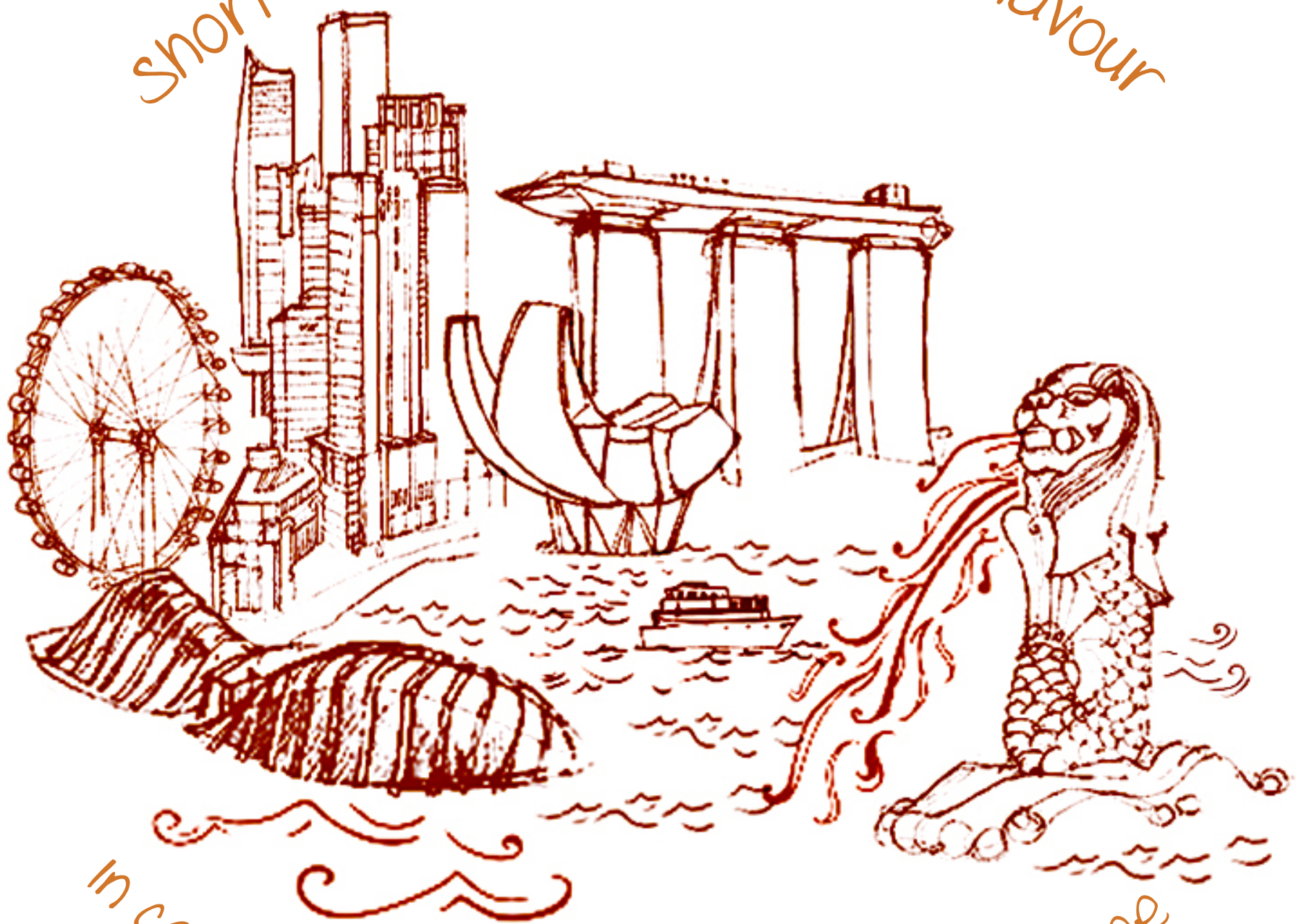


# Once upon a time in Singapore

Short stories with a Kellock Flavour



In celebration of Singapore's Golden Jubilee

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# ❀❀The Kind Soldier❀❀



War Years  
1942-1945

I ran around the streets happily, dressed simply in white singlet and frayed navy green shorts. The pavements were completely deserted and extremely filthy but I did not mind as it was the first time I was able to run around again after what seemed like a long time to me. Ma had kept my younger brother, Zi Yan, and me in our attap hut for so long. I longed to go outside and play with my friends again but she forbade me from going out ever since the Japanese invaded our country and the British surrendered.

Feeling bored, I decided to go out and play. I managed to sneak out while Ma was in the garden picking sweet potatoes and yam and Zi Yan was asleep. It was all we ate these days – steamed yam and sweet potato porridge. I didn't particularly like the bland, watery porridge but I still gobbled it down to satisfy my growling stomach. We were always running low on food and needed to keep growing sweet potato and yam to sustain ourselves.

When I asked Ma why we couldn't have things like rice, meat and vegetables for our meals anymore and why all we had were sweet potatoes and yam to eat, she always replied, "Girl ah... You must know... The evil Japanese soldiers ruling our country give us barely enough rice each month. The authorities encourage us to grow our own sweet potato and yam. That is all we have to eat because they cut back on the amount of resources given to the population and the lion's share is given to the Japanese."

Suddenly, I saw a troupe of Japanese soldiers in navy green uniform marching my way. Ignoring their presence, I continued to run and skip happily about the dirty streets, humming my favourite tune merrily when...

"You! Bakka!" The head of the troop shoved me roughly. "Why are you speaking English? You should be respecting us and speaking Japanese!" He yelled furiously at me.

I shook so violently and my eyes widened in immense horror. "B-but, why c-can't I s-speak E-english?" I stammered. As soon as I said those words, I instantly regretted it when the troop of soldiers glared menacingly at me.

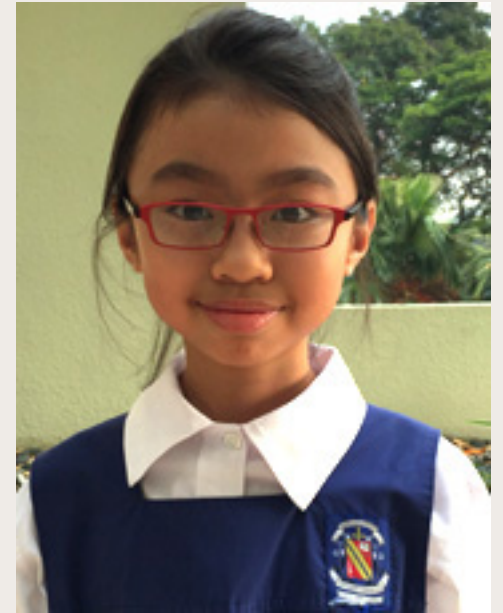
But that was my real opinion: Since Japan took over Singapore, I had to learn Japanese in school and we had to sing the Japanese anthem every morning. I didn't understand why those rules had to be set. Why did we have to speak Japan's national language and not ours? Just because Japan ruled Singapore now?

"What? You better bow and apologise to Officer Ishikuro right now!" the soldiers threatened me, with his boynet pointing right in my face.

I was about to make a run for it when a young soldier with a name tag that read 'Yoshihiro Osaka' on his navy green uniform stepped forward. "Let her off. She's still young, she doesn't know why people must speak Japanese."

The soldiers stood there for a few moments, then the head of the troop gave a curt nod and they marched off down the street. Only then did I notice the Japanese soldier who saved me, Yoshihiro Osaka, remained. He knelt down and looked me straight in the eye.

"Child, you must bow to the Japanese and respect them, do you understand?" he spoke in Japanese, then explaining further in English. Then, Osaka looked at



By Rochelle Lee Ruo Xuan  
Primary 5 Ixora

◆ 15th Feb 1942 ◆



[Singapore Falls To The Japanese](#)



me from head to toe. “You look very malnourished. What have you been eating these few weeks?”

I didn’t say anything. First of all, my mother had told me not to talk to strangers, and secondly, I had no idea what to say.

“I...I’m Zi Qing. Lim Zi Qing. I’ve been...eating sweet potato porridge and steamed yam,” I finally managed to stammer. “I’ve been so hungry for many days.”

He began to rummage through his bag, but then we heard the threatening voice of the leader of the troupe. “Yoshihiro Osaka! Ikkimasuka?” (Translated: Are you coming, Yoshihiro Osaka?)

“Hai!” Yoshihiro called out. He handed me a pack of cigarettes. “Here. Back at the soldier campsite, we have plenty of them. By selling this, you should be able to have a good meal for a week or so, Zi Qing.”

I was left speechless. “Thank you.” I said gratefully.

Giving me a friendly smile, Yoshihiro stood up and left to join the troop of soldiers down the street. I thought: So the Japanese aren’t as evil as I thought they were.

Looking down at the pack of cigarettes in my hand, I wasn’t sure what to do with them. Although I was grateful to Yoshihiro for saving me from the troupe and giving them to me, I had no idea how Ma, Zi Yan and I would have a good meal from this tiny box.

Maybe Ma knew what to do. I decided to go home, in fear of meeting more Japanese soldiers. As I meandered down the streets, I heard a ringing of a bell.

“Produce and other foods for sale! Come! Come!” A man yelled. He pushed a cart laden with bags of food. My stomach growled as I looked longingly at the mound of produce laid out, yet knowing I couldn’t afford them.

When the seller spotted me, he immediately rushed towards me. “Would you like anything? Salted fish? Dried chili? Canned meat?”

“I...I can’t. I don’t have any money,” I answered.

“You have those cigarettes!” He gestured to the box I was holding.

“I can trade these for food?” I asked incredulously. So that was why the soldier I would get a good meal for about a week!

“Of course. It’s so rare in the market. People would die for a stick.” The seller said and handed me a thick brown bag. “Here, a bag of produce and dried food, for your box of cigarettes.”

“OK!” I agreed without hesitation and handed over the box. I hurried home, clutching onto the bag for dear life.

“Ma!” I shouted as I barged into our attap hut.

“Lim Zi Qing!” Ma scolded when she saw me run in. “Why did you go out without my permission? You could have been caught by the Japanese!”



“Sorry, Ma, but look what I got!” I held up the bag.

“What is that, Zi Qing?” She took the bag and emptied its contents on the table. There was a big sack filled with long, plump, unbroken grains – rice which seemed to be able to last an entire lifetime to me! I had never seen rice as beautiful as that! On top of that were canned meat, poultry and vegetables. There were even salted fish – a rarity in any household like ours because it was so expensive – and jars of five-spice powder, dried chili, rock salt and other spices and flavourings.

“How did you get so much food?” Ma asked.

“A Japanese soldier gave me a pack of cigarettes and I traded them for food!” I told her. “Now we can have a good meal tonight!”

“A Japanese soldier?” Ma echoed suspiciously. “Why did he help you?”

“He was very kind-hearted. Not only did he give me cigarettes to trade for food, but he saved me from being caught by the troop of soldiers!” I told her. “So, not all the Japanese might be as evil as you think, Ma!”

But Ma simply said, “I will use some of the vegetables, fish and rice for dinner tonight and save the rest.”

That night, we feasted on rice and steamed fish and piping hot vegetable soup for dinner, unlike our usual bowls of watery sweet potato porridge. Zi Yan stuffed his face with the food on the table, happy to be able to eat vegetables, meat and fish again. Looking at everyone at the table, I was just grateful to Yoshihiro for letting us have so much food to eat.

About three days after I met Yoshihiro again. I was wandering around the street, this time with Ma’s permission after her repeated warnings against talking to strangers (especially the Japanese soldiers). I saw a crowd of people in the middle of the street. Curious, I made my way over, wondering what had happened.

When I was close enough, I caught a glimpse of a man on the ground, being beaten up by a group of Japanese soldiers. He was covered with blood and awful scars so deep that exposed his raw flesh. This man seemed vaguely familiar. Where had I seen him before? I thought. He looked like...the soldier, Yoshihiro, who helped me a few days ago. Could it be?

“I heard that this soldier, Yoshihiro Osaka, was beaten up because he helped and gave a pack of cigarettes to a small child. Officer Ishikuro told General Nakamura and he ordered for him to be beaten up.” An onlooker commented to another.

I froze. It really was him! Yoshihiro Osaka was the soldier being beaten up. He knew he risked punishment and yet he still took that risk to help me! This single kind-hearted soul amongst the Japanese soldiers, nearly beaten to death before my very eyes, made my heart wrench.

As I watched him cry out in pain as the soldiers continued beating him up, I felt like bursting into tears. I couldn’t believe he was being punished just for helping a local. It was so unjust of the soldiers to do so! I only knew Yoshihiro’s name and nothing else, but I felt so indignant for him as he had not done anything wrong. The soldier who was kind enough to spare my family and I some food, being unfairly punished for doing so. If I could do something...anything...



Before I knew what I was doing, I rushed forward, yelling “Stop! Stop!” at the top of my lungs.

When the soldiers saw me, they immediately threw down their weapons and advanced on me.

“Who do you think you are? That you have the authority to stop us?” one soldier taunted. The rest of the soldiers snickered under their breath.

“I...I may only be a small child, but I also need to stand up for what is right! Just because you hold authority here, you think you can push people around?” I blurted out.

I could hardly believe I had the courage to say those words. A crimson blush rose up my neck and onto my cheeks as I heard the murmuring and whispering from the onlookers.

“So what do you think you can do about it?” The soldier challenged.

“Yoshihiro didn’t do anything wrong! He only helped my family and me! Why are you punishing him for nothing!” I shouted, my embarrassment quickly replaced by rising fury.

“Leave it, Zi Qing.” I heard a weak, feeble voice say. My eyes widened and I stared at Yoshihiro, covered with dried blood and deep scars and injuries so awful I had to look away.

I threw myself on my knees next to him. “How can I leave you alone in the lurch? You are being punished right now and you didn’t do anything wrong!” I whispered.

“You stood up for me before I leave the world forever. That’s all I could really ask for,” Yoshihiro answered weakly. I tried to fight back my tears.

“You hear that, child! Just give up!” The arrogant voice of the Japanese soldier rang out, followed by the sniggers of the other soldiers. They swaggered off down the street with self-satisfied smirks on their faces.

“Take good care of yourself. Goodbye, Zi Qing...” Yoshihiro whispered before his eyes closed.

I froze on the spot. He had died – right in front of my very eyes, right in my arms...

Swallowing the lump in my throat, I slowly got to my feet, holding back my tears. With one final look at Yoshihiro, I turned and walked away. I said a silent goodbye to Yoshihiro and thanked him for everything he did for me and my family. I knew I would always remember him in my heart, the single kind-hearted soldier who had risked it all, just to help my family and me during the war...







## War Years 1942-1945

“Apapa ! We are really very hungry! I cannot take it any longer, our stomachs are grumbling!” complained Rama and Siti to their grandfather.

The Rajan family lived in the days when life was hard. Food was scarce and clean water was difficult to find. It was the Japanese Occupation. The War started and ended with the British surrendering. Wounds, cuts, slits were made – physically, emotionally and psychologically – and the lives of many loved ones were lost.

“Please Apapa, I will probably die if I go on any longer like this,” said Rama.

“Fine, fine give me a moment,” said Apapa.

Apapa went to one corner of the three-room flat and started digging through his old antiques when suddenly, he came out with a long, slender fishing pole.

“Where are we going?” asked Siti while Rama stared in awe at the fishing rod that he had never seen before.

“We are going to get some food from the river before it gets too late and the soldiers come and chop our heads off.” Appa said.

Siti and Rama knew that the idea of soldiers chopping their heads’ off was serious and should not be made fun of, but they still could not help giggling at Apapa’s sarcasm.

Within minutes, the small family was at the polluted, olive-green Kallang River. They all settled down on a red, thin, old-fashioned mat as Apapa reeled in the rod. Rama could not help muttering vulgar retorts under his breath at the nearby Japanese soldiers who were eyeing the family cautiously. Siti did not mind the soldiers eyeing her as she had a theory that the Japanese were a bunch of lunatics who enjoyed killing the innocent and that nothing could be done to change their minds, no matter how hard anyone tried. They need not be afraid, as long as the curfew imposed by the Japanese was observed.

“Apapa, is it true that life was much better before the war?” asked Siti.

Apapa hesitated for a moment and then nodded his head. He could tell where this conversation would be leading to.

“Was this war the cause of lost Ama and Apa’s death?” asked Rama, a pitiful look in his eyes.

Apapa nodded silently once again. Tears started to well up in Apapa’s, Siti’s and Rama’s eyes. The great loss of Siti and Rama’s parents was still felt although it had been two years since it happened; and to remember them, every year on their parents’ death anniversary, the family would eat sweet potato porridge and drink one can of barley as a family and reminisce about old and good times when their parents still lived. As the trio sat silently on the mat, looking out at the river ahead of them, thoughts of how they lost Apa and Ama flooded their minds.

Two years ago, Apa and Ama went to a nearby well to fetch water. Ama was pulling up the bucket in the well that was filled with water while Apa watched



By Leandra Anisha Arakkal  
Primary 5 Lily

◆ 1942 - 1945 ◆



[The Singapore Story  
\(Japanese Occupation  
of Singapore\)](#)



her. Suddenly a group of soldiers came and confronted them. They teased Ama and Apa stood up to them. Things got out of control and before they knew it, one of the Japanese soldier pulled out his long, black rifle and pulled the trigger.

Crack! The sound of the gunshot pierced the air as the bullet as went towards them at lightning jet speed and pierced through both of them.

At this point, Apapa fell silent and shuddered. Tears streamed down Rama and Siti's faces. Apapa held them close and said, 'It is not such a bad thing really, as they are now watching over us day and night to make sure we are okay and safe.'

Not wanting to spoil the day, Apapa changed the topic. "You know, if we are lucky and catch a fish, we might be able to try some of my famous, mouth-watering fish curry," said Apapa and that cheered up both the children.

They wiped the wet tears that was pouring down from their cheeks and gazed into the orange evening sky as white clouds drifted across the clear blue sky. It was finally peaceful and quiet as the Japanese soldiers had left, after shouting at some rickshaw pullers for yelling down the street. Siti looked down into the water, enjoying the serenity and tranquillity that enveloped her.

Suddenly, a sharp tug was felt on the fishing pole!

"We have caught something!" Siti exclaimed excitedly.

"Ooohhh! Let us pray it is a big fish! I'm craving for Appa's fish curry!" said Rama.

Apapa pulled out the fishing rod but much to the family's dismay, the fish was as small as a children's palm.

"I really wish we had caught a bigger fish!" said Rama, disappointedly.

"Do not worry, this will suffice," Apapa said lovingly and added, "We really need to count our blessings that we are still able to do this together in such bad times."

And with that teeny fish in Apapa's hands, the family of three walked home, together holding hands, with a silent prayer that the war would end soon and that justice and peace would prevail.



# Importance of Food Rationing



War Years  
1942-1945

I rummaged through the kitchen, looking for a nice snack to nibble on. As my mom was gone for about an hour, I had got so hungry that I decided to numb my hunger by eating tidbits until she returned. I opened all the drawers and could find only some dry spices and raw ingredients. There was nothing that I could make as I was only nine years old and did not know how to cook at all.

I eventually gave up and retired back to my room, where I settled with my Singapore history book. As I read a heart-warming story about Elizabeth Choy who had tried her best to fend the Japanese off and about freedom fighters like Lim Bo Seng who did all he could to play his part during war, I was inspired. Despite the struggles, they died as martyrs. I read about how they had to dig for tapioca or make do with banana peels just to satisfy their hunger. Thinking of war and food, my heavy eyelids started to give in...

Not long after, I found myself among a group of children in a kampong. They were hungry and looking desperately around for food. I looked more closely and saw that there were a couple of children who were younger than me! They were weeping softly. They looked absolutely pitiful in their tattered and torn clothes. I joined them to scavenge for food since I was hungry too.

Suddenly we heard approaching footsteps, which we recognised as the sound made by the Japanese soldiers' boots. We hid behind the bushes to avoid being seen. The soldiers were making jokes while eating bananas. As they passed by, they threw the banana peels into the bushes.

As the sounds of footsteps got softer, I grabbed the banana peels and divided it among the children. We devoured our peels hungrily while cursing the occupiers. It was because of them that we were reduced to eat the peels instead of the actual banana. In the midst of our interactions while eating, I learnt that many of these kids had been orphaned by war. They started telling me their sad and pitiful stories. I realised that they were unfortunate to be born at such a time. They had no control over their destinies and the dire circumstances they were in had made them stronger than me.

"It's rationing time!" Xiu Min's sharp shrill remark interrupted my thoughts. Xiu Min was my new found acquaintance and she was about my age.

Ahead of us, we saw a long queue, desperate for supplies. The children shared that though the supplies were meagre, these supplies meant a lot to the victims of the war. Often, the queue was so long that people at the back of the queue would not get any food. It was the generosity of the others that would save the day for them. As they say, only a hungry person can understand a plight of another hungry person. From what the children shared, the times were indeed tough for all but it was how people stood together and helped each other in need that helped them ride over any crisis. As I thought about what was shared, I saw the Japanese soldier sounding the bell, signalling that the supplies for the day had ran out. The disappointed faces in the queue further emphasised what these supplies meant to them.

Ring... Ring... and I stirred in my sleep. Seconds later, I awoke with a realization that hit me like a twenty-pound sledgehammer!! It was the doorbell



By Keya Niranjana Kaulagekar  
Primary 5 Ixora



Grow More Food  
Campaign



## War Years

1942-1945

and my mother had been sounding the doorbell for some time. I bounded out of bed and sprinted to the door as fast as my feet would carry me. I quickly unlocked the door and my mother came in, looking slightly weary. She put down her groceries and asked me, “Sweetie, what is the matter? I rang several times and you did not answer the door. Are you sick?”

I told her about my dream and she smiled at me, nodding her head. She said, “I’m glad you understand, my dear. We must not take our peaceful country for granted.”

“Mum, I am starving. Please whip up something quickly?” I pleaded. She reached into her plastic bag and took out a tray of delicious double-chocolate cupcakes. She instructed me to eat only ONE cake to satisfy my hunger in the meantime till lunch was served.

During lunch, my mother and I discussed my dream. I realised how lucky I was to be born after the war! Today, food is never a problem in today’s context. In fact, we are able to get all the different types of world cuisine here in Singapore - the melting pot of Asia.

Even in times of emergencies, we are now ever so prepared. Standing together to overcome challenges has proven to be the most critical factor in riding through any adversity. Although we do not face war or natural calamities like tsunamis and typhoons, we are still exposed to pandemics like SARS and MERS. We definitely have to stand together like how our forefathers had and always be prepared to play our part in overcoming these challenges.

“That’s a lot of insights from a dream!” Mother joked, “but I’m proud of you. I am glad you are part of Singapore’s future.”

I blushed, and thought of what I can do as a young child for Singapore. Perhaps, I should first learn to whip up a few dishes so I will not need to depend on others anymore when I am hungry! I smiled at that thought.





# In the Days of a Young Boy



War Years  
1942-1945

I bolted upright. What was it? I thought. I wiped my forehead with clammy palms. I had dreamt that I was 24 years old and had been caught by the Japanese and was forced to kill thousands of people for a paltry fee. I only then realised that it was only a nightmare, thank God! I was back to my real self - a super timid eight year old boy. Gazing outside with my ebony black, wide eyes, I saw bright lights twinkling in the dark, dark night.

This was tropical, balmy Singapore, in the year 1942. Nonetheless, there was an unmistakable chill in the air defined by the terror of foreign occupation, war and the stench of death. Suddenly, there was a loud but muffled BOOM! It must be another bomb exploding.

In these days, hearing loud explosions, screaming and shouting, and guns being fired were all part of the daily rhythm of our lives. I could hardly understand what was happening despite it all not being a first for me.

However, even though there was much I could not comprehend, I rested secure, in the warmth and love of my dear, dear parents.

My brother, Harry, was 21 years old. I hero-worshipped him because in spite of our grim circumstances and unhealthy environment, he remained strong and undeniably cheerful. He was also always ready to lend a hand to people in need. His only weakness was that he had a fiery disposition. On the whole, though, he was the type of brother that everyone longed and prayed for.

One day, I heard my mother weeping. Racing down flights of steps, I went to her and found that her usually merry, happy face had abruptly turned into a tear-streaked, unhappy face. I immediately demanded to know what the matter was.

She told me between copious sobs and wails, "Your grandmother... went out to get... food for Grandpa... and...and... got... shot... in the... back... she couldn't find... a doctor in time....."

Suddenly, I felt tears welling up in my eyes too, and no matter how hard I tried, I could not fight my tears back...

After her death, we buried her in the ground outside Grandpa's old, run-down house. Even though it was hard, we did it unbeknownst to the Japanese.

Well, there was always a risk of going outdoors, as we would never know what would happen. Nevertheless, we still needed to get food for ourselves and our family members. The other family members who stayed home were always afraid that they would receive the dreaded news that they would never see their beloved one again.

In those days, food was scarce. Sweet potatoes and yams became the most commonly food consumed by Singaporeans because they were considerably cheaper than rice and could also be grown in gardens. They were then turned into a variety of dishes, and all were used in the three meals of the day.

Even though I was really getting tired of eating it, the nutrients from the food helped to fend off starvation. The Japanese authorities ordered us to grow our own food if we had even the smallest plot of land.



By Joan Tan Ting Li  
Primary 5 Ixora

◆ 14th Mar 1967 ◆



National Service  
Becomes Compulsory



## War Years

1942-1945

Suddenly, one day, on September 2 1945, when my family and I were eating lunch, my uncle burst through the door, flapping his arms wildly. He was perspiring heavily but looked excited. His cheeks flushed a bright pink, so I deduced that he had run all the way from his house.

"The... the... the...war...has..." Uncle said, speaking so excitedly that he was practically incoherent.

"All right, all right, relax, Uncle. RELAX! Now, just calm down and spit it out." I shouted.

"Did you hear? The war has come to an end! The British, no, the Japanese have surrendered and the British have come back to us!" he said, tripping over his words as the words came out in a rush.

"Uncle, this is no time to joke! It's a serious matter!" I said, my heart thumping fast.

I hoped that what he said was true, but now, at this stage, it seemed virtually impossible for the Japanese to surrender. They had practically taken over the whole island! But, could what he said even have an iota of truth? Would the hated Japanese finally leave?

He crossed the room and turned on the radio. "Don't believe me? Well, hear this." he said, confident that he was right.

The radio belted out, "Well, well, well! It seems like the Japanese have surrendered and left Singapore! Now the question is: How will Singapore survive now?" Uncle turned off the radio. All of our mouths were agape.

Soon, everything started to sink in and it became clear. I recovered quickly and jumped to my feet almost as if I had sat on a needle. I grabbed my mother's hands and started dancing in circles around the room.

"The Japanese have left! The Japanese have left!" I chanted, over and over again. My mother started weeping again, but this time it was tears of joy, not misery. She bent down and whispered to me, hardly daring to breath. "Is it really true?" I nodded my head.

My mother then replied, "It's a miracle! It's a miracle!"

My brother and father smiled to each other. My uncle looked proud that he had caused quite a lot of commotion in our house, but he too was jumping with joy. I looked at my family and there were smiles plastered all over their faces as they looked at me too. I had the biggest smile on my face that stretched from ear to ear. That day was the happiest day in my life.

Life held hope again. I hope that Singapore would never be subject again to the horrors of war and captivity. Although Singapore was free from the hands of the Japanese, the death of my dearly loved grandmother left a permanent scar in my heart. Every year after her untimely death, we would never forget to commemorate the death of my grandmother. Even if she was not there, I always felt that her spirit was with my family and I. I wish that her kindred spirit would forever rest in peace in Heaven.

My prayer was that as our country looked to rebuild itself, love and peace would continue to remain steadfast in this island. I am sure that my brother also feels the same.

My brother, whom I loved and respected, became instrumental in helping to shape our nation. His name is Lee Kuan Yew.



# magical Graveyard



War Years  
1942-1945

"Do you really have to go?" whined a seven-year-old Lucy as she clutched tightly onto Ah Kong's pants.

Ah Kong smiled warmly down at Lucy. He bent down so that he was at eye-level with her. "I do have to go unfortunately; however, I have a present for you to remember me by." Ah Kong said while he reached behind him, and from behind him, he got a small puppy with pure white fur.

"A PUPPY! Oh, it is so cute and adorable!!!"

While Lucy was distracted by the puppy, her father and mother, Huat Teck and Li Mei, smiled at their daughter's innocence. However, as soon as their eyes turn to Ah Kong, their happy expressions turned to sadness, they could feel their noses starting to burn as tears started to stream down their faces.

"You know, you really don't have to go to the army because of me." Huat Teck commented, his voice cracking at the end of his sentence.

"Aiyah! Don't nag lah! You still have to take care of Lucy! I am growing old, you still have a long life in front of you! The most this old man can do is to play chess and drink Kopi-O. Besides, it is almost time for me to join your Ah Ma in the skies," Ah Kong joked as he tried to lessen the tension in the atmosphere.

He then looked at the clock on the wall and sighed. "I have to get going or else I will be late."

And with that, Ah Kong left to join the army. Little did they know that that would be the last time would see Ah Kong alive and happy.

"TAKE COVER!!!" As soon as Lucy heard that, she ran towards the nearest bomb shelter with her dog, Patch, the dog that Ah Kong had given her before he left. She did not wait for her parents as she knew that they would catch up soon enough. Besides, she thought that her survival was more important than her parents.

It had been four years since the departure of Ah Kong and she learnt the hard way that the world isn't all about sunshines and rainbows and sometimes, loved ones will just leave and never return again. The thought of dying scared Lucy – to know that you go to sleep and never wake up ever again, to know that you leave the house and never return again, that you would never see the sun, the moon, your friends and your family ever again.

Lucy ran into the shelter just before the first bomb hit. The walls shook as debris and dust from earlier bombing rained down on them. Lucy looked around, trying to spot her parents in the crowd. They were, however, nowhere to be seen. Lucy shrugged her shoulders as she sat down, hugging her legs to her chest. Patches lay down next to her and looked around curiously, whimpering every time a bomb hit the shelter.

"Too bad for them I guess, whether they live or die is not my problem! I need to take care of myself first. I need to survive!" Lucy thought.

But her heart was betraying her as a nagging feeling continued to bug her relentlessly. She sighed as she rested her head on her kneecaps, trying



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to block out the crying of other children as a bomb hit the shelter once again.

An hour later, a piercing alarm rang, informing the terrified citizens that they had survived the bombing and that it was over. A few minutes after Lucy walked out of the shelter, her aunt, Ah Moi, ran towards her, shouting.

“LUCY!!! Your mama didn’t make it, she is in a coma! She is in the temporary hospital!!! Let me take you there!!!”

Before Lucy had a chance to reply, Ah Moi had already began dragging her to the ‘hospital’. Patches ran after them after shaking dust and small pieces of debris out of his pure white fur, wondering where his mistress was going.

A few minutes of stumbling over debris later, they finally arrived at the ‘hospital’. It was the kindergarten that Lucy went to when she was younger. It was a miracle that it was still standing. And because of that, people believed that the gods favoured the school so it was made into a ‘hospital’.

Ah Moi dragged Lucy to the end of the hallway and into a classroom and there lay her mother, Li Mei. Her body had burns and the bandages on her head were stained with her blood. Sat next to her was Father, Huat Teck, his eyes bloodshot from crying and visible tear stains on his cheeks. Lucy’s mouth gaped open in shock as she stared at her mother’s body. Her eyes grew to the size of saucers as her vision began to blur and her nose started to sting. Hot tears cascaded down her cheeks as she choked back a sob.

Before anyone could move to comfort her, she had already ran out of the room and out of the ‘hospital’. Lucy did not know where she was heading, all she knew was that she wanted to get away from there as fast as she could, before she knew it, she had arrived in a cemetery..... the one where Ah Kong was buried at.

She walked in and sat down in front of her grandfather’s grave. Patches, who was silently following her, jumped into her lap and licked her face, trying to comfort his mistress. After Lucy finally stopped crying, she spotted a thin book with a brown leather cover on Ah Kong’s grave. Lucy’s curiosity got the better of her as she slowly reached over to grab it. She picked it up and examined it closely as she ran her fingers over the cover of the book.

“The person who dropped this must be rich! This is a type of fine leather isn’t it, Patches?” She said out loud as she looked down at Patches as he sat on her lap. He barked as if agreeing with his owner’s statement.

“I wonder what’s written in it?” she mumbled to herself. She flipped it open and was greeted with a single page and on the page was a short paragraph. Lucy raised an eyebrow and began reading it out loud.

“The chosen one rises while the evil one falls. When there is darkness, there is light. When there is bad, there is good. Now what will you be? The light or the darkness? The good or the bad? The choice is in your hands Lucy...”

Lucy’s eyes grew wide as she dropped the book, how did it know her name? While these thoughts were spinning around in her head, she did not notice the ground crumbling beneath her. And before she knew it, she was falling.

“AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...!!!”

Lucy closed her eyes and instinctively hugged Patches to her chest as





she braced herself for impact. Instead, she fell onto something soft. She opened her eyes only to see a pitch black face and white eyes staring right back at her.

“AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!”

Lucy shrieked once again as she struggled out of the creature’s grasp and landed on the floor. “W-w-who are y-you?! W-what a-are you?! W-where am I?” stammered Lucy as she backed away from the ‘creature’ in fear.

She looked around her and unintentionally gasped in awe. There was lush green grass and colourful flowers all around her. There were butterflies fluttering around as the trees swayed gently in the wind. She took a deep breath in and exhaled. It smelled of freshly cut grass instead of rotting bodies and smoke from fires. Patches stuck his tongue out as he ran around excitedly. The ‘creature’ merely stared at them.

“Do you not see grass or trees often?” asked the creature, tilting its head in curiosity, its voice deep, informing Lucy of the gender.

“You speak?!” exclaimed Lucy as she pointed a finger at him. Only now could she have a good look at him. His entire body was pitch black and the only thing visible was his white giant eyes which took up half his face and his tuxedo which looked like the kind which people would wear when they die. He looked like something out of a children’s picture book.

His voice sounded quite familiar but Lucy could not pinpoint where she had heard that voice before. “There is a war happening in our country so we don’t get to see greenery often.” Lucy replied.

Both of them enjoyed a moment of peace and serenity.

“Do you want to go back home? Oh and you can call me Demo.”

“Of course I want to go home!” Lucy said, her voice laced with uncertainty and hesitation once she remembered what happened to her mother.

Demo sighed and started speaking, “All you need to do is to travel through the different dimensions and collect pieces to create a sword to slay Kenchi, a dead Japanese soldier who has come back for revenge. His family was killed by the British because of Singapore so he wants all Britons and Singaporeans dead.”

Lucy looked at him as if he had grown a second head. “You want me to do what?! Are you insane, in fact, this whole idea is insane! How is there greenery here?! How did you get your skin to be PITCH BLACK?! How is there not a single bombing yet?!” Lucy ranted.

Demo said, “Well, you do want to get home don’t you?”

Lucy crossed her arms and sighed “Fine! What do I have to do again?”

Demo clapped his hands which Lucy took was a sign of happiness. “Well, we first have to visit the Storm Nation to collect the red storm piece. There is however the loyal three-headed guard dog to guard it. Next, we are visiting the Rain Region to collect the blue rain storm piece, but it is easy as only the people are guarding the piece so they will give it to us if I am there. After that, we are heading to the Lightning Region to get the green lightning gem. All we have to note that are the constant thunderstorms and lightning strikes. Then, we have the



Sun Nation. It was said that there was a giant kangaroo that guards the yellow sun piece. Then, we are heading to get the purple cloud piece at the Cloud Nation. There is apparently a blood drinking bat we have defeat to get the piece. Then, we will head to the Mist Nation to get the indigo mist piece. We will then head to the Sky Nation to get all the pieces forged together forming the elemental sword. Once that is done, we will go to the Moon Nation to fight Kenchi.”

And with that, they embarked on their journey, not without Patches of course.

At Fire Nation, Patches somehow managed to convince the three-headed dog to let them get the piece, much to the amazement of Demo and Lucy. Subsequently, they went to Rain and Lightning Region and got the pieces easily.

Lucy managed to defeat the kangaroo at Sun Nation by throwing a rock to its head by accident and quickly grabbed the piece and ran for their lives. At Cloud Nation, they scared away the bat by throwing a torch at it. They got the piece and headed to the Mist Nation. There, they found the Indigo Mist Piece in a cave and they headed to the Sky nation.

Over the course of the few days, Lucy became good friends with Demo. While they were getting the sword forged, Lucy peered up at Demo with a frown. “After this, am I going to ever see you again?”

Demo bent down so that he was at eye-level with Lucy and said, “Most likely not, but remember this okay? Treat others the way you want to be treated. Care and shower love onto your family just as they showered you with love and care. Love is important! Always remember that. Pinky promise?”

Lucy hooked pinkies with Demo and smiled “Promise!” After the sword was forged, they proceeded to Moon Nation and so the time had come where the final stand off would take place.

The middle of Moon Nation was a square field of about 100 km across. Kenchi stood alone right across Lucy as he observed Lucy, Demo and Patches closely. He had a black cloak on and a white mask with slits where his eyes were supposed to be. They stood there, observing each other as Kenchi decided that he would make the first move.

He ran at them drawing out a sword as he prepared to strike. Patches ran forward and bit onto Kenchi’s leg in an effort to slow him down as Demo whipped out a gun which Lucy never knew he had. Lucy clutched on to the elemental sword as she trembled, her feet rooted to the ground.

“Kill him!” Demo shouted at Lucy.

“I-I c-can’t! I am too scared, I-I can’t hurt anything alive!” Lucy stammered.

“Well,” Demo shouted back “He’s a DEAD soldier that wants revenge! He is DEAD!!!!”

Lucy stopped shaking as she snapped out of her fear. “That’s right, he’s already dead, someone killed him, not me!” Lucy thought as she rushed forward and stabbed the sword through Kenchi. A blinding light emitting from Kenchi made Lucy let go as she stumbled backwards.

After the light dimmed, Kenchi was gone. Demo smiled at Lucy as they gave each other a high-five. “Well you have done your part. It is time for you to go

home now.”

And just as Demo said that, light beams surrounded Lucy and Patches as Demo’s Pitch black skin began to peel away revealing....Ah Kong.

Lucy’s mouth gaped open in shock as she tried to shout but her words got stuck in her throat. Ah Kong waved at her, sending her one last smile before everything turned pitch black.

“... up..... Wake up!”

Lucy bolted awake as she stared at Ah Moi’s concerned face.

“Your mother woke up!” As soon as Lucy heard that, a wide grin spread onto her face as she grabbed Ah Moi’s hand, sprinting towards the hospital, Patches right beside her. Lucy smiled once again and silently thanked Ah Kong for teaching her how love for family is important.



## War Years

1942-1945





# Granma as a Girl

I was on Instagram, looking at my friend's posts when I saw a picture of Hard Rock Hotel, a hotel in Sentosa. This brought back memories of that time I went there for a staycation with my family. This was what happened...

Staring out of the window, I could see the cable cars hanging in the sky. People inside were taking pictures of the beautiful scenery of Sentosa. There were many trees around and leaves were rustling in the wind. The cool wind caressed my face and I smiled to myself. Birds were chirping melodiously and my cousin, Rebecca, was humming to the tune. On the other hand, my younger sister, Jessica, was listening to pop music. With headphones on, she was tapping her feet to the rhythm.

It was such a wonderful day, just perfect for a swim in the pool. Just as I was about to ask my mum whether I could go down for a swim, she said, "Valerie, your dad, Auntie Olivia, Uncle Ben and I want to go shopping but I know that Rebecca, Jessica and you won't want to go. Is it all right if I leave you to take care of both of them while we are out? You are already eleven years old and I am sure you can do that!"

"But Mum, I want to go down to the swimming pool to swim!" I argued. Sighing heavily, she said firmly, "No Valerie. We are going shopping and you are to take care of Rebecca and Jessica."

I exclaimed, "Mum! I really want to-"

"Now Valerie, look who's the mother here!" my mum interrupted.

Grumbling, I slumped onto the sofa and muttered, "Fine."

Sulking, I picked up my book and began to read just as my father, mother, aunt and uncle left the hotel room. I planned to read the whole time they were out.

However, Jessica was probably bored of listening to music so she suggested, "Can we play a game? I am bored. How about playing a game of 'Catch the toy'?"

"You play it with Rebecca. I am reading!" I said, face still buried in my book. Jessica picked up my favourite Hello Kitty toy without my permission and started to throw it to Rebecca. They giggled while playing the game. It was not even fun and they were having a whale of a time? Weird! Just then, Jessica called, "Valerie! The toy rolled under the bed and both of us cannot reach it! Can you help us please?"

Groaning, I put down my book reluctantly and groped around for the Hello Kitty toy. However, I did not feel the rug. Instead, there was something rough underneath the bed! Taking a torchlight, I saw a little door with a metal handle on it. A trapdoor!

Excited, I exclaimed, "Jessica, Rebecca! Look! A trapdoor! Shall we open it and look what's inside?"

Being the adventurous one, Jessica immediately agreed. However, Rebecca was a scaredy-cat.

Staring at the trapdoor in fear, she stammered, "O-ok th-then."

We climbed under the bed and I opened the trapdoor. Worried, Rebecca asked, "Can you see anything there?"

War Years  
1942-1945



By Keira Low Wei-Qi  
Primary 5 Hibiscus





Shaking my head, I replied with a smile, “Well, there is only one way to find out. On the count of three, we will jump in together. One, two, three!”

Everything was black. I could not even see Jessica and Rebecca but I could feel them so I knew that they were safe. Soon, we landed on soft cool ground. We were standing on a grass patch and our feet were getting wet by the dew. It was sweltering hot and sweat started trickling down my forehead. I spotted several kampongs in the distance and gasped. Modern Singapore did not have any kampongs, only apartment blocks. This only meant one thing, we had travelled back in time!

Jessica said, “Wow! Let’s explore the place. Where should we go first?”

“Valerie?” my timid cousin said quietly. I looked at her and she continued, “I want to go back! What if we are trapped here forever?”

Comforting her, I replied, “Let’s ask the people in the kampong for help. Maybe they might tell us how to get out?”

Walking towards the kampongs, I knocked on the door but no one opened the door. After a while, a middle-aged woman opened the door and said to her young daughter, “Go and pluck the beansprouts from our backyard, Wee Xing. Come back when the basket is full.”

Taking this chance, we rushed into the house. There were no beds, just thin rattan mats. A teenager, who I guessed was Wee Xing’s older sister, was lying on the mats and fanning herself. In those days, there was no air-conditioners.

“Wee Ling! Stop daydreaming! Help your sister! Here, take a bucket and collect water from the well!” the woman, who I thought was her mother ordered.

Groaning, Wee Ling left the house. Wait a minute. Wee Ling sounds familiar! Where did I hear that name from? Then, it hit me! Wee Ling is my grandmother and I am looking into her past!

Nudging both Rebecca and Jessica, I whispered, “That’s Grandma!”

Not wanting to waste more time, Rebecca piped up, “Excuse me.”

Nobody answered. Maybe she was too soft. I repeated what Jessica had just said, but much louder. Still, nobody answered, all of them were still occupied in doing their own things. I guess when you time travel, nobody would be able to hear or see you. Next, my great grandmother pulled out a box and took out something. Looking closer, I saw it was the game, Five Stones.

Obviously bored, she started playing with it while a man, whom I supposed was her husband, took out a Chapteh and started kicking it with his feet. They were much better than my parents!

Jessica looked around the room and told us, “There are no computers! No online games? What a boring life!”

“We have to be grateful for what we have back home. I guess we are in the 1960s, where there was still no technology. So when people were bored, they would play traditional games such as Five Stones and Chapteh,” I replied.

Not long after, Wee Ling and Wee Xing returned, carrying a pail of water



## War Years

1942-1945

and a basket of beansprouts. After putting down the basket and pail, Wee Ling said excitedly, “Mum, can you please tell us about the Japanese Occupation? Aunt Lui Nee was sharing one to a group of children and when we arrive, she was about to end the story!”

Sighing, the woman put down the Five Stones and started to tell them all about it. She started, “During those days, I was only a small child, about 5 or 6 years old. Despite that, I still remembered what had happened. There were bombs and many people were killed, including my sister, aunt and father. We starved and there was food rationing. The Japanese soldiers, whom I hated, were giving out for small portions of rice and vegetables. Our meals were mostly plain and simple, and we could not have a good meal, not once.”

She continued, “Many people were dying from poverty and starvation. Some of us did not even bathe for weeks, others even for months! We stunk really bad but we had no choice. Also, we had to pay respect to the soldiers whenever we see them. If we do not, we might even get killed! My neighbour was with me when we bumped into one Japanese soldier. I immediately bowed and greeted them but my neighbour did not! Luckily for her, she was not killed, but slapped in the face, real hard. The war lasted for three years. I thought that we would have to continue like that forever. Fortunately, the Japanese finally surrendered and we were free again!”

Wee Ling and Wee Xing clapped and that’s all we saw of our grandma as a teenager. The next thing we knew, our world went black. I felt myself spinning and we were back at the hotel.

Rebecca enjoyed herself thoroughly and exclaimed, “That was so fun. Maybe if we open the trapdoor again, we might go into a different era – probably the Japanese Occupation!”

Amazed, I chuckled, “So now you are no longer timid and know how fun and meaningful adventures can be?”

Nodding, she said, “I hope this is for the better!”

From that day onwards, Rebecca learnt to be braver and always faced her problems boldly. At first, she was scared of going onto an adventure but right now, she wanted to go on another one. I was also glad that we had opened the trapdoor. We learnt a lot about the Japanese Occupation, the War Years, and also to be grateful for what we have now.



# ✿✿ The wardrobe ✿✿



War Years  
1942-1945

I squealed as the school excursion bus approached us. I ran to the bus door, pulling along my two best friends, Mei Mei and Mary along with me. I ran to the front of the queue to grab our favourite seats. As soon as we had settled in, the bus moved off. The bus was full of squeals of excitement and we started to chat about what we were going to discover at the Singapore Historical Museum.

When we arrived, we jumped off the bus and ran to our teacher who was already at the entrance of the museum. As soon as everyone was lined up in an orderly manner, we walked in.

As we walked in, a huge blast of icy cold wind blew into our faces, and not before long, all the students and teachers were wearing our school jackets.

First, we went to the gallery to see some old newspaper articles that were framed. They had been saved from the destruction of the war. We looked at them with squinted eyes as the words were faded and yellowed.

Next, we saw some antique furniture from the 1940's – interestingly designed old sewing machines, typewriters and old plain wooden desks. Suddenly, Mei Mei, Mary and I noticed a suspicious-looking wooden wardrobe sitting at the corner of the room. It had a notice stuck onto it. It read: DO NOT TOUCH!

“Why can't we touch ah?” Mei Mei asked curiously.

“I don't know,” Mary and I replied. There was a long pause as we walked silently out of the room, still looking at the wardrobe from the corner of our eyes.

Just when the wardrobe went out of sight, suddenly, something occurred to me. I thought: Maybe we should try opening it? Perhaps we will find something that will help us with our history project after all.

Having this thought in mind, I told the others, “Shall we try opening it? I think it is much better than keeping this question in mind and never getting the answer.” They paused for a while and Mary said, “Sure! I'm dying to know what is in that wardrobe too!”

“Are you sure?” asked Mei Mei, unconvinced.

“Yes. I'm absolutely sure!” Mary replied confidently.

We walked back to the wardrobe. Mei Mei and I kept a lookout for any staff heading our way while Mary peeled off the sign and opened the door. A gust of wind sucked all three of us in and when we opened our eyes, the atmosphere felt a little different. There were trees and huts all around us. As we turn around, we saw a hole in the bush.

“That must be where we came from!” I whispered.

Just when we were looking around to find clues to tell us where we were, a Japanese soldier caught our attention. We then realised that we had travelled back in time to the Japanese Occupation, when Singapore was called Syonan-to.

“I am very scared... can we go home or not?” Mei Mei pleaded brimming with tears.



*By Erica Loh E-Wen  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*



"No! We are not going back until we find some interesting facts for our project. Look! There are huts there! It's a kampong!" Mary said immediately.

"Come on," I said, "Let's go and find out from the villagers what's going on."

We walked to one of the huts and knocked on the door.

"Anybody home?" I asked politely.

A simply-dressed Malay lady came out and greeted us, "Hello! May I help you? I am Aunty Rosnah."

"Hello Aunty Rosnah! We would like to know what year this is," Mary asked almost instantly.

"It's 1942. This is the Japanese Occupation. What are you young children doing here? Hush! Come in! You do not want to be caught by the Japanese soldiers out here." Aunty Rosnah warned us. When we were inside, she said, "You all should go home after this. You shouldn't be loitering around, it is very dangerous."

"Yes Aunty, but then could you answer a few questions first?" Mary said.

"Why are there so many skinny people around here and they don't look well fed?" Mei Mei asked curiously.

"Oh...children...we have been having food rationing. We have to queue up as early as 4 a.m. in the morning just to collect food for our families. Despite that, sometimes, we have to come home empty-handed." Aunty Rosnah said. "We also have to plant our own vegetables. But the soil is not fertile so we can only grow sweet potato and tapioca," added Aunty Rosnah.

Mary nodded and said, "I see, so do you have any rice to eat?"

"Well very little unfortunately. Rice is scarce. Adults could purchase 11lb (4.8 kg) of rice per month and 5.3lb (2.4 kg) for children!"

"Oh dear! That is very little." Mary replied shocked.

"When are the soldiers leaving?" I asked.

"I don't know, everything is unpredictable now," Aunty Rosnah said, turning her head to wipe a tear from her eye.

Mary looked at her watch and said, "Sorry aunty, we have to go home soon."

Aunty sighed and said, "Okay. Bye children and please take care." After which, we bade her farewell.

Finally, we reached the hole where the portal to home was. As we approached it, we were sucked back into the hole again. When we opened our eyes we realised we were in the wardrobe again. Mei Mei opened the door and we got out quietly.

We then realised that our classmates and teacher were still in the museum. Our 'time travel' had caused the current time to pause till we returned. We crept back to join our class and continued the excursion.

After school, we met at Mary's home. We were ecstatic as we were



still in shock about our encounter with Aunty Rosnah. After a while, we decided to get on with our work. We consolidated all we had learned and put them into PowerPoint slides for our history project.

The next day, we proudly presented our slides and got an A\* for it. We will certainly never forget the day of our unexpected adventure. We actually saw Singapore during the Japanese Occupation with our own eyes! This experience would be forever etched in our memories.



## War Years

1942-1945



# Kidnapped In the Kampong



War Years  
1942-1945

It was the loud chattering in 13th Mile Kampong that woke 12 year old Lim Peili. Trees, wooden houses and the residents filled the kampong entirely. Though the kampong was small, the number of people living there made it feel lively and bigger.

“Bang!” A loud sound interrupted the lively chatter in the kampong. Everyone started panicking and they ran into their little wooden houses all at once. There were about 50 families living in the kampong, so when they heard the gunshot, they ran in all directions. Chaos and frenzy were everywhere!

“Was anyone hurt? Why was there a gunshot?” Thoughts flooded Peili’s mind. “Was it that another innocent life had been taken by the Japanese since mass killings were rampant these days?” She wondered. Noah, her neighbour, looked at her intently, hoping that she would tell him what the gunshot was all about. Just then, her parents barged into the hut. Sarah, Peili’s sister, was kidnapped! Apparently, the kidnapper had a gun and had taken Sarah away by force. As there were Japanese soldiers everywhere on the streets, Peili’s family did not dare to go search for Sarah. Peili was very angry with them as she felt that they cared more about themselves than for her sister. As she was very close to her sister, she decided to go look for Sarah, not by herself but accompanied by Noah, as she always believed that two heads were better than one.

The next day, as dawn came, Noah and Peili set off to search for clues that could help them look for Sarah.

“You are really willing to risk your life to save Sarah?” Noah said.

“Yes, and I bet that you would do the same if YOUR sibling was the one who was kidnapped!” Peili snapped back.

Upon hearing that, Noah paused, touched by the strong bond between Peili and Sarah. It motivated him to do more and search even harder for Sarah. However, after two days of thorough searching, Peili’s family received a mysterious phone call, instructing them to leave an amount of money in the nearby field. The kidnapper would then take the money and leave Sarah there.

Peili saw this opportunity to catch the kidnapper; however, her family was already very content with the deal and did not want more trouble. Peili begged to differ and felt that people should commit crimes and get away with them, so she hatched a plan to nab the kidnapper with Noah.

The day to pay the ransom came. Her parents did not allow Peili to tag along as they knew what she would do – create more trouble and risk Sarah’s life. Instead, she was sent to do her daily chores, and her sister’s share as well, just in case she finishes her share of the chores early.

Surprisingly, not long after her family had gone, Peili was done with her chores. Almost immediately, she ran to the field to find Noah. In order for her family not to spot her and to avoid a scolding, she had to run quietly, hiding behind trees occasionally with Noah! Armed with a long wooden tree branch to attack the kidnapper when he or she appears, the duo waited patiently.



By Leanne Soh Li En  
Primary 5 Daisy



Not long after Peili's family placed the money in the middle of the field, a figure dressed in black walked casually into the field and swiftly picked up the bag with one action, dropped a piece of paper on the ground and walked away. While walking away, the kidnapper walked past the tree Peili and Noah were hiding behind. Noah saw his chance to catch the kidnapper. He hit the kidnapper hard on the head with the sturdy branch he was holding. However, he did not hit him hard enough for him to become unconscious. The kidnapper quickly turned around and revealed her face. The kidnapper was an aunty in her 40s with a distinctive mole on her chin.

Realising that she had revealed her face, she whipped out a gun and muttered, "Only dead men tell no tales!" With that, she prepared her gun and was about to shoot when Peili's mother grabbed her hands from behind! Peili's mother took one good look at the kidnapper's face and her jaw dropped in horror. "You? Is that you, Mei Ling? I thought we were friends..... Why would you do this to my family, Mei Ling?"

Later, Peili learnt that her mother and Auntie Mei Ling met in the market and became good friends. She had even invited Auntie Mei Ling to her house while Peili was out playing with her friends.

Peili's mother said firmly, "Surrender and tell me where Sarah is? And why did you do this? How can you? I trusted you!"

"I kidnapped your daughter only for ransom, I never planned to hurt her!" Auntie Mei Ling replied, remorseful. "I owe the loan sharks money, and jobs are scarce during this time. Where can I get the money? Please let me go. I will only reveal her whereabouts if promise to let me go."

As Peili's mother loosened her grip, Auntie Mei Ling led them to her car where Sarah was in. At the sight of her mother, Sarah wiped her tear-stained face and ran into her arms. It was a very touching and happy reunion. Peili's mother decided not to pursue the matter, and even got the entire kampong to help Auntie Mei Ling out.

Peili felt very happy. She felt that that experience had taught her to treasure her family more. She learnt that it was love for one another that made it possible for anyone to do all that they could to overcome challenges together.



# The mysterious Kampung



War Years  
1942-1945

"You all have to present on what you have researched on Wednesday." Miss Sim reminded.

Samuel subconsciously nodded, knowing that he could finish the research in a few hours. He was always the lazy student, but due to his tuition, he was able to become the best student in his extra Social Studies class. And as the school bell chimed, the students left one by one, leaving Samuel and the teacher by themselves.

Just as Samuel was about to leave the classroom, Miss Sim stopped him. "Sam, I hope that you understand this. You are my best student. Therefore, I was wondering if you could be the first person to present." She smiled. Sam's face dropped when he heard those words.

"U-uh, but Miss Sim, I might not be able to research in the first place!" He stuttered.

"Don't worry Samuel, you will be able to. If you really face difficulties doing the research, just meet me tomorrow during recess."

Samuel sighed, feeling defeated. He nodded reluctantly and left the classroom. As Sam left the school campus, he decided to check his phone. It then dawned on him that the usual road that he always went through to get was closed because of the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations and that he had to go through an old kampung to reach his home. He sighed in frustration, and started his journey. Beads of sweat trickled down his forehead as he trekked past several shophouses.

Soon, he arrived at Sempang Kampung. Chills went down Sam's spine as he passed by the old and abandoned houses. Vines and old plants surrounded the kampung, giving the place an eerie atmosphere. He walked by possibly the oldest house from the looks of it. Windows with bullet holes and the wooden walls were infested with termites. Unexpectedly, Sam heard a giggle from the house. He yelled, looking at his surroundings. He was alone! But, where did the giggles come from? Curious, he decided to check the house out.

Sam pushed open the old wooden door. The creaking of the door made her cringe. In front of him, cobwebs scattered across the room and eerie lights flickered constantly. Even then, Sam couldn't help but notice a soft wail coming from the room at the back of the house. He walked towards the sound with caution, trying not to make any sound. He spotted a small silhouette of a girl and approached it. He stopped dead in his tracks when she was just a few centimetres away from him. "U-um...hello?" Sam whispered. His heart was beating fast as the small child turned around. The girl's piercing blue eyes were mesmerizing, and her long black hair was tied into pigtails.

"Hello there!" The little girl smiled. "My name is Cindy. Cindy Long." She stood up.

"My name is Sam. Where are your parents?" Sam wondered. The little girl looked almost the same age as him.

"They haven't returned since the war." Cindy sighed, playing with the hem of her ragged dress.

"W-wait, when were you born?" Samuel stuttered. There hasn't been a war since the Japanese Occupation.



By Sofia Althea Salamat  
Gonzales  
Primary 5 Lily





## War Years

1942-1945

"1932. Why? Is something wrong?" Cindy asked. Sam played with the rubber band on his hand.

"It's 2015, Cindy." The only logical explanation for all that was happening was that Cindy was a spirit, he thought, recalling a TV show he was recently watching.

Cindy's eyes widened. "Do you remember anything about the war, Cindy?" Sam whispered.

"My parents went out to get food. I remember they weren't supposed to do that after they left. I stayed home and waited. I remembered being hungry and cold..." Cindy frowned as she tried to recall more details.

"Cindy, I think there's only one possible explanation for this. I believe-I believe you're a ghost." Sam said.

"Are you saying I'm dead? How am I here though?" A tear slid down Cindy's cheek.

Sam shrugged. He didn't know either. Suddenly he had an idea. He thought: I can get information about the Japanese Occupation from Cindy and use it for my Social Studies project! "Okay Cindy. Please tell me about what happened during the war."

It was 1942. I was 11 then. It was just like a normal day. Fishermen sitting by the dock, waiting patiently for the fish to catch the bait, there were many people selling delicious cuisine, when suddenly, I heard a loud bomb explode nearby. And soon after, I was forced to go home. I didn't know why, or what was happening then. I couldn't do anything. I was just a child. I just stayed there for practically most of my life, and my parents would sneak out just to get some food for me.

One day, they went out as usual and never came back. I stayed home, and waited as instructed... I remember being really hungry... and cold... and all I can remember after that is darkness... permanent darkness...

Sam sighed. Cindy went through a lot. "We need to bring you to peace Cindy. You're alone here, by yourself. You should go back to your family."

"My parents did tell me that a baptism amulet can bring spirits to rest." Cindy thought.

"I saw one near the front door." Sam immediately went up to the first room and looked for the amulet. He spotted the shiny silver charm and grabbed it. He then ran back to the other room and handed it to Cindy.

Cindy held it, gave him a smile and vanished into thin air. As Cindy left, Sam stood there in silence. He hoped Cindy was able to find peace. He left the house, thinking about Cindy before his thoughts drifted to his upcoming Social Studies research. Well, at least he now had some information to start off his project! As he looked back, the old kampung seemed more peaceful than before, as if a curse was lifted from the place. With a sigh, he continued his journey home, all ready to start on his assignment.



# mystery at Changi Beach

"Was I going to find anything? Would my mission be a success? Oh, what do I do? And on top of all this, this place looks so scary!" I told myself.

I am a 26-year-old discoverer. So far, my discoveries have been quite interesting and I always look forward to such discoveries. My pay is about 5000 dollars a month but my boss told me that if this current mission is a success, he would increase my pay. When I heard that, I was on cloud nine! He did this because his company was not doing well and, if this mission last mission fails, his company would have to close down.

My boss told me about the mission. "The area you are to investigate is believed to be haunted by the ghosts of the executed Chinese during the Japanese Occupation. Passers-by often report hearing strange cries and screams. The heads of the Chinese dead bodies are sometimes seen flying everywhere. Headless bodies walk around the beach as well. One passer-by even witnessed a ghostly execution leaving blood stains. Go, find out if this is real!" my boss challenged me.

At that moment, I thought my mission was going to be easy to solve but my teacher always told me to never assume and she was right! It was tough but I had to overcome it with my determination. Pitch darkness blinded me and I depend on my other senses that God gave me.

Suddenly, as I was walking around the area, out of the blue an old-fashioned hut glowed in front of me. At first I thought, "Why would there be a hut in modern Singapore?"

Finally, I decided to enter it and see if there was something that could help me solve my mission. There, I saw a beautiful lady dressed in a kimono. She was sipping tea like a graceful woman from the old days.

"What is this woman doing here? Is she alive?" I thought.

As if reading my thoughts, she suddenly spoke, "Why are you here so late at night?"

I told her why I was there and wanted to know more about what she was and her story.

She offered me a seat and started. "I am one of the wandering spirits here who cannot find peace. I guess saying sorry is one of the ways to atone my sins, or rather, my husband's sins. You see, my husband did a lot of evil to Singapore. I am telling you this because many Japanese feel guilty about this and we want to lift this burden by apologising to you Singaporeans.

It all started when the Japanese realised that the Japanese' Zero airplanes had been sabotaged. To take revenge, the Japanese rounded up many innocent Asian workers at Changi Beach and made them stand in line for two days while they were being interrogated. The men were of all ages, young and old. Subsequently, these men were executed, despite them not knowing anything about the sabotage. This was quite a large scale execution after the Sook Ching operation, right there at Changi Beach. The innocent victims knew very clearly that they were wronged, yet they had to face their doom. You can imagine how fierce and anguished their spirits are... These innocent victims, it's no wonder why many of their spirits are still wandering around too."



War Years  
1942-1945



By Prabhleen Kaur  
D/O Gurmeet Singh  
Primary 5 Ixora



Operation Sook Ching



She continued, "To avenge for the innocent, the saboteurs scouted around the Japanese army compounds, tracking their patrol trails, and got to know where the guards were likely to be. Out of many places, they chose a small footbridge to bomb. They observed that a small group of about five or six Japanese troops would cross this narrow bridge every evening. If the narrow bridge were to blow up, the soldiers would fall down into the water and the saboteurs hiding below the bridge can 'finish' them with a parang. But the challenge was that they had only fifteen minutes of time between the changing of guards at a post next to the bridge. They had to smuggle a small quantity of dynamites from the guerrillas for the mission. It was difficult but not impossible.

That day, the saboteurs brought the dynamite to the bridge. However, while they were busy setting up the bomb, the Japanese commander showed up on a bicycle early! The saboteurs panicked. They were spotted and killed. They were the last victims of the War before the Japanese forces surrendered unconditionally. The war was soon over.

These saboteurs need not have to die if the Japanese commander had not appeared on his bicycle. Full of grief, the saboteurs had cursed every cyclist that crossed the bridge with their last breath. So, nowadays, you will hear reports of cyclists losing control and falling from their bikes into the water. Some said they felt as if an invisible hand was pulling their legs or strangling their necks while crossing the bridge."

I listened to her tale with amazement. "Wow! That is amazing! Thank you so much! Erm... May I know who you are?" I questioned the woman.

"I am just a wandering spirit, but unlike the wronged souls, I can't find peace because of all the wrong-doings my husband had done. He was the commander who ordered for the execution to take place. Now that I have shared the story with you, my soul can now find peace..." she replied, with a tear in her eye.

I muttered a silent prayer, as she vanished into thin air after saying another word of sorry. Strangely enough, a few other spirits seemed to go along with her.

As I walked out of the hut with heavy footsteps, I could not help but thought of all the innocent lives lost. Power, if misused, could really cause lots of destruction and misery. And with that thought, I trudged my way back to the office.



# ❀❀ Lost In Time ❀❀



War Years  
1942-1945

“Wake up Miss Sleepyhead! We are here! You do not want to miss the stop right?” Clariece whispered in my ear. I woke up, unaware of what was happening. Finally, I remembered my friends, Clariece, Charlotte and Mei En, were going with me to visit and pass a gift from Mother to my uncle, who is currently in National Service.

Let me first introduce my friends. Clariece is ten years old and likes ponies and rainbows but she hates ponies with evil-like colours. She thinks it destroys the ponies’ ‘flair’ and ‘beauty’ but actually, it merely stems from the fact that she hates the gloomy colours. Charlotte always has a pink or blue bow depending on her mood. If she had a pink bow on her hair that day, it means that she is really happy that day but if she had a blue bow on, it means that she is feeling depressed. Occasionally, she will wear her rainbow bow to birthday parties or special events. Mei En is my very best friend. We have been in the same class since kindergarten! She is a special girl in my opinion because she always makes me happy when I am sad and she has a lot special talents like fine arts. She also plays music on the violin and piano, and because of her talents, she has performed in many concerts, competed in competitions and won many awards too.

We alighted from the bus and walked to the army barracks. The sight of twenty men in army uniform doing push-ups greeted us. Their uniform was mostly dark green, had a name badge and an official badge from National Service. I thought the uniform was similar to a green jumpsuit I saw in the mall while shopping for the gift to my uncle with my mother.

Among the few National Service men, I saw my uncle waving to me. He looked a lot different when I last met him during Chinese New Year. At that time, he had short brown hair and was very scrawny. Now, he had a shaved head and big bulging muscles. He spotted me and smiled. I walked over, handed him the gift from mother and gave him a big smile.

My uncle said, “Ah, thank you my little niece and say hi to your mother for me!” I nodded shyly while my friends and I started walking towards the exit.

While walking towards the exit, Mei En found a secret passage near an old passageway. Being the lot of cheeky monkeys that we were, we decided to explore further and crept through the passageway. In the secret passage, we found a lever next to an antique vase. Although the vase looked like it would cost about a million dollars, we mostly focused on the lever not because it looked like a hybrid of a three-headed flesh-eating snake and tiger but because the lever looked like it was beckoning us to pull it.

Suddenly, Clariece pulled the lever without warning and with that, she launched a portal that scooped us into another dimension or so I thought. Upon our arrival in this weird dimension, I saw plenty of shophouses and men pulling weird-looking carts but I did not see any gadgets or not even a person with a phone in their hands!

“Hey, is that a person on a rickshaw pulled by the rickshaw man? Wait, is that the sound of a radio my great-grandmother told me about? I thought those were long gone!” Charlotte said.

I started feeling uncomfortable about what was happening and we decided to ask the rickshaw man some questions. Have we been taken to another



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Primary 5 Hibiscus*



*Operation Sook Ching*





dimension from the portal? Was the portal we entered just now actually a time machine?

Bang! Bang!

“D-duck everybody! Jade! Duck! Jade! Are you listening? Jade? Jade!” Charlotte screamed. I felt dizzy, that was when I blacked out.

“Jade? Wake up!” Mei En gently spoke. I woke up in a daze, opening an eye, then the other. I saw Mei En, Charlotte and Clariece staring at me with concerned faces, they all started sighing in relief as I gained consciousness. My friends crowded around me as they gave me a big hug, feeling happy that I had awoken.

That was when it hit me, where were we? I looked around our surroundings – there were two queen-size beds, a cupboard and a flower vase with some dried flowers in it.

Bam! Bam! More gunshots were heard. Suddenly, the sounds of a few jet planes’ engine roars were heard from the distance too. What was happening? My friends and I ran out to check out the situation and realised that it was World War 2.

Clariece, Charlotte, Mei En and I started running back to our temporary home for shelter. Clariece locked the door behind us so no one followed us here. We sat down on the floor, trying to understand what was happening around us.

“We are in World War 2, my grandmother always told me about the War and how we should be grateful to be in modern Singapore,” Charlotte said. Drifting off to sleep, she continued, “We should probably get to sleep now, it is night time.”

That night, I dreamt of an elf-like lady standing in front of me and asking me to use my powers.

I was baffled by this and asked, “What are my powers? How do I use them?” After I had spoken, the lady merely disappeared into thin air.

The next morning, I woke up and told my friends about the weird dream I had last night. Their mouths widened as they asked if it was true, I nodded my head, still in shock of what happened last night

That following night, I dreamt yet another weird dream of the same lady I had seen the night before.

She whispered to me, “To find out your power, go to the grasslands you see in this scene, and you will find me.”

After that she disappeared into thin air. Peculiar, very peculiar. Who was she? What was she talking about? Did we have something connected to each other? I felt an eerie tingle at the weird sense of familiarity. Perhaps she was someone I knew before, in another time, in another place.

It was morning again as I told my friends to wake up earlier so we could go to the mysterious grasslands to meet the mysterious lady. My friends ran after me, shouting for me to slow down but I ignored them as I was excited to meet this lady, despite being scared at the same time. I matched the picture to every grassland I saw but to no avail. Finally, I gave up hope as it was soon evening and we all were very tired. Walking back, I saw a lady with a sparkly gold



dress singing a sweet, lovely song. Curious, my friends and I ran to take a closer peek. I realised that the lady was the lady in my dreams.

I jumped for joy as I ran there and said, “Hello, are you the lady in my dreams?”

She looked up and said, “You are the chosen one, princess. Will you show me your powers?”

Confused, I looked up to her and asked, “What powers? Why have you been appearing in all of my dreams at this new, adventure-filled place and what is with this ‘chosen one’ you are talking about?”

“Maybe you are not the chosen one after all.” She sighed, drifting away into space.

Just then, I suddenly shot up into the air about five metres high and rainbow-coloured sparks burst through the sky, identical to the stars. My friends and the lady stared in wonder as I continued floating in the air for some time. It felt wonderful and surreal at the same time, I continued to enjoy floating in air, straightening my arms so I would not fall down. After a while, I landed gently on the ground, and I blacked out once again.

Clariece, Charlotte, Mei En took turns to carry me back to our hiding place.

When I awoke again, it was already two days after the weird experience. I looked around and picked up the newspaper on the floor. The headlines read : WAR WORSENS. MANY LIVES LOST. I stared in shock as I continued to read on, I knew we had to do something.

I said while running up to my friends, “Friends, read this!” I continued, “We have got to do something!”

They nodded in agreement as we ran outside to see Japanese soldiers driving a truck filled with prisoners. The prisoners were men with cloth bags on their heads, and the Japanese soldiers pointed their guns at them. We followed them in secret.

They arrived at a sandy beach with a lot of dug holes. The soldiers they pinned the innocent men’s heads onto the ground.

One of the Japanese men shouted, “One, two ... ..!”

Mei En ran there and shouted, “Hey! Do not do it! That is wrong, you know! Lives of people are in danger because of you!”

The rest of us ran up to her although we were afraid that we would get killed by the guns and never be able to return to where we came from again. Suddenly, I started to glow again. Sparkles and glitter flew out from me, and behind me appeared a shadow of a fire dragon. It reared up in front of the frightened Japanese soldiers. Scared of the dragon, the Japanese soldiers ran off and the prisoners were free!

Ahead of us, we spotted a shiny blob. It grew bigger and bigger as we walked towards it. A strange force seemed to be beckoning us, the same force that made Clariece pull the lever. As we went closer, we felt a strong suction and before we knew it, our bums hit the hard floor and we were back in the passageway where we last were in. We looked at each other, bewildered, wondering how long it had been since we were in the army barracks. Without a word, we picked ourselves up and swept the dust off our bottoms before leaving the barracks.



# Accidental Time-traveller



War Years  
1942-1945

"Attack!" Gran yelled, thrusting her arm out with a fake, handmade sword, jabbing it forward, pretending to be a soldier during the war, but her movements were definitely a gazillion times too slow for her to be in a real war.

Zach sniggered and motioned for his brother, Zayden, to join him.

"I'm guessing that whatever Gran is doing has got something to do with Grandad... But what?" Zach whispered, hoping for a decent answer from his twin brother. Zayden was a straight-As student but he just loved to annoy his not-so-bright brother by giving him misleading answers.

"Mr Ignorant, can't you see that Grandad is not here with us now?" Zayden asked sarcastically. "And that we never actually had a currently living Grandad?"

"Thanks Captain Obvious, even though I'm not very smart, I am not dumb," Zach retorted. Then, under his breath, added, "Unlike you..."

Zayden, who heard the last statement, was still thinking of the next scathing remark when Gran, who had overheard their conversation, threw down her handmade sword to interrupt and inform the twins that Grandad died while defending Singapore, together with the rest of the army, during the war. Since the boys believed in Greek mythology, Gran quickly added that because he died a hero's death, Grandad definitely went to Elysium, the place, the Greeks believed, where people who were good all their lives and/or died a hero's death went after death.

After fooling around with Zayden, Zach went down to the neighbourhood NTUC to buy Khong Guan biscuits for his late night supper.

Beep! BEEP! Screech! A BMW swerved left at the last second. The driver of the car yelled out of the window, "Oi! Ah girl, want to cross the road can cross properly or not?" Continuing to drive at breakneck speed, the reckless driver continued screaming cuss words in Hokkien.

Caught by surprise in the rude driver and the 'careless' pedestrian, Zach peered over his shoulder, hoping to get a glance at the girl. Strange, Zach wondered in surprise, trying to register petite heart-shaped her face. Didn't she know that she shouldn't be crossing the roads when the traffic lights showed green for the drivers? Squinting, Zach struggled to look at the girl, who was huddled in a fetus-like position by the pavement beside the road, shivering even though in the sweltering hot weather. She should, after coming face-to-face with such a near-death incident. Zach's curiosity was aroused and he made his way towards the poor girl at the side of the road.

"I... I... I want to go home... These loud monsters are so scary! It must be... the...the J...Jap...p...panese..." The petite girl whimpered, still huddled together like a human ball.

Squatting beside this small-sized girl, Zach noted that she was an Indian. She wore strange clothes, like the kinds shown in old movies. Wait a moment, movies!

Maybe this girl was acting in a film and the driver was also supposed to be part of the scene... and Zach had barged into the scene and interrupted the



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movie. Thinking that he really disrupted a film, he hastily got to his feet, his mind already busied itself by thinking up an apology to offer to the director, the actors and actresses. But strangely, there were no cameras and absolutely no crew. And just what did she mean when she said 'loud monsters'? Was she referring to the BMW? Had she never seen one? Or did just never seen cars before? But being in Singapore means that you would have seen many of such things before.

"Hey, are you all right? That was pretty scary out there, don't you think?" Zach asked. He hoped her answer would be quick, clear and concise, like "Yeah, I'm fine, thank you." because he seriously wanted to get his biscuit and return home quickly. Unfortunately, the Indian girl responded with a, "I inna unnerstand what you is talking 'bout..." Sure, this is Singapore and Singlish is most commonly used in daily conversations in life... However, even with Singlish as a most common language, nobody's English and interpretations of words could be that bad. This was so as Singaporean student is required to receive education. Helping the weak-looking Indian girl up to her feet, Zach found out that for such a small-sized girl, she had a really strong grip. After a very long questioning, Zach finally found out that her name was Sitivarkithini. However, Zach decided to call her Siti as her name was too long and complicated for him to remember.

"Yucks, so dis...disgusting Chinese!" Siti wailed at an eardrum-bursting volume, saying the word 'Chinese' repulsively, sounding as if she would rather dip some nachos in the vomit and eat it than have a Chinese in her presence.

"Hey! Watch it, you! Do you want to start another racial riot?" Zach asked obviously flabbergasted.

"Wha... Wait what is a ratio-" Siti began.

"Racial," Zach corrected.

"Racial -whatever- riot...Since when was there a racial riot here on Singapore, or Syonan, may I ask you? Is this a prank? I tell you, I always been on this island ever since 1939 you know? And at that time I was already ten-years-old, don't you dare lie to me through your teeth! You try lah!" Siti ranted.

"Wait what? 1939?!" Stupefied, Zach did a quick mental calculation and added, "Are you sure you were here in 1939 at the age of ten? Because that will mean... that you should be eighty-six years old this year! But you don't even look like you are a teenager yet!"

"THAT IS BECAUSE I AM ELEVEN THIS YEAR,WHAT!" Siti roared in reply. She was so loud that many passers-by stopped to look at what the commotion was about.

It was so embarrassing, especially when an old lady muttered, "Aiyoh! kids this days ah, so noisy one leh! Alamak!"

"Um, so, do you want to go home with me? We can nurse you there so that you can be well and ready to go?" Zach asked Siti, his voice quivering a little, out of fear and nervousness that Siti might lash out in a tirade again.

Siti screamed and shrieked, arguing and protesting that if she followed him home, she might be a victim of his crimes. In a nutshell, Siti, a girl who had a strength way too powerful for her own size and a voice that could probably be heard halfway across the globe if at maximum, was exceptionally wary of mere stranger.





Hoo... boy, this is harder than expected and surely going to take a very long time, Zach thought, sighing deeply.

As a result of an extremely long convincing talk, Siti relented and agreed to follow Zach home, although she stayed cautious and kept her distance, of approximately one metre, from Zach.

On their way back to Zach's house, after much questioning and Zach's exasperated asking of, "So, what else happened? Oh! My sympathies... I am so sorry... So your father was called? Singapore must have been in a very poor state, in terms of condition." Zach finally learnt that Siti was from the past although all she could remember was that during the Japanese Occupation, a soldier dressed in a camouflage suit barged into her house and dragged her father out. Siti had lunged at the soldier but he had hit her with a bayonet and she fainted. The next thing she knew, she was suddenly on the road outside Zach's house with all the vehicles bustling on the road. Racking his brain for an explanation, all Zach could think of was that at the moment the soldier hit Siti, she was immediately teleported to the future from the past. This might have been because the force that the soldier hit her with was so hard that he had accidentally sent her flying all the way into the 21st century.

Speaking of pasts and futures, Zach immediately recalled his weekend project. Oh no! What to do? He pondered hard and eventually thought of a solution. "Um, Siti, would you want to return to the past? That will take a lot of time, effort and work but we should be able to do this..." Zach asked Siti, hoping she would want to stay in Zach's present day. "Well, I would want to go back seventy-six years to see my parents again... But, I would rather stay in the present day Singapore and learn more about modern day technology." Siti ended with a grin on her face.

"Awesome! Now that you are staying in present day Singapore, can you help me with my project? You can stay at my house, we have an extra room and I can persuade Gran to let you stay. I'll tell her that you are a lost orphan and that I decided to help you and let you stay with us. But of course, you have to play along too lah..." Zach said, with a sheepish look on his face.

From then on, Siti stayed in the Tan family's house. On Siti's instruction, her experience and recounts, Zach's project was quickly completed and he considered it a job well done. When Zach's form teacher returned the project document to him, she said, "It almost seems like you were there... And you get an A+!"

Because of Siti's attempt to bond the Tan brothers by teaching them to play team-bonding games and sharing stories of the many conflicts amongst her eight siblings, the twins definitely got closer. Gran also still remembers Grandad all the time and Gran seemed much happier from then on, probably because there was someone in the family, even though not by blood, who had similar things to chat about with and understand her.

Next time, if you happen to see a person in way old-fashioned clothes, seemingly confused by our present day technologies, do welcome her. You might also enjoy similar benefits to what Zach, Zayden and Gran have experienced.



# ✿ Kidnap in the Cemetery ✿



War Years  
1942-1945

“Let’s go to the temple and pray to the god there that we will always be sworn sisters!” Mei Ting exclaimed in excitement. All the three of them, Mei Ting, Javashini and Nazzira agreed. They strolled leisurely to the nearest temple with their laughter and voices filling the surrounding air. They had become best friends as they had met each other at the same kampong. After they are done praying, they decided to cut their palms to mix their blood as a symbol that they would not leave each other, regardless of what happens. They did so with a blunt knife so as to not make the cuts too deep. Then, they went to the playground and played to their hearts’ content. Even though they were twelve, they loved to play like young children at the playground. Soon, dawn arrived and the sun started to set. They headed home for dinner after bidding each other goodbye.

The next day, the three best friends were supposed to meet at the Ah Huat coffee shop in the morning just beside the kampong they are living in, but Mei Ting did not turn up.

Javashini said, “ Maybe she overslept ! Let’s just wait a while more!”

They waited for more than half an hour but she still did not turn up. They were extremely curious and decided to go to her house and find out what had happened to her. They eventually found out that her grandfather had passed away during his sleep and she was grieving. Tears flowed involuntarily down her chubby cheeks. Javashini and Nazzira comforted her and gave her a cup of warm milo. She went down to Ah Huat coffee shop with them so that she could tell them what had happened.

“My grandfather passed away in his sleep. He died of cancer. My grandfather had always loved me and my sister, Mei Si, and always played five stones with us. I miss him very much. I really miss him!” Mei Ting told them between sobs. However, she was old enough to understand that there was nothing she could do about her grandfather passing away as all life and death were all part and parcel of life.

Ever since the passing of their grandfather, Mei Ting and Mei Si had to take care of themselves as their parents had to go to work in the market almost every day. They were very poor and had to scavenge for food. They had holes in their clothes and sometimes did not wear their only pair of shoes around in order not to dirty or spoil them. Nazzira was better off so she would try to help them whatever she could help. That was what sworn sisters were for, right?

Weeks later was ‘Ching Ming’ and Mei Ting had to go to the cemetery to clean up her grandfather’s grave. Javashini and Nazzira came to help. After hours of cleaning with her family and her two best friends, they suddenly heard a gunshot. Everyone froze, not knowing what to do. They did not know that disaster had struck their country. Then, they heard stomping sounds and noticed that Japanese soldiers were gathering around them. Everybody sprinted in different directions. Screams were heard when some unfortunate people were caught by the Japanese soldiers.

Before Javashini and Mei Ting got the chance to grab onto Nazzira so that they would be together no matter what happened to them, she had already ran into another direction. In the split second, Javashini and Mei Ting watched helplessly as Nazzira dashed in a different direction while running with the crowd. No one except Javashini, noticed that Nazzira was running towards a little hut near the



By Zoe Kwah  
Primary 5 Daisy



cemetery. What could happen to her? Is she going to be safe by herself? All the questions flooded Mei Ting's busy mind. She could not think properly whenever she was nervous or afraid. Still gripping tightly onto Javashini, she felt extremely worried. After sprinting at top speed all the way back to their house in the kampong, they felt safe for themselves but not for Nazzira. What could happen to her?

Javashini followed Mei Ting into her room as she wanted to have a few words with her. "I noticed that Nazzira headed towards a little hut. Would it be dangerous in there?"

Mei Ting looked at her with a blank face. She seriously did not know what to do! They were sworn sisters so the two girls must not leave Nazzira alone. After contemplating for some time, the duo decided to go look for Nazzira.

In the meantime, Nazzira was extremely relieved when she realised she was safe from the Japanese. She sat in a corner of a room by herself, taking deep breaths continuously. Then, she suddenly heard footsteps coming from the other end of the hut but who could it be? Nazzira thought: I thought this was an abandoned house? Even though she was now safe from the Japanese, she did not notice that there was a man living in the hut she was in. She did not know that he was actually a kidnapper ! He was none other than notorious Tan Ming Choo.

The footsteps drew nearer and soon, she saw a grown-up man, aged around 29, walking towards her. He was bald, muscular and had tattoos and earrings on his nose and ears. Ming Choo walked towards her and grabbed a coil of ropes behind her. He tied her to a chair near an old rickety table and taped her mouth.

"This is the revenge you get for coming into my house without permission!" Ming Choo shouted at her, before giving her a slap across her face which robbed her of all consciousness.

Mei Ting, Javashini and Nazzira's family members were worried about Nazzira. They wondered where she had gone but Javashini and Mei Ting did not say anything about what they noticed about the direction Nazzira went to. They are going to investigate it themselves, just the two of them, as they did not want their parents to get worried.

Javashini whispered to Mei Ting "Why don't we lie to our parents that we are going out to play and will be back after a while but actually, we will go the hut to look for Nazzira?"

"I will save her from any harm. As mentioned, we are sworn sisters," Mei Ting replied , looking at the cut on her hand.

Javashini asked her parents "Can Mei Ting and i go out to play for a while? The Japanese soldiers have already headed towards East and we are staying in the West. Please?"

Her parents nodded their heads. The girls thanked their parents, walked out of the house and secretly headed towards the cemetery.

As soon as they arrived at the cemetery, they crept up to the hut for fear of being discovered by anyone. They peeped in and saw Ming Choo putting a tape over Nazzira's eyes. They heard her muffled screams and were resolute in saving her.



## War Years

1942-1945

Javashini and Mei Ting hurriedly went to the police station and reported the kidnap case to the police and to their parents too. The police drove them there and arrived at the scene quietly as they did not want Ming Choo to escape upon hearing the sirens. The police went near the hut and kicked open the door with all their might and immediately they saw the kidnapper, Ming Choo. The wooden door fell on the ground with a loud thud and Ming Choo tried to escape but the policemen were too fast for Ming Choo and he was arrested for kidnapping.

The policemen took unconscious Nazzira back home with Mei Ting and Javashini. When they arrived home, Nazzira's parents were elated.







## 伟人 - 尤索夫·宾·伊萨克

War Years  
1942-1945

“心悦，我要告诉你有关一位新加坡伟人的故事，快拉张椅子过来吧！”一家人吃了晚餐后，奶奶拿了一把扇子对我说。“一九七十年，新加坡第一任总统——尤索夫·宾·伊萨克 (Yusof bin Ishak) 因为心脏衰竭，在十一月二十三日这一天过世了。这件噩耗给国人带来无比的悲伤。尤索夫总统是在一九六五年八月九日，也就是新加坡国庆日当天当上了新加坡的第一任总统。现在让我来告诉你这位伟人的功绩吧！”

尤索夫总统毕业后加入新闻界，并创办了马来报章Utusan Melayu。第二次世界大战，日军攻打新加坡时期，人民时时刻刻都处在恐慌之中，性命危在旦夕。在兵荒马乱的期间，在马来报馆担任常务董事的尤索夫总统即使听见空袭警报声，仍然与记者继续工作，并在第一时间将日军空袭的消息告知国人。直到看见日军的轰炸机群飞来，尤索夫总统与报馆的工作人员才冒着生命危险逃到附近的防空洞避难。尤索夫总统舍己为人的行为非常勇敢。他爱人如己，实在教人敬佩。

听了奶奶的故事后，我认为我们应该向尤索夫总统学习，能够舍己为人，并多为他人着想。当身旁的人遇到困难时，我们应该尽心尽力地帮助他们，而不是只想着自己的利益！倘若每个人都可以像尤索夫总统一样，这个世界将变得更美好！：)



By Christy To Sum Yuet  
Primary 6 Angsana



எனது இக்கதை நமது வீரர் இளவரசர் சாங்நீல உத்தமன் பற்றியது. ஒருநாள் காட்டிற்கு வேட்டையாட சென்றார், இளவரசர். அவரது அப்பயணத்தின்போது, மலையின் அருகே ஓர் ஆண் கலைமானைக் கண்டார். அதன் அழகு அவரை ஈர்த்தது. இளவரசர் அதைத் துரத்திக் கொண்டு சென்றார். கலைமான் மின்னல் வேகத்தில் ஓடியது. புயல் வேகத்தில் ஓடிய இளவரசர் மலையின் உச்சியை அடைந்தார்.

அம்மலையின் உச்சியில் நின்ற இளவரசர் எதிரே ஓர் அழகிய தீவைக் கண்டார். அங்கிருந்த மணல் பனியைப் போல் வெண்மையாக இருந்தது. அதன் அழகு இளவரசரை ஈர்க்கவே அவர் அங்குத் தனது படையுடன் சென்றார். கப்பலில் ஏறிய இளவரசர் தனது படையினரை நோக்கி, “வீரர்களே, இப்போது நாம் மேற்கொள்ளும் பயணம் ஒரு தேடலை நோக்கி, புதிய கண்டுபிடிப்பை நோக்கி, புதிய தீவை வடிவமைப்பதற்கு....” என்றார்.

பயணமும் தொடங்கியது. தீவை நெருங்கியபோது வானம் இருண்டது, மின்னல் மின்னியது, இடி இடித்தது. கொடூரமான அப்புயல் கப்பலைக் கடலில் தத்தளிக்க வைத்தது. வீரர்களைப் பயம் கெளவியது. இளவரசரோ ஆழ்ந்த சிந்தனையில் மூழ்கினார். திடீரென்று, தனது கிரீடத்தைக் கழற்றி கடலில் வீசினார். என்ன ஆச்சரியம்! கடல் அமைதியானது; வானம் தெளிவடைந்தது. இளவரசர் தனது படையுடன் பயணத்தைத் தொடர்ந்தார்.

தீவை அடைந்தபோது அனைவரின் முகங்களும் மலர்ந்தன. அச்சமயத்தில் அவர்களின் முன் கொடிய சிங்கம் தோன்றியது. நொடிப் பொழுதில் இளவரசர் பார்வையும் சிங்கத்தின் பார்வையும் சந்தித்தது. அதில் மரியாதையும் நம்பிக்கையும் இருந்தது. சிங்கம் மாயமானது. உடனே இளவரசர், “இத்தீவில் நான் ஒரு நாட்டை உருவாக்கப் போகிறேன்! அந்நாடு சற்று முன் நாம் கண்ட சிங்கத்தின் கம்பீரத்தையும் வேகத்தையும் பெற்றிருக்கும்” என்றார். மேலும், “இத்தீவை இனி “சிங்கப்பூரா” என்று அழைப்பர்!” என நவின்றார். இவ்வாறே நம் நாடு அதன் கம்பீர பெயரைப் பெற்றது.



By Shreeram Akshaya  
Primary 5 Lily

### Synopsis

The story depicts the role Sang Nila Uthama played in finding Singapore.



# 🌸 I Survived Till Today 🌸

"The Japanese have surrendered! The Japanese have surrendered!" The static voice blared from the radio.

I suddenly looked up from my thin rattan mat at the cheap old radio Ah Mah had managed to find. It was broken and rusty when she found it, but Pa fixed it. I stared at the Rediffusion, my mind whirling with emotions. I was stuck in a trance, feelings overwhelming me. I could feel relief wash over this household, tension clearing. The whole family gathered in front of the radio, listening carefully.

"Singapore is now out of the Japanese's rule! World War II is over."

I looked at Ah Kong, Pa and Ma. We gave each other that blank look of disbelief. Was this torture really over? Had the sufferings really ended?

The war had been painful. Since 1942, our family longed for freedom. We would wake up at the break of dawn, or earlier to line up for food. One family had to share a measly bowl of porridge! If it had not been for our kind neighbours, we would not have made it.

Japanese soldiers would march down the street daily and we had to bow to them. Ma did not once, and got beaten so badly she could not get out of bed the whole day. There were bruises all over her arms and legs and she was puking blood from a huge slap the soldier had given her. Pa was also taken away, with many other men. The Japanese introduced the system of "Sook Ching", which means "purge through purification" in Chinese, to get rid of men who were deemed to be anti-Japanese. Pa thankfully came back alive, as the Japanese found him innocent and gave him a 'chop' to prove his innocence. Pa did not shower for a long time, as he was afraid that the 'chop' might be washed off.

1945. This 13-year-old Chinese girl finally saw light. Long before the war, Ah Mah, my grandmother, had died from cancer when I was 6, and I was the only child. Due to scarcity of food and water, our family worked hard, and was grateful for anything we had. Even 70-year-old Ah Kong goes around selling bread for money. Everything in our family was cherished, especially the radio. Ah Mah used to scavenge for disposed items, bringing home anything she could find. I worked with Ah Kong most of the time, cycling around the neighbourhood to sell bread, thus I grew up to be a friendly and kind person, knowing many people from our area.

1964. "Ah Lang! Xiao Mei! Come back!" I called to my children, 8 and 11 respectively. The two mischievous devils ran towards the playground, as I chased them. Life was good. I am currently living in an HDB flat, with my loving husband, two children, Pa and Ma. I slowed down as my children came into view, walking towards them. After two hours of fun at the playground, we started making our way home.

At about 5:30 p.m., loud shouting could be heard. Malay and Mandarin vulgarities echoed across Kallang. Worried, I ushered my curious kids to move along, away from the shouting. We made it back to our flat.

Later that day, at about 7p.m., it seemed that the whole island was consumed by chaos. People were getting killed left, right and centre. Malays and



Post War Years  
1945-1965



By Chua Yu Xuan Amelia  
Primary 5 Hibiscus

◆ 1945 ◆



[Singapore Surrender](#)



Chinese attacking each other with iron rods and poles. They hacked anything that was in their way. This was the 1964 racial riots.

My husband and I locked Ma, Pa and the kids in the main bedroom. With my husband's tanned skin, he could masquerade as a Malay. And that's what he did. He and I took turns, he posing as a Malay, I as a Chinese. This way, we could appease both races. I wasn't about to lose my family because of this racial disagreement.

11 days of hiding, posing, acting. Every day I woke up with terror, worried for my family, after all, which mother would not?. After those 11 days, the curfew was finally lifted! Lots of tension was still in the air, and it took hard work to appease both races. After that, the government set up lots of goodwill committees, made up of community leaders from the various racial groups, wanting desperately to ease the Malay and the Chinese.

Things had finally calmed down again, and this time the whole family was at home when we heard yelling from the corridor. I recognised one of the voices to be Lin Ah Yi, or Auntie Lin, our next door neighbour. When the yelling died after about 5p.m., I went next door to ask her about the yelling.

"Have you not heard? Another racial riot has broken out in Geylang." She said in Cantonese. I got worried for my family, thinking we had to pretend to be different races again. Thankfully, this time the riots were not as major, and the curfew was lifted quickly. The tension cleared easily as well. Life returned to its regular state.

2015. I, Cheong Lim Xiang, 83, have made it past the toughest, hardest sufferings. This is because I have a loving family who gave me strength. We suffered together but I survived both the Japanese Occupation and the Racial Riots, nonetheless, till now, where Singapore is 50 years old. 50 years of independence. And you know the best part? I was there every step of the way. Singapore will forever be my homeland, where I belong.





# Rescuing my Father



Post War Years  
1945-1965

I am Yuri Mako and I am from the land of the rising sun. My father was a high ranking officer in the Japanese Army and my mother had passed away when I was born so I have never seen her before. However, I come from a wealthy family so I get everything I want.

"Yuri, we are moving to Singapore in a month's time!" My father, Yoska Mako shouted.

I asked, "What, why? I am perfectly happy here!"

My father replied, "This place has been taken over by Japan and it is my duty to make sure it stays that way!" I hung my head as I never liked war.

The following month, we moved to a big bungalow located at the south of Singapore. Everything went well and I was home-schooled. However, I did sneak out a few times so that I could get some fresh air. One day, I met a local girl named Huang Hua Mei. She was relatively fat but I thought she was very cute.

From that day, we met along the coast line daily. She always wore the same design of clothes everyday which made me assume that she only had the same design of clothes in her wardrobe. However, her jokes and positive attitude made the even the darkest day cheery. Her jokes allowed me to forget the sad things that happened during those days.

A few years later, a nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Americans to threaten Japan to stop the war. The nuclear bombs wiped out both the cities and survivors were affected by the radiation of the bomb. More than 129,000 people died. Japan had no choice but to surrender. On 12 September 1945 at 11.10 am at the city hall, the Japanese surrendered to the British. Many people wanted to kill my father for all the suffering that he had caused them and no one could stop them. At that time, I was worried about losing my father and becoming an orphan, so I decided I would find a way to help him.

The following day, I visited Hua Mei and asked Father to come along with me.

"I need your help, the Japanese are surrendering and my father is in grave danger. Can you help me?" I asked.

"Of course! Hm...Yes! I know a local magician. He can cast magic spells based on your heart's desire. However, he will only do it if he thinks you deserve it," Hua Mei replied.

"A magician? But my father has caused so much terror to your people and who can forgive him?"

"There is no time to talk, let's go! After all, he is my best friend's dad! If I don't help you, your father would be dead and you would not be your usual self anymore."

Hua Mei tugged my hand and brought me to a nearby kampong house. It was surrounded by lush greenery and the house was torn and tattered. Hua Mei knocked gently on the wooden door. Someone with old wrinkly hands opened the door.



By Aw Yeting  
Primary 5 Hibiscus



“Oh! Hua Mei, how nice to meet you again, and I see you have brought some friends,” Mr Loh, a man with silver grey hair spoke.

“Hi! I’m Yuri and this is my father. We need your help. My father is in danger of getting killed by the locals,” I explained.

“ You seem distressed. Come in for some tea and I will see how I can help you,” Mr Loh led us in and invited us to sit at the chairs near his coffee table in the middle of the house. He served us three cups of piping hot tea and walked to a gigantic black pot like the ones that witches use to make potions. He grabbed an odd looking plant and dropped it into the pot full of water. He then added a pinch of golden dust before using a large wooden spoon to stir the mixture carefully. Poof! A large puff of smoke appeared above the pot. It was red in colour and had blue streaks in it. My jaw dropped and my eyes were wide open.

“How did that happen!” I thought.

“Yuri, I can help you but I need you to go with Hua Mei to Japan.” He said. Hua Mei nodded her head. Mr Loh instructed for my father to stay in the living room while her led us into an empty room and locked the door.

“Marisa madukara munhatare!” Mr Loh shouted. Silver mist immediately surrounded us and the floor below us began to disappear. Fortunately, we did not fall into a endless hole. Instead, we teleported to a strange land . We were standing on a metal double helix bridge above a river. In awe, we looked at the incredibly tall sculptures around and the people who were dressed in strange clothes, were staring at us.

Suddenly, a tall Indian man wearing a brown leather coat approached us. He dropped a small slip of paper in front of us. Curious, Hua Mei picked it up and showed it to me. It read:

Girls,

Go to the pool located on top of three large towers .

-THE MAGICIAN

After reading it, I looked around and pointed to a boat-like structure located at the top of three large towers.

We immediately started running to the building. In a matter of minutes, we reached the building. Amazingly, there was an invention named ‘Lift’. It could take you up to any level you want! We entered the lift and pressed the highest level. After forty seconds, we finally reached the ‘boat’.

Hua Mei’s ears were blocked and she kept complaining while we were the way up. I rolled my eyes and reached for the pineapple flavoured sweet in my pocket which I had planned to eat later. I passed it to her and explained that it helped with the pain. She immediately opened it and tossed it into her mouth.

“Come on!” I groaned. As we reached the outside, we saw a large swimming pool.

“The pool!” Hua Mei exclaimed. She grabbed my hand and we jumped into the pool. Again, the silver mist appeared and we teleported back to the house.



## Post War Years

1945-1965

“Sorry, girls. I had cast the wrong spell and teleported you to the future. The chant for you to be teleported to Japan is a little similar to the time travel chant so I read the wrong chant. Yuri, I need you to go back into the room and I will teleport you and your father to Japan.” I quickly got my father and told him to go inside the room.

“Bye Hua Mei. I will miss you. Thank you Mr Loh. I will visit you again peace has been restored to Singapore,” I thanked them.

I hugged them and entered the room. The magician locked the door and cast the spell again. I was teleported to Japan.

I explained to my father what had happened when we reached Japan.

A few years later, I visited Hua Mei in Singapore. I told her that my father and I were safe and sound and I was going to stay in Singapore. Sixty years later, it was finally Singapore’s 50th anniversary. We as Singaporeans, celebrated this special event. This memory will forever be a secret between Hua Mei and me.



# Adventure Through Time



Post War Years  
1945-1965

I used to hate it when someone randomly brought up the topic of SG50. The mention of this topic bored me to tears. Little did I know that my boredom with SG50 was about to be transformed into a life provoking experience on a hot Saturday afternoon.....

The punishing afternoon sun beat mercilessly down on the crowds of Primary Fives that waited expectantly for the National Day Preview to begin. Surrounded by billboards and huge TV screens displaying reels of random people saying 'Happy Birthday Singapore' running continuously, I was so overwhelmed that I experienced dizzy spells, thanks to the heat and noise level. I decided to take a short walk to clear my head. As I headed down the stairway, I missed my step and fell over clumsily.

I chided myself for being so clumsy. I shot back up to see soldiers marching in unison. The band played their instruments with as much gusto as they could. I was still at the National Day Parade but the atmosphere was different. A hunch told me that I was in the past. I decided to get some information and asked a lady next to me what the date was. Oh no! I was in 1966! But, wait! There's more! BANG! Suddenly everything went pitch black. I was enveloped in fear. The cracking sound of the kinks and knots in my bones could not ease the fear trapped inside me.

Screams and shouts for help reverberated through the air. I was no longer at the Parade! The ground was covered with knives stained in blood. I was all alone in a dark alleyway. Not one leaf moved in this horror movie-like atmosphere. It sent a chill down my spine. A Chinese man in his early thirties was running as fast as his feet could carry him. Hot on his heels were a group of Malay men armed with knives. Oh gosh, is this the racial riots of 1969? I gasped in shock as the revelation of where I was hit me.

I need to get out of this place fast. Just as I was about to run for shelter, I felt myself being lifted and carried high up into the night sky studded with stars as if by a bird. I must say the ride was pleasant with the wind lightly brushing against my cheeks.

I glanced down to see huge waves crashing into the buildings around the coast of Malaysia. Oh no..... I thought to myself, "Isn't that Typhoon Vamei of 2001!" The relentless heavy rain caused a powerful landslide, bringing with it fear, anguish and terror of destruction. As I watched the horrible scene, my heart reached out to those who were trapped in this violent storm and the feeling of helplessness enveloped me like a wave. I watched in horror as my tears rolled down and blended in with the torrential storm. My eyes misted over and soon it was difficult to see as my surrounding faded out.

Now, I am engulfed in a thick haze, coughing as I tried to breathe. Many Singaporeans were rushing around, handing out N95 masks to those experiencing difficulty in breathing. It just hit me, it was the year 2013. Singapore was facing its worst haze with the PSI level hitting a high of 401. I landed on the ground with a thud, huffing and puffing in the midst of the thick haze. Just then, a strong wind blew and I could breathe easily again as my vision cleared.

I looked around and realised that the National Day Preview was starting and students were cheering. I was on the bottom of the stairway and I could see



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Primary 5 Daisy*



*Singapore's First  
National Day  
Celebrations*





the huge banner with the words, “Majulah Singapura, Our Golden Jubilee”. Seeing this, a sense of relief told me that my ordeal was over. I dashed back to the safety of the spectator’s seat waiting for me. During the show, I cheered and sang along with everyone.

My experience with the recent time-travel has made me appreciate the education, peace, security, comfort and quality of life I enjoy today. Thanks to the Singaporeans, who over the past 50 years, faced the challenges without giving up hope. Truly, I am proud to be a true blue Singaporean.

## Post War Years

1945-1965



# True Friendship



Post War Years  
1945-1965

“Goodbye, Mother and Sister!”

Taylor Liew Mei Hua hugged her dear mother, Catrina Yang Kai En, and her younger sister, Jessica Liew Chen Xi.

“Don’t worry you little fur ball, I’ll see you soon!” Taylor cuddled her cat, Miaow Miaow, before rushing out of the door to go for her training at the nearby island, Enchanted Island.

Taylor wore a well-starched and ironed blue black blouse of the British Air Force with a collar and a short matching skirt with pockets. Her ranks shone in the sunshine and the gold buttons with the BAF symbol on it glistened under the light as she hurried towards the runway.

The moment Taylor reached the run way, she boarded a jet and headed to the BAF headquarters which was located on a sunny island just off the coast of Singapore. When she had arrived, Taylor hurried towards the gigantic building which shone like a diamond. Upon reaching the entrance, Taylor spotted Seraphina, one of her roommates, through the clear glass door.

Taylor pushed open the door and slumped into a nearby cushioned chair in front of a small round table. Watching Seraphina converse with her other roommates, Taylor hoped with all her heart that when they were grouped up for this semester, she would not end up with Seraphina as her buddy.

The previous semester, Seraphina Teng Jia Xian had irritated Taylor by saying that she was fat. Taylor had then shot back by saying that Holly was a pig and both of them were sent to their sergeant, earning themselves a severe scolding each. Taylor shivered at the very thought of it. A little while later, she heard a sharp and distinct voice coming from the sergeant’s office.

“All fighters from Group Alpha, please report to my office. Now! I don’t have all day to wait for you!”

All faces, including Taylor’s and Seraphina’s, turned to the sergeant’s office and immediately, the entire group lined up in an orderly fashion and marched into the office. Sergeant Owens, their reporting sergeant, stood up and strolled around Group Alpha. He is probably going to group us up, Taylor crossed her fingers tightly, praying that she and Seraphina will not going to be grouped together to be buddies for the semester!

“Let’s see. Okay,” Sergeant Owens quickly grouped up the rest of group, except Holly and Taylor. “Hmmm...shall I put the both of you together? Will you two quarrel if I put you together? Will you two pull down the entire group with your arguments?” Sergeant Owens stared at them with his marine blue eyes, his cold eyes boring a hole into Taylor and Seraphina.

Feeling uncomfortable, they stared at Sergeant Owens and gave him a firm reply so that he would stop his creepy staring.

“No sir! We will be good buddies!” Taylor and Seraphina replied in unison.

“Good! I am your new sergeant. Your training will start in fifteen minutes’ time.



*By Liew Shu Mei Jacynthe  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*



Meet me outside this darn building! If you are late, twenty push-ups for all of you! Now get out of my office and call in Group Beta!" Sergeant Owens hollered at the group. Trooping out of the room quickly, everyone in winced at Sergeant Owens' harsh tone.

Setting her watch to ring in ten minutes' time so that she could call the group together, Taylor, who was the leader, began shuffling towards her friends, Hazel, Valerie and Vanessa, the twins. The four of them began sharing with each other how they had enjoyed their June holidays.

Beep...beep...beep...! Taylor's watch beeped to remind Taylor to muster group Alpha.

"Everyone, assemble in front of this building! NOW! Sergeant Owens will kill us if he doesn't see us there in five minutes!" Taylor hollered. Hazel rushed to her partner, Holly, as Valerie and Vanessa partnered up and lined up behind Taylor. Seraphina was the last one to file in. Leading the group out of the headquarters, Taylor thought, I don't think I will be able to survive one semester with Seraphina!

And from that minute onwards, training had officially begun!

"One... Two... Three... Four... Five!" Group Alpha was training on a typical morning with Sergeant Owens. Owens always started every morning with twenty push-ups and twenty sit-ups.

"Come on Group Alpha! You are not a bunch of fat people at a park, are you?" Sergeant Owens screamed at them. Four more months of this, Taylor thought as beads of perspiration dripped off her forehead, I don't think I'll ever survive...

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One day, when it was time for everyone to call their family, Taylor called her sister, Jessica. A worried voice greeted Taylor as she asked Jessica how Mother was doing. As Taylor listened to Jessica tell her how life was at home without her, a worried frown creased upon her pretty face.

"Mother has been taking drugs at home! You must find a way to stop her without letting the authorities know...You have to come home immediately, Taylor, my sister. Mother has even threatened to starve me if I didn't give her money! How can she suddenly be so desperate for drugs? Oh Sister, do you think it is because she still cannot get over Father's death?" Taylor heard Jessica plead her to go home.

"But how? I'm in a place where there are security officers everywhere! And if I tell Sergeant Owens, what explanation am I going to give him?" Taylor questioned Jessica.

Soon she came up with a plan. She was going to make up a story! Without much further ado, Taylor had finally agreed to find a way to sneak home.

That night, Taylor tried to get permission from Sergeant Owens to leave. Owens stared at her as she tried to make up a story about her sister had suffered a fall and how her mother had called numerous times to inform her that Jessica still hadn't returned home. Sergeant Owens still would not let her go and asked for another more valid reason.



While Taylor racked her brains to find a way to trick her very clever sergeant, Owens told her that the British were no longer going to protect Singapore. They were leaving Singapore the next night to go home to Great Britain.

Suddenly, the answer hit Taylor's head like a ton of bricks! "Oh my gosh!" Taylor thought, "I'll make a detour mid-way and drop by Singapore to settle the issue!" Excusing herself quietly and apologising for wasting his time, Taylor left Owens' office. She felt like dancing around but she kept her cool and marched back to the dormitories. That night, she tossed and turned as she was so excited. But soon, she was fast asleep, feeling very warm indeed in her bed...

"It's time for us to go home! Yay!" Seraphina rejoiced as she walked out the washroom the next morning.

Seraphina approached Taylor. "Why do you look like you are so determined? We're not going to war, are we? Are you trying to show off?" Seraphina asked sarcastically.

Pulling Seraphina into a toilet cubicle, Taylor poured out everything to Seraphina. When Taylor finally had finished explaining herself, Seraphina was dumb-founded. Her heart melting into a puddle of water, Seraphina pledged to help Taylor with her escape and swore her to secrecy.

That night, all the Singaporean groups, group Alpha, Beta, Charles, Delta and Echo, took a fighter jet with their buddies. Taylor and Seraphina wore their oxygen masks, following the standard procedures, the moment they boarded the jet. If I ever survive this, Taylor thought, I wonder if Father will be proud of me?

Engines were started and the jets were driving along the runway, the sound of jets taking off echoed through Seraphina's mind. Her heart pumped wildly in her chest as she thought about what she was going to do. This is right, Seraphina thought, then she thought, No! This is wrong. She felt doubtful of her own actions, and why was she helping the person hated the most in the entire group, why Taylor?

Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee! The jet Seraphina and Taylor were piloting was going to take off. Driving along the runway, accelerating, swooping up into the sky, soaring above the clouds at the speed of lightning. Usually, Taylor would enjoy this but she was certainly too focused on figuring out how to land secretly. Seraphina was also racking her brains to find a way to land safely yet secretly. Thirty minutes into their journey, the two buddies silently began their descent into Singapore at a deserted junkyard near Taylor's house.

"We have to be really silent when we walk," Taylor murmured as they switched off the engine and tip-toed across the junkyard.

"There it is. My mother and little Jessica lives there. I hope that they are all right," Taylor told Seraphina while trying to stay calm.

Inching towards Taylor's home, Seraphina and Taylor braced themselves for flying pillows, random ropes, sticks, and lots of flying weapons that might come out of the front gate anytime. Surprisingly, Taylor's home had an eerie silence when Taylor unlocked the padlock securing the front door and gate. A sudden loud crash startled the duo and both of them hid behind the nearby couch. Two fighting figures came into view as the figures ran into the small living room.

"Take that! Give me money! I'll starve you to death...give it now! NOW!" Seraphina heard a piercing shriek echo through the room.





“No! Mother! You have to stop now! Please! Aaaahhh!” Taylor heard Jessica plead with their mother.

Jumping into action, the two BAF girls raced from the couch and they were immediately filled with horror. Taylor’s mother, Catrina, was staggering under the weight of a stack of five heavy books! It seemed as though Catrina wanted to throw them on poor Jessica. Catrina, dropped the stack of books on the floor when she saw the two neatly-dressed girls. Jessica, in fact, had already fainted when she saw her mother almost dropping the heavy books on her!

When Taylor saw her mother, she almost could not recognise her! Her mother had dark eye-rings around her eyes, probably from a lack of sleep. Her skin was a pale greenish-yellow and she staggered around like a zombie.

“Get her, Miaow Miaow!” Taylor painfully and sadly commanded her pet cat to pin down her mother. Taylor grabbed some rope and tied her shrieking mother to a chair. Taylor and Seraphina sat beside Catrina while Catrina struggled to break free.

“You are not my daughter! You are unfit to be my child! Set me free this instant! I need my heroin...I need my heroin...,” Catrina was boiling with rage.

At that moment, Jessica finally regained consciousness. Her hair was plastered onto her face and loose ends blew freely behind her head. Eyes swollen from crying, Jessica’s hands and legs were also bruised by the blows her mother had given her. Sitting up from the floor, Jessica stared at her mother while stroking Miaow Miaow’s furry head. Jessica’s face was creased with a worried look, she was wondering how they were going to solve the problem.

“What are we going to do now, Sister?” Jessica stammered, still in the shock by her mother’s attack.

“I’m afraid we’ll have to call the British Police. They will know what to do,” Seraphina stared at the ground, avoiding Taylor’s eyes. Jessica’s eyes were filled with horror almost immediately, and she began wailing when Taylor gave a reluctant nod.

Taylor gripped the phone tightly while she waited for Sergeant Owens to pick up her call. When he finally did, Taylor blurted out the entire scenario with all the fine details.

“You mean you disobeyed my orders to go back to Great Britain? All that just for your mother who is on drugs?” Sergeant Owens said in his deep, booming, angry voice.

“Y...yes Sir! I am very sorry Sir! I-” Taylor tried to think of a way to explain it to her sergeant.

“Now, I’ll just call the police. When you and recruit Seraphina come back to Great Britain, get ready for punishment. Goodbye,” Sergeant Owens ended the call.

A few minutes later, the British Police arrived. When Taylor looked back at her screaming mother, her wailing sister, her friend trying to help, the police holding her mother’s hands, her father not being there... it proved just too much for her. Slumping into the couch as Catrina was being led away, tears began



to roll down her cheeks. Her sister was still sobbing because Jessica felt as if Taylor and Seraphina had just torn apart her world.

Soon, Seraphina decided it was time for them to leave, and they said goodbye to Jessica, who trudged into her bedroom and fell asleep, feeling lonely and cold. As Seraphina and Taylor walked back to the jet in the junkyard, the sounds of the jet engine rang through their ears once more as they took off into the night sky...

The next morning, after a not-so-good-night's rest...

"Recruits Taylor Liew Mei Hua and Seraphina Teng Jia Xian, report to my office. NOW!"

Taylor winced at the sound of the loudspeakers booming through the headquarters in Britain. Recruits from group Alpha snickered at the two red-faced girls marching off to Sergeant Owens' office. Soon, their big lecture had begun.

"That was a horrible tongue-lashing," Seraphina told Taylor.

Taylor gave a fake smile and a false laugh. Taylor and Seraphina thought to themselves, of all people, I am now friends with my buddy! Beaming at each other, the two best friends strolled to the canteen to have their lunch...

A few weeks later, all the recruits were ready to go home! Waving goodbye to Seraphina and her friends, Taylor flew home proudly, wearing yet another rank with pride. Reaching home, she saw Jessica getting ready to leave.

"Where are you going?" Taylor questioned the flustered-faced Jessica.

"I am going to fetch Mother from the prison. You can come along if you want," Jessica grabbed Catrina's car keys. Taylor immediately flung her bag on the couch and they drove to fetch their mother.

Upon reaching the prison, Catrina came walking out of the gate, downcast. When she saw Jessica, tears of joy began streaming down her cheeks. Taylor stood a little further away, somewhat afraid of her own mother.

When Catrina saw Taylor standing under a tree, she gladly opened her arms and gestured to Taylor for a hug. Surprised and happy, Taylor rushed to embrace her mother. Taylor thought to herself, I am so lucky to have a loving family and wonderful friends, what more can I ask for?



# ✿The Karang Guni man✿



Post War Years  
1945-1965

I have a boring life. Every day, it is just the same boring routine. Wake up, prepare for school, go to school. Boring. The most exciting thing neighbourhood is when the Karang Guni man comes to sell his trinkets.

You see, he is not an ordinary Karang Guni man. Instead of selling everything, he reuses some items after thorough cleaning them to make interesting things. In fact, the necklace I am wearing right now is made by him. It is made of black lace with little silver charms on it. Most of my jewellery or trinkets are made by him.

The other interesting thing in my life is my best friend. I have known her ever since Primary one. Her name is Renee. She has grey blue eyes and dark brown hair. She is very sassy and straightforward.

Now back to me. My life is boring, as I had mentioned earlier, so I enjoy doing adventurous things. The impression I give others is that I am very sweet, friendly and funny, but that's not really it. I just keep an outgoing character but no one except my family and Renee knows.

So back to reality. I was just lying on my bed, doing nothing, as it was the school holidays, when I heard screaming and shouting coming from the window. Peering down, I saw Madam Lim yet again screaming at the Karang Guni man, Mr Chan. She hates him for some reason and always tries to find a reason to argue with him. Madam Lim has white hair, neatly tucked into a bun, and often wears these strange flowery dresses. Her stern expression and piercing eyes always seemed to make you feel as if you had done something wrong., as Madam Lim is very argumentative and cunning so not many people like her. However, we don't show it and we try our best to be polite to her as she is a senior.

Right now, Madam Lim is complaining that Mr Chan is making too much noise while collecting recyclables. I saw Mr Chan uttering a retort, and Madame Lim's face turned dark and dangerous. She clenched her fistss tightly, her face pulled into a menacing smirk. She muttered a few words to Mr Chan and stalked off, emitting an aura of anger and danger. I shivered. My thoughts soon evaporated as my mobile phone rang. I flipped it open and realised that it was Renee who was calling. I started chattering with her forgetting the din between Mr Chan and Madam Lim.

The next morning, I woke up to the consistent twittering of birds singing in harmony. Fingering my dream catcher, I found that the strings were coming loose, and it was rather old. I decided to buy a new one from Mr Chan today. Then, another thought struck me. Renee was coming over today. It was what we were discussing about yesterday. I decided that I would take her with me to buy a few trinkets.

When Renee finally arrived, we occupied our time doing our nails, eating pizza and making friendship bands. Then, I took her to Mr Chan's hut. Mr Chan lived in a tiny hut just at the foot of a small hill. I often visit him to purchase items from him. However, when we got to the hut, there was not a soul in sight. We knocked on the door a few times but no one answered.

"Strange, he is usually at home on Fridays." I thought aloud. Shrugging, we trailed home, disappointed that we were unable to buy anything. Suddenly, just as we were passing Madame Lin's home, we heard muffled cries of help. I looked at Renee wide-eyed. We crept towards her door and peered through



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the window squinting hard to look through the flimsy lace curtains.

To our surprise, we saw Mr Chan all tied up! He had somehow managed to remove the gag and call for help. I frantically searched for a sharp object that we could use to break into the house, but to no avail. I turned around to see Renee smirking at me. I glared at her and snapped.

“Wipe that smirk off your face and help me!” Her smirk grew wider and she lifted a small object she was holding. “I found the key.” She said in a sing-song manner. Grumbling, I watched her open the door.

We rushed into Madame Lin’s apartment frantically and immediately untied the ropes which were holding Mr Chan in place. He rubbed his reddened wrists and thanked us.

“Thanks. That witch really has it in for me. We better leave before she comes back.” Mr Chan said

We rushed out of the apartment, afraid that Madame Lim might suddenly appear out of nowhere. When we reached my apartment, we let out a sigh of relief and quickly locked the doors. Renee raised an eyebrow at me and said, “Remember all the times you said your life was boring? Well, now you’ve got yourself an adventure.”

We both stared at Mr Chan, expecting answers. He sighed and started to explain. “You must swear that you will never tell anyone.”

At this, we chorused, “We swear on the River Styx.”

He continued, “Well, Madame Lim and I are not normal people. We practice magic.”

Mr Chan waited for us to process the information.

“WHAT? YOU’RE KIDDING US RIGHT?! MAGIC DOES NOT EXIST!” I retorted.

Mr Chan sighed noisily. “If you are done, allow me to continue,” We apologised and resumed listening to him.

“Madame Lin and I both come from a line of magic practitioners. And yes, magic does exist. Anyway, she was planning to travel back to the post war era. 1969 to be precise, to save the country and make herself famous. I found out about her plan, and in order to silence me, she tied me up and gagged me. Do you understand what I have just said?”

Questions burst from our mouths at the speed of light. He sighed once more and said, “I need someone to accompany me to stop her, or history would be changed.”

“We’ll go!” I smacked Renee on the head for saying that. “Don’t be an idiot Renee! How can we go? What about our parents, school and homework?”

Mr Chan stated calmly that when we are gone, no time would pass. Sighing, I agreed. Renee pumped her fist in the air. She was way too hyper. After going back to the hut to get more tools and clothing that would be more appropriate, we were off.





“Woah! That was fast!” I exclaimed.

In the blink of an eye, we were back in 1965. The streets were dirty and there were people lounging around. No one looked too happy. I recalled that in one of my Social Studies lessons, I learnt that after the Japanese occupation, the country did not have enough food and water. Many Singaporeans did not believe that we could make it.

As we looked for Madame Lim, we learnt and saw a lot. Children were playing with toys that we could not name. Embarrassed, we asked Mr Chan.

He replied with a laugh, “You see those boys playing with that rattan ball? That is called Sepak Raga Ratus. The players will gather in a circle and game will begin with one of the players throwing the rattan ball to another player who stands opposite him. The receiver can use their feet, knee, head or chest to control and kick the ball several times before sending it to another player. It will be more interesting when any of the players is able to keep the ball up in the air for a longer period of time without allowing it to fall to the ground.

As for those girls playing with the wooden board and seeds, that game is known as Congkak. It is a game of wit played by womenfolk in ancient times. This game is usually played by 2 girls sitting face to face on the ground, using rubber seeds, saga seed or small marbles as the seeds. Seeds are points for the players.. The Congkak has several pits to hold the seeds. The furthest pit to the left is the ‘Home’ for the player. To start the game, the player chooses to take all the seeds from one pit and place one at a time into another pit including the player’s Home, moving in clockwise. Seeds are not to be put in opponent’s Home. If the last seed in a play is placed in the player’s Home, she will be granted another turn on the other hand, if the last seed is placed in an empty pit on her side of the board, she will capture the seeds in the opposite pit and place in her own Home. The game will carry on till all the pits on one side are empty. The winner is the player who captured the most seeds.

Renee and I were very intrigued by the games people played in the sixties. We had actually wanted to join in the games but it was already quite late and we were starving. We decided to have dinner before continuing our search. We ate many local dishes, such as Otah Otah and had ice balls for dessert.

As we continued with our search, Renee and I were greeted with many interesting sights. We saw street hawkers hawking their delicacies, women dressed in different traditional clothing chatting in multiple dialects and languages. It was so interesting to watch the lives that our pioneers led. However, the excitement soon wore off as Mr Chan reminded us to keep a lookout for Madam Lim.

Three hours had passed, we were almost ready to give up and go home as we made no progress. Just then, a familiar piercing voice shrieked, “Hey! Who are you calling crazy! I will have you know that I have connections in high places! You better watch your back.”

Nodding to each other, we rushed towards the source of the voice. Our guess was correct. Madame Lin was arguing with another man who looked irritated. Even in another time period, she did not get along well with others. Mr Chan interrupted and led Madame Lim away. “Hey! How dare you! I am not done scolding him yet!” She yelled angrily.

I sighed, “Aiyo, stop being so troublesome lah.”



Upon taking a closer look at us, she recognised us and tried to escape. Fortunately, we managed to corner her. We also found out from the locals that she had been trying to convince the people to join some organisation led by her, but due to her strange attire and her sharp tongue, everyone refused. One man had even gone as far as to call her crazy. She had started arguing with him when Mr Chan stepped in. So that's what it was all about.

Relieved that Madam Lin had not caused any significant damage, we returned to our time with her in tow. To ensure that she would not try to change history again, Mr Chan had placed a special charm on her, making sure that she could not do anything that is possibly harmful.

"I still can't get over the fact that magic exists," Renee whispered to me. I nodded in agreement.

We arrived back at Mr Chan's hut and thanked him for the interesting time-travel adventure. We bade him farewell and headed home together with Madam Lim. Throughout the short walk home, Madam Lim did not utter a word. In fact, she was in a daze. Renee and I figured that it could be the charm that Mr Chan had cast on her. We soon parted ways as Renee and I wished her a good night's rest.

Back home, my father told us about an incident his granduncle had related to him when Father was a young boy.

"You know, when I was younger, my grand uncle told me about a crazy woman that he had encountered on the streets. She was ranting about some organisation and offered people foreign money. When grand uncle refused, she threatened him. Reminds me of our neighbour Madame Lim."

I stifled a giggle because that woman WAS Madam Lim. But they did not need to know about that. Instead Renee and I laughed along with my mother, agreeing with my father. This time-travel adventure will forever be our little secret.



# ❀❀ The cabinet ❀❀

“Hi, could I to speak to Tomao? I’m his friend,” Amora said while calling Tamao one day.

“Okay...” the other party replied.

“Hello?” Tamao said.

“Hey, it’s Amora! Today’s the day! Come on... Aren’t you excited?” Amora screamed into her mobile phone.

On the other end of the line, Tomao was going deaf with Amora’s screaming and excitement that had started since a week earlier when their school teacher had informed them that there would be a field trip to a museum on the 28th of March.

“Yes, I am excited. I’ll meet you in school in fifteen minutes and then we can talk about it, TTYL,” With that, Tomao quickly hung up before Amora could say another word and started getting ready for school.

Amora, on the other hand, was already dressed in her school attire - a white shirt and a navy-blue skirt, and was just leaving her house. Anyone would describe Amora as a typical girl if you look at everything besides her hair. But, if you look at her hair, she would look very unusual because she has purple hair, which is why people avoid her. She was born with purple hair and her parents always said that it was her great-great-grand aunt who last had purple hair. She, like her great-great-grandaunt, has big blue eyes and is always chirpy and fun-loving. However, a real friend, like Tomao, does not care what Amora looks like.

If anyone were to look at Tomao, they would see a Japanese boy with jet-black hair and hazel eyes who is nice, funny and brave. They would also see that he was going to be late.

Tomao then looked at his new ‘SG50’ watch, grabbed his strawberry jam sandwich, said some quick goodbyes to his parents before rushing out to the bus-stop.

When Tomao reached school a few minutes later, he got in line with Amora and the rest of his classmates and started chatting. Soon, they were sitting in the bus and were on their way to the museum. Once the class had reached the museum, their teacher, Mrs Tan, briefed the students before they started on their tour of the museum.

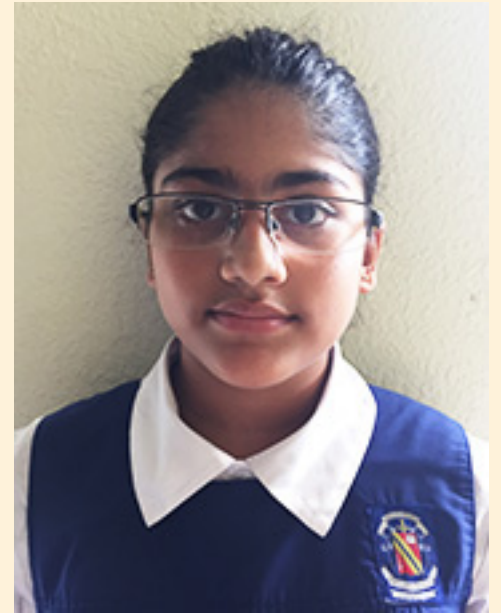
“Listen up because I’m only going to say this once... When you go inside, be quiet and don’t run around because other people are visiting the museum too. I don’t want any of you to rush or push to look at the artefacts. Remember to take notes of all the artefacts and if you want to, you can take some photographs. Any questions? Now, you all can go.”

Amora shouted, “Come on, Tomao! I saw something over there that we should check out. There’s no lock on the glass cabinet it so I’m guessing that I can open it to take a closer look at the artefact.”

Amora grabbed Tomao’s hand and led him to an ancient-looking cabinet.



Post War Years  
1945-1965



By Malaeka Samir  
Primary 5 Daisy



Japanese Occupation  
of Singapore



Tomao declared, "This is the last time I'm allowing you to do such things. I'm only doing this with you because it feels as if we are detectives but... This is the last time. Okay?"

"Okay, okay..." Amora impatiently dismissed Tomao's words while she opened the cabinet.

Suddenly, everything turned pitch-black. The next thing they knew, they were dressed in ragged clothes and found themselves in a deserted alley filled with dirt and rubbish. Out of the blue, Tomao and Amora noticed a large group of people running towards them. Before Amora could react to the situation, five of the men grabbed Tomao and gagged him. They then carried him down the alley. The last two men punched Amora and knocked her out when she tried running after her friend.

When she woke up, she saw a girl shaking her awake. "Who are you? Where am I?" Amora groaned.

"Don't you know? I am Ai. You are in my Kampong," the girl answered.

"Kampong? But I was at the ACM with my friend, Tomao. Where is he?" Amora asked.

"You seem dazed. Come with me. I will take you to my home where it is safer. We can look for your friend later," replied Ai.

Amora followed Ai quietly to her home. There, she found a newspaper on the kitchen table. Amora was shocked when she saw the date - '25th May, 1946'.

"How can it be 1946?" Amora thought out loud.

"What do you mean? We just regained our freedom from the Japanese," Ai looked at Amora, puzzled.

"So you mean to say the locals are still angry with the Japanese? That explains why my friend was taken... He is Japanese! Will they kill him? He is innocent!!" exclaimed Amora.

"Of course the locals are still angry with the Japanese. Even I am! They destroyed and took away everything that we owned. Now, we are left with nothing," Ai broke down in tears.

Amora tried to console Ai. She also tried to learn more about the things going around her since she was stuck in 1946. She needed to know how to get to Tomao and then get back to 2015.

Amora described the people who had taken Tomao and Ai instantly recognized them members of the Quoo clan. They have been behind several kidnappings. She told Amora that the leader was a well-known ruthless thug, named Weng Quoo. He had witnessed his only brother, Jing Yei, being killed by a Japanese soldier. Since then, he swore to avenge his brother's death by killing every Japanese he comes across.

Ai knew where Weng Quoo could have taken Tomao to. However, to get Tomao back would be nothing less than a suicide mission.

Nevertheless, Amora was determined to rescue her best friend. She pleaded with Ai to think of a plan. They searched the alley where Amora was





knocked out and but found only the cabinet that had brought Amora and Tomao to Ai's Kampong.

Next, they went to Weng's hideout. It was a half-destroyed building. The building was heavily guarded. Amora observed that there was a short interval before the next change of guards, so they would have to get Tomao out during that period.

They sneaked into the alleyway behind the hideout. Then, they slipped into the building through a broken window pane and into a room. There, they found Tomao! Thankfully, Tamao was not hurt. They wasted no time. The girls helped Tamao up and instructed him to slip through the window pane. However, they could not because the guards had arrived! They looked around for another escape route. In the end, they had to climb to the top of the two-storey building and then jump to the next building to get to the alley where the cabinet was lying.

Lady luck was on the trio's side. They managed to escape unnoticed! When they reached the cabinet, Ai gave Amora a wooden hairclip as a farewell gift. It had a few symbols carved on it. In return, Amora gave Ai her wristband.

Then, just like before, everything turned pitch-black for Amora and Tomao. When both friends came to, they saw their classmates. They were back in the Museum! Amora, being the first to wake up, asked her friends what had happened.

"You were just looking at that cabinet-artefact and then you and Tomao fell to the ground and blacked out," her friend said. "So, we called Mrs Tan and she took you and Tomao to the museum's sick bay. It's been fifteen minutes since you fainted."

When they got back to school, their anxious parents fetched them home. Amora dug into her pockets. Her hand closed in on an item - it was Ai's hairclip!



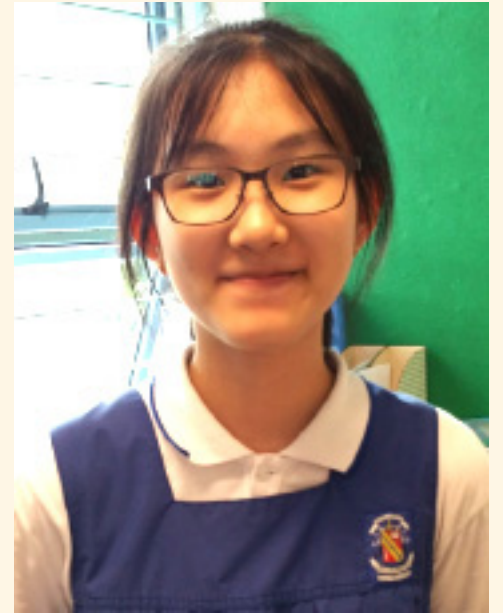
如今的新加坡绿意盎然且政治安定，交通便捷，治安良好，是最适合人们居住的环境之一。85%以上的居民都拥有自己的组屋。这样的成就是来之不易的，新加坡也是经历了多灾多难。

在1961年5月25日下午3.20pm，从四脚亭（Si Kah Teng）开始燃烧的火焰在风势下迅速蔓延到河水山。这场火灾燃烧到了隔天早晨。这把河水山夷为了平地，也导致了4人死亡，85人受伤，还有16000灾民流离失所。救火车抵达现场时，就被逃难的人潮堵住了，场面非常混乱。为了扑灭火焰，消防员、警员、村民和路人只能合力拉水管来救火。最后，在大家的努力下，大火终于被扑灭了，一些村民和路人立刻抢救物资。

受害的灾民被安置在附近的河水山联络所和金声小学。在九天之内，1200个灾民就被分配到女皇镇、加冷、中峇鲁等新建的组屋。不到三个月，在中峇鲁前坟场的904个单位中，有700个分配给了灾民。1962年2月，1900户灾民入住在河水山灾区重建组屋。这十六幢应急的一房式门对门组屋很不容易保持卫生。但为了快速安顿灾民的紧急措施，当年PAP实实在在落实了照顾民生的承诺。

在新加坡1961年5月25日的河水山大火之前，新加坡城市边缘的木屋区已有过类似的火灾事件，不过都被居民抢救，没酿成大祸。这些在市区边缘人口稠密的木屋区都杂乱无章，环境非常恶劣。木屋里包括木屋都是易燃物。至于起火的原因，煤炭火水，元宝蜡烛，电线走火等都会引起大小火患，另一个可能的原因是人为的纵火。

河水山火灾充分体现了消防员、警员、村民和路人的团结精神。只有他们的齐心协力才能及时扑灭大火。他们表现的勇气也是值得我们赞叹、学习的。当然，这也与政府不断完善防火措施的努力分不开。我相信那次的火灾也让居民们吸取了教训，让他们提高警惕，以免惨剧再发生。



By Pan YunHui  
Primary 6 Cherry



# my memories



Post War Years  
1945-1965

Aku melihat anak dan cucu aku membersihkan bilik. Tiba-tiba, cucu aku terjumpa koin lama.

“Nenek, apa ini?” cucu aku bertanya.

Aku tersenyum melihat koin lama yang sedang digenggam oleh cucu aku. Anak aku pun berjalan ke daerah kami. Aku teringat menggunakan koin itu untuk membeli sesuatu semasa aku masih kecil.

“Ini koin zaman dahulu waktu nenek masih kecil seperti Aminah,” aku berkata kepada cucuku.

Aminah mula menyuruh aku untuk ceritakan kepadanya tentang Singapura pada zaman dahulu. Aku mula bercerita kepada Aminah tentang kantin sekolah yang sangat sempit dan panas pada ketika itu. Kawasannya tidak besar dan agak kotor. Kadang kala, ada beberapa murid yang tidak dapat tempat duduk dan harus makan sambil berdiri.

Aku memandang anak dan cucuku sedang mendengar dengan penuh perhatian. Lantas ini membuat aku menjadi lebih ghairah untuk bercerita. Aku pun mula menceritakan tentang guru-guru yang sangat garang pada masa itu. Muka aku pucat seperti mayat setiap kali aku terlupa untuk memotong kuku aku. Aku sangat takut guru aku akan sebat tangan aku dengan pembaris. Walaupun ia sangat menakutkan, aku bersyukur kerana ini mengajar aku untuk sentiasa menjaga kebersihan diri dan bertanggungjawab untuk diri sendiri.

Aku melihat jam di dinding dan ia sudah waktu untuk Aminah tidur.

“Aminah, sudah waktu untuk kamu tidur,” aku berkata.

Aminah berasa sedih tetapi dia terus tersenyum sebaik sahaja aku berkata aku akan menyambung cerita aku esok. Anak dan cucuku pergi ke bilik mandi untuk menggosok gigi. Aku masuk ke dalam bilikku dan melihat suamiku sedang membaca surat khabar. Aku ketawa kecil apabila aku teringat suami aku pernah dimarahi oleh guru kerana dia asyik tidak menyelesaikan kerja rumahnya. Dia akan disuruh berdiri di atas kerusi sepanjang hari. Itulah kenangan-kenangan terindah semasa aku di bangku sekolah dahulu.



*By Nabilah Khairani  
Binte Mohd Nasir  
Primary 6 Acacia*

## Synopsis

A story of a girl named Aminah who found an old coin while cleaning and asked her grandmother what it was. She got interested about the past and got her grandmother to tell her more about it.





# ❀❀ Bukit Ho Swee Fire ❀❀

Post War Years  
1945-1965

காலைபொழுது கதிரவன் பொன்னொளி வீசி எழுந்தான். அன்றைய பொழுது நல்ல பொழுதாகும் என்ற நம்பிக்கையுடன் கண் விழிந்தேன். அன்று சனிக்கிழமை, நான் என் காலைக் கடன்களை முடித்துவிட்டு காலை உணவை உண்டேன். பிறகு, நான் என் தாத்தாவுடன் உரையாடிக்கொண்டிருந்தேன். அப்பொழுது, தாத்தா சிங்கப்பூரின் வரலாற்று கதையைச் செப்பினார். அச்சம்பவம் அவர் வாழ்வில் இடம்பெற்ற ஒரு சம்பவமாகும்.

“சூரியன் உலகைச் சுட்டெரித்துக்கொண்டிருந்த வேளை, நான் மெதுவாக கடைக்கு நடந்து சென்றுக்கொண்டிருந்தேன். வழியில், வண்டிக்காரும் தேனீக்காரும் ரிங்காரம் இட்டுக்கொண்டிருந்தன. தென்றல் காற்று முகத்தை முத்தமிட்டுச் சென்றது. திடீரென்று, “காப்பாற்றுங்கள் காப்பாற்றுங்கள்”, என்று உதவிக்கு அலறும் சத்தம் கேட்டது. உடனே, குரல் கேட்கும் திசையை நோக்கி மின்னல் வேகத்தில் ஓடினேன். நான் புக்கிட் ஹோ ஸ்வி (Bukit Ho Swee) வட்டாரத்தைச் சென்றடைந்தேன். அங்கு நான் கண்ட காட்சி என் கண்களாளே நம்பமுடியவில்லை. அங்கிருந்த வீடுகள் தீப்பற்றி எரிந்துக்கொண்டிருந்தன. எல்லாரும் தங்கள் உயிரைக் காப்பாற்றிக்கொள்ள அங்கும் இங்கும் ஓடினார்கள். நான் சிறுத்தை வேகத்தில் அங்கிருந்த வானியை எடுத்து அதில் மண்ணை அள்ளி போட்டு தீயில் எறிந்தேன். பிறகு, பக்கத்தில் இருந்த தண்ணீர் குழாயை எடுத்த தண்ணீரைத் தீயின்மேல் பாச்சினேன். மற்ற குடிமக்களும் விடாமுயற்சியுடன் தீயை அணைக்க முயன்றனர். கடைசியில், நாங்கள் தீயை வெற்றிகரமாக அணைத்தோம். அந்த வட்டாரத்தில் இருந்த குடிமக்கள் எல்லோரும் என்னுடைய உதவிக்காக எனக்கு நன்றி நல்கினார்கள். அந்தத் தீதான் சிங்கப்பூர் வரலாற்றில் ஆக பெரிய தீ விபத்தாகும்.” என்று என் தாத்தா கூறினார்.

தாத்தா அந்தத் தீ எப்படி ஆரம்பித்தது என்று யாருக்கும் தெரியாது என்றும் மொழிந்தார். நான் எனது மனதிற்குள், எவ்வளவு மக்கள் தங்கள் உயிரை இழந்திருப்பார்கள் என்று நினைத்துப் பார்த்தேன், அதே சமயத்தில் நிறைய மக்கள் பாடம் கற்றுக்கொண்டிருப்பார்கள் என்றும் நினைத்தேன். பல இன மக்கள் ஒன்றிணைந்து செயற்பட்ட விதம் பாராட்டக்கூரியது. ஒரு கை தட்டினால் ஓசை வராது என்பதால் நாம் அனைவரும் ஒன்று சேர்ந்து செயற்பட வேண்டும் என்பதை அறிந்தேன். அதோடு, அந்தச் சம்பவத்திலிருந்து நான் எந்த ஆபத்து வருவதற்கு முன்பு முன்னெச்சரிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும் என்று அறிந்தேன். அப்பொழுது ஒரு திருக்குறள் என் மனதில் தோன்றியது.

‘வருமுன்னர் காவாதான் வாழ்க்கை எறிமுன்னர்

வைத்தாறு போலக் கெடும்’

என்பதே ஆகும். அந்த நாள், என் தாத்தா கூறிய சம்பவம் என் மனதில் கல்லில் செதுக்கிய எழுத்துக்கள் போல் பதிந்தது.



By S. Janani  
Primary 6 Angsana

## Synopsis

A story enacts the Bukit Ho Swee fire. The story depicts how the people came together to help during the crisis and how it bonded Singaporeans together.



# ❀❀❀ Kampong vs HDB ❀❀❀



Post War Years  
1945-1965

கதிரவன் ஒளி மென்மையாகவும் மாலைக் காற்று ஜில்லன்று இதமாகவும் இருந்தது. நான் அந்த நேரத்தில் வேலை முடிந்து வீடுத் திரும்பிக் கொண்டிருந்தேன். நான் வீட்டுக்குச் செல்ல பேருந்து நிறுத்ததை அடைந்தேன். பேருந்து கண்சமிட்டும் நேரத்தில் வந்தது. நான் பேருந்தில் ஏறியவுடன் பேருந்திலுள்ள இருக்கையில் அமர்ந்தேன். நான் சன்னலின் வழியாக நிறைய அடுக்குமாடி கட்டடங்களைப் பார்த்தேன். என் நினைவுகள் பின்னோக்கி சென்றன.

நான் ஐந்து வயதாக இருக்கும்போது நானும் என் குடும்பமும் குடிசை வீடுகளில் வாழ்ந்து வந்தோம். அந்தக் காலத்தில் நானும் அங்கே இருந்த மற்ற சிறுவர்களும் ஒன்று சேர்ந்து புன்னகை மலர்ந்த முகத்துடன் கல கல என்று சிரித்துக்கொண்டே மாலை நேரத்தில் விளையாடுவோம். அதே நேரத்தில் எங்களுடைய பெற்றோர்கள் ஒன்று சேர்ந்து அன்றைய இரவு உணவைத் தயாரிப்பார்கள். சமய விழாக்களின்போது எல்லா இனத்தவர்களும் சேர்ந்து அதைக் கோலாகலமாகக் கொண்டாடினோம்.

சிறிது காலங்கள் கழித்து 1960 ஆம் ஆண்டில் திரு லீ குவான் யூவின் கடின உழைப்பால் அடுக்குமாடி கட்டும் பணி தொடங்கியது. முதல் முதலில் 1964 ஆம் ஆண்டில் அடுக்குமாடி கட்டடத்தில் குடியேறலாம் என்று அறிவிக்கப்பட்டது. பண வசதியில்லாததால் நிறைய மக்கள் வீடுகளை வாங்கவில்லை. அதனால் 1968 ஆம் ஆண்டில் மக்கள் தங்களின் மசேநி (CPF) மூலம் அடுக்குமாடிக் கட்டட வீடுகள் வாங்கலாம் என்று அறிவித்தபோது நிறைய பேர் வீடுகளை வாங்கினர். அப்போது என் குடும்பமும் ஒரு வீடு வாங்கியது.

எல்லோரும் அடுக்குமாடிக் கட்டடத்தில் குடியேறியபோது பெற்றோர்கள் எப்படி அவர்களுடைய நண்பர்களுடன் தொடர்புகொள்ளுவது என்ற ஐயங்கள் தோன்றின. அப்போது சிங்கப்பூர் தொலைபேசி சேவை அறிமுகம் கண்டது. இதை எல்லாம் நான் நினைத்து பார்த்து முடித்தபோது நான் இறங்க வேண்டிய இடம் வந்துவிட்டது. நான் பேருந்தை விட்டு இறங்கினேன். நான் சுற்றும் முற்றும் பார்த்து விட்டு இப்போது இருக்கும் நவீன சிங்கப்பூரை உருவாக்கிய திரு லீ குவான் யூவுக்கு மனதிற்குள் நன்றி கூறிவிட்டு என் வீட்டை நோக்கி நடந்தேன்.



By Manasarow Gunasekaran  
Primary 6 Angsana

## Synopsis

The story depicts how the people from the kampong areas moved into HDB flats and how they maintained strong bond.





# An Alien Landing in the ✿✿ Playground ✿✿

A Growing Nation  
1965-1985

"It's 12 June 1975! My eighth birthday! It is the exact day that the Singapore Dollar was issued! Haha, I feel so privileged to be born on the same day as the Singapore Dollar! Umm, it is also the day that my parents got the HDB flat that we are living in now! My parents said that this house was way more comfortable than the crowded squatters they used to live in! Let's go to the playground to celebrate!" I said, grabbing Roulan's hand.

Slipping on our slippers, we raced down the four flights of stairs from her house to the playground. Whoever reached first would be declared the champion and of course, as usual, I won.

As we slid down the concrete slide, I noticed a strange blurry silver object near the monkey bars. Hmm, what was that?

"Roulan, quick, come here! I see something interesting! Let's go have a look."

"Oh! I see it too! Don't go too close and touch it! It might be dangerous!"

An unusual sharp shrill sound rang in my ears. I cautiously walked towards the mysterious thing.

POOF! BANG!

"AHHHHHHHHHH! ALIEN!" Roulan and I screamed. It was creepy-looking and staring right at us! It had an egg-shaped head with many dark almond shaped eyes---too many to count. It also had four long stretchable arms, green scaly skin and was extremely thin, like a child's stickman drawing.

"Teyhaeryu! Kmkoaha nismem huyp?" the alien squeaked.

"Oooh! Look at the cute teeny-weeny flying saucer! Look at the tiny windows, the many colourful bright lights and the shiny silver paint on top!" Roulan cooed.

"Roulan, please focus! Can't you see we have a mighty huge problem on our hands now?" I cried.

The alien suddenly spoke again but this time, in English.

"Oops, sorry! I forgot to turn on my translator! I'm Jig, 1178 years, 2 months, 3 weeks, 6 days, 4 minutes and 13 seconds alien from Planet Euria. Okay, now 17 seconds. What I wanted to say was sorry! Did I scare you? I think I did. Your faces were as white as a sheet and your eyes were so bulging!"

That was very precise. And wow! She is, or maybe he, is old, I thought.

"Yes, you definitely scared us. Why are you here on earth? Are you here alone? How long do you plan on staying here? Are you going to harm us? You better not!" I rattled on, demanding answers.



By Chow Yin Yin Megan  
Primary 5 Hibiscus



"Accidentally came to Earth on my parents' flying saucer, yes, until I am able to get home. Maybe a friend or a parent would come and bring me back? I have no idea how to get the flying saucer to go back home. Anyway, who are you?" Jig answered.

"I'm Cuifen, an 8 year old Chinese girl. Beside me is my best friend, Roulan, glasses, long black hair, half Caucasian and half Chinese. You are in Singapore in the year 1975." I answered.

"Not to interrupt but... Where are you going to stay? Maybe, you can stay at my place?" Roulan meekly asked.

"That's a great idea!" Jig and I said at the same time. We quickly ran up to her house but stopped halfway.

"Are you going to stay like that? You look kind of freakish..." I mumbled.

"Oh yah! Of course not! I have an app somewhere on my watch. Oh here, App to change appearances! 3, 2, 1, press! Taadaa!" Jig exclaimed.

Jig had disappeared and instead of an alien in front of us, there was an ordinary girl! Okay, maybe not that ordinary. She had long, dark red hair that was tightly curled and bobbed up and down whenever she walked. She also had many freckles dotting her sun-kissed face. She looked slightly older than us by maybe a year or two. She was about a head taller than us. When we reached Roulan's house, we opened the unlocked door and Roulan yelled to her grandma, "Ah Mah! Today we have a guest! Her name is Jig!"

"Jig? Why her name so unique one?" Ah Mah asked.

I called her Ah Mah too as my own had passed away. I saw her so often I just felt like we were family.

"Ah Mah, you can keep a secret, right? This girl, or might I say alien, is from Planet Euria, in outer space! She came using her parents' flying saucer. She's stuck here until she is able to go back home. Remember, do not tell your friends when you go to the wet market! We don't want Jig to be all over The Straits Times!" I whispered into her ears as if there could be someone listening to us and wanting to do something to Jig.

What we did not know was that there really was someone listening to us! Okay, maybe not wanting to kidnap Jig, but she wanted to snatch Jig all to herself! That person was Scarlett Koh. She was standing beside the door, concealed behind the wall so we could not see her. She was my classmate and lived near us, in a big bungalow. As you can tell from where she stayed, she was quite rich. Not to offend anyone, but she was the stereotypical rich girl in books--- snotty, conceited and stuck-up. She was my 'arch enemy', always sticking her nose in the air and sassing me.

Scarlett had just happened to pass by Roulan's house on the way to visit her aunt who lived in the same block as us. Ah Mah usually leaves the wooden gate open and we totally forgot to close it before revealing Jig's true identity, so it was very easy to overhear what we were saying, if you had sharp enough ears. When she heard what we were saying, she smoothed her brand new sarong kebaya down and was annoyed and jealous at the same time as we got to meet Jig first instead of her. That moment, Scarlett immediately set her mind to making herself Jig's only friend and ending our friendship.



“Why not try the local food while you are here, Jig!” I suggested. We decided to bring Jig to the hawker centre near our HDB flat to try the local delights. Along with Ah Mah, Jig, Roulan and I strolled to the hawker centre.

Scents of wanton noodles, mutton biryani, and other Chinese, Malaysian, and Indian fare whiffed through the air. Long lines at the most popular stalls, the tables between the rows of eateries filling up.

“What you want?” called out the hawkers in Singlish to the person ordering at their stall---Singaporean English. We quickly found a seat, skipping some tables even if no one was seating there---tissue packets have been used to reserve those seats.

For the chilli and all things spicy, Roulan got a bowl of thick and tasty Laksa. For myself, I got a plate of Chee Cheong Fan and Popiah. For Ah Mah, a plate of Char Kway Teow. And for our guest, Chicken rice, Carrot cake and Oyster omelette and Otah.

“Jig, you’re our guest and it is your first time in Singapore, so we must let you try the delicious food in Singapore. After all, Singapore well known for her food! If you come to Singapore, you absolutely have to try the food.” I explained to her as she asked why we had gotten her so much food.

We decided to go all out and get desserts to celebrate my birthday! Ice Kachang--- a shaved ice dessert always delightful in hot Singapore, and Chin Chow Grass Jelly --- the slippery jelly, absolutely delectable. We also got Muah Chee---chewy goodness topped with grounded peanuts and sugar and last but not least, Satay---a dish of seasoned, skewered and grilled meat, served with the spicy peanut dipping sauce.

Jig was fine when eating the food, however when she started eating the Muah Chee and the Satay’s dipping sauce, she looked like she was turning back to her original alien form! Green skin! Green again! I can see her tube ears!

“Jig! You are turning back into an alien! I think it’s the peanuts! You must be allergic to peanuts!” I hissed, “Unlike us where we get rashes instead, you must be turning back to your original form! Oh dear, no more peanuts for you.”

I took away the plate of Muah Chee and the bowl of dipping sauce. Then, I spotted Scarlett standing near us, watching our every move. Oh no, I thought, Scarlett has seen Jig and knew what she really was! Knowing her, she would definitely want to do something. I pointed out Scarlett to Jig and Roulan, telling them what I thought.

We decided to go up to her confront her. Telling Ah Mah our plan, we stood up and walked towards Scarlett. When Scarlett saw that we had noticed her, she tried to escape but we quickly ran forward, swerving to avoid the people holding plates of food.

“Scarlett Koh! Stop right there!” Roulan yelled as we caught up to Scarlett. We grabbed her hand to stop her from running away.

To our amazement, Scarlett burst into tears and sobbed, “So...Sorry. I...I just wanted to be Jig’s friend. I thought you do not deserve such a u...unique friend because I thought I was better than you guys. Now I realise that I was wrong. Ple...please forgive me.”





Well! Under that arrogant exterior there was actually a heart! She actually apologised to us!

“You know, you could have just walked up to me and asked to be my friend. You did not have to follow us around and cook up whatever evil scheme you were thinking just now.” Jig said.

Suddenly, Jig ran up to a man and a woman who looked strangely like her. “Mummy! Daddy!” Jig said, hugging the couple.

We dashed to Jig’s side and asked her, “How do you know that they are your parents?”

“Well, we aliens can recognize one another.” Jig answered.

Remembering that Scarlett was still there, I turned to her and said “I hope you have learnt your mistake. Friends?” We all shook hands and Scarlett beamed from ear to ear.

“Not to ruin the moment but I have to get going now! It has been a wonderful experience on Earth in Singapore. Here’s something to remember me by. A model of the flying saucer I came in.” Jig said while giving us each the flying saucer. After hugging us, Jig quickly ran to catch up with her parents who were walking away.

“Don’t forget me!” Jig yelled. We waved to her and knew that that would be the last time we would be seeing Jig. However, we would never forget Jig and how she helped us forge a friendship with my ex-archenemy, Scarlett.

Till this day, while Roulan and I remain best friends, Scarlett is also our good and close friend. And maybe, even a best friend in the making.



# ❀❀ Ahhh! Spirits! ❀❀



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

A huge full moon hung high in the navy blue sky, its strong rays hitting the dark earth in the cemetery head on. Behind the black pointed gate that guarded the unnerving place, crackly grey tombstones of all sizes stood on the sodden ground, and in the middle of it all was a tall memorial that rose into the sky, glowing a mysterious silver in the moonlight. Everything seemed still, like a blanket of silence draped over the glowing grey cemetery. However, two bickering shadows inched closer to the huge gate and soon, their faces could be seen...

"Meili, let's just turn around and go back home please? I know that this is very important to you, but I am terrified, you know I am!", Red, my best friend with red hair and soft almond eyes whispered, turning her head left and right rapidly to scan her surroundings.

I rolled my eyes and whipped around. "Wah lao eh... if you are so scared, Red, why don't you make your way home, YOURSELF!"

Annoyed at Red, I held my head up high and stormed towards the Kranji War Cemetery. You see, Jia Xin, an annoying foe, had dared me and that scaredy-cat Red, to snap a few pictures of the so called "haunted" place at night. Jia Xin and I are sworn enemies, and we have always completed each other's dares. I was not going to lose to her! So together with Red, my sidekick and best friend, I was going to do this dare and prove that we are the bravest souls in town.

After a few more steps, I reached the ebony black gates and realised that they were not locked. Weirdly, the gate creaked open by itself as soon as I touched it, and behind me, Red gasped and caught up with me. I just shrugged and entered, thinking that was probably nothing.

Pulling out my phone which had a cover that said #YOLO, I looked around me with awe. The surroundings were cool yet creepy, not for the faint-hearted, like my dear Red! Completely enchanted by the spooky place, I snapped about fifty photos of the full moon, huge memorial, dark soil, crackly tombstones and everything that was completely bathed in silver because of the moon.

Suddenly, there was a soft tap on my shoulder! Do not get me wrong, I did not feel scared, just shocked. Spinning around, I realised that it was just a freaked-out Red. I had forgotten all about her.

"What now! I was taking pictures you know! You want to finish this dare or not!", I shouted with rage, but slowly regaining my cool.

"I'm so sorry, Meili", Red's voice quivered as she apologised, and I simmered down.

"I just wanted to tell you this. I swear I saw the memorial engulfed in a bright blue flame, and that something must have made me trip just now..."

Sighing heavily, I leaned onto a tombstone and folded my arms, shaking my head slowly. When will this girl ever learn! There was nothing to be afraid of. Those thoughts swarmed around my head as I stared at my feet and faced her again.

"My gosh! Look Red, there is nothing to be afraid of. It is just you're..."



By Feodora Lee Yu Tian  
Primary 5 Hibiscus



“OI! WHAT ARE YOU TWO XIAO ZA BO DOING HERE?” A voice boomed around us and interrupted me. While Red squeaked and shuddered uncontrollably, I froze and squinted to see where the voice came from.

“Hey, Red. Can you see that blue thing that looks like a will-o-wisp?” I pointed to something blue that was wispy and translucent, like Ah Gong’s white hair, in the distance. Red just nodded and stood closer to me until our shoulders brushed. Shrugging her off, I crept closer and closer to the thing... when it suddenly disappeared! Frowning, I opened my mouth to speak but Red cut me off.

“Meili...”, she gulped, “Behind y...you!”

I froze yet again. Sure tons of things made her scared, but everything was so creepy already, so I dreaded what was behind me. I took micro steps, turning around 180 degrees, and....a spirit.

It was a strong blue but still slightly translucent. It did not have feet and its body ended in a wispy tail like a genie. It was crossing its arms and furrowing its eyebrows so hard, his eyes practically popped out of his sockets. Ugly wrinkles formed all around his face. His tail gripped a rusty metal bar and two sleek black rifles were clutched in his arms, and he was wearing a camouflage helmet. Though he looked young, he was obviously really old as he was a spirit and was dead.

I gulped louder than a popped balloon, with beads of perspiration trickling down my neck.

“My friends”, he boomed in his poor English, “Look what we have now, spoiling our plans for Japan.”

Red made a dead sprint towards me and threw her hands around me as she sobbed in pure terror.

Out of the blue, more ghostly spirits rose around the first spirit and they stared at us with their hawk like eyes.

The first spirit relaxed his face and spoke, “Why, where are my manners?. I am Chua Zhi Yang, the leader of the S16.”

Red stopped sobbing, and threw a confused look at Mr Chua. I piped up and said, “Sorry Mr Chua, what is S16?”

It was his turn to throw us a look, and it was clear that he was irritated.

“The S16 is an elite group of our Singapore army, formed to destroy the Japanese army and stop the War once and all!”

Red took a deep breath and whispered without looking at Mr Chua, “With all due respect, what are all of you doing here then? Isn’t that horrible War in the past?”

“Revenge! That will be sweet!”, he shook his fist and smirked. “Japanese killed us and all our families when we tried to stop them from taking over our country.

We tried to put a bomb in the camp of the Japanese general Tomoyuki Yamashita and the heart of the whole Japanese camp, but they caught us. So the War may be in the past but I see my family killed in front of me whenever I

think of them.”

His eyes filled with almost transparent tears and his facial features softened sadly as he spoke about his family. As he seemed pretty real and humanlike with emotions, my embarrassing fear started to ebb away. Besides, I was having a conversation with spirits! I began to see how cool this was.

I shrugged Red off and enquired, “So, how are you going to take revenge? I feeling slightly confused already.”

This time, another spirit which was standing beside Mr Chua opened his translucent mouth to speak. He was wearing a smart army uniform and had a cannon parked behind him. I guessed that he was the deputy leader of S16 as Mr Chua nodded to him.

“Japan kill us and our family, we kill everyone in Japan!” He roared, and every spirit, armed heavily and wearing their similar green uniforms, let out triumphant and deafening cheers.

“Tonight, swirling tornado will appear because it is full moon night, and we will go into tornado. Tornado will take us to Japan, and then we will kill! All of us have waited a long time for this”, he stretched his hand out really wide for emphasis, accidentally knocking another spirit in the process. I tried not to burst out into laughter as that spirit saw stars and sank into the ground.

He continued, “And tonight, we will finally take revenge at midnight!” All the spirits cheered again upon the last statement.

However, Red did not share that joy and neither did I. I glanced at her and could immediately read her mind by the worry lines. Innocent lives would die and a whole country would collapse if we let this happen! Although the ancient Japanese soldiers had done something wrong, those innocent Japanese citizens should not be blamed for their ancestors’ wrong doing. Therefore, we had to be even braver than we ever had before and stop them from reaching Japan.

Red stopped shuddering and spoke out with a determined look plastered on her face, just as the spirits were shouting out their joy.

“STOP!” All the spirits turned around and faced Red with menacing eyes. Red gulped and continued in Chinese, to make communication easier, “The people in Japan are innocent! Their ancestors were in the wrong. Now, Japan has learnt its mistake, and is different now.”

“Do you even know how much destruction Japan has done? You young people are definitely too young to have seen Singapore when it was ruled by the Japanese. One thing’s for sure though. We will never forgive Japan!” Mr Chua sneered and moved a step closer, the S16 following behind him.

I took two steps closer to Red and whispered that this S16 would not be easy to convince. Red rolled her eyes and nodded her head. Mr Chua was about to say something in his booming voice when suddenly, the sound of violent swirling air, practically as loud as a sonic boom, sounded behind us, outside the cemetery. My ponytail started to flap in the wind, Red’s long auburn hair began slapping her face. Leaves flew in the air, soil tumbled across the ground and the strings on my grey hoodie fluttered madly, unlike my tight denim jeans and Red’s body hugging tee shirt. It could only mean one thing, the Midnight Tornado!







Mr Chua's face lit up with instant delight and he cackled.

"It's time my boys. We shall go RIGHT NOW!" he commanded.

Red and I exchanged another look- this time it was one of urgency. I racked my brains and screamed, "Wouldn't it make all of you as cruel as the Japanese if you were to invade a country and kill its people?"

The S16, which was marching out of the cemetery and towards the tornado with their weapons, paused for a while as if they were considering what I had said.

"Do not listen to them, boys!" Mr Chua commanded over the din.

"No, just listen to us!" Red pushed locks of hair away from her face and exclaimed as we ran over to them. "Surely you do not want to be just like those cold-hearted people who invaded us? Well, if you wipe Japan out, then you are even worse than Ancient Japan!"

Some spirits gasped, and the marching group halted once more, even Mr Chua. After I ran some distance, I landed myself onto the ground and slid towards Mr Chua. Jumping to my feet in front of him, I pleaded in Chinese, "Please, Mr Chua, turn around! What you are doing, like it or not, is wrong, and surely you know it? I have always looked up to my country's army as my noble, strong and brave protectors, who always do the right thing! What if someone else invaded Singapore again and wiped us out. How would you feel?"

"Yeah everybody! Furthermore, your sweet family is in heaven now, enjoying life, while you are down here, trapped in your own misery. Why don't you go to heaven right now and join them? You do not have to take revenge if you go and stay with your family!", Red spoke gently, knowing that this was a very touchy subject but a very powerful weapon to use against them.

Mr Chua stopped in his tracks immediately, and so did the rest of the spirits. He bowed his head and then stared at our pleading faces again. Then he silently led his troop away from the swirling tornado, and Red and I squealed with joy. Mr Chua finally changed his mind, and Japan would still exist now! We have officially saved Japan! Walking with the S16, we stopped when we reached the inside of the cemetery, with all of the spirits' weapons.

Mr Chua spoke softly with his head bowed, "Thank you young girls, for talking sense into us, for preventing us from wiping out a whole country, for letting us know that we still can turn back and go up to heaven, for making us aware that the past is in the past. We shall not enter the tornado now."

True to his word, the noisy swirling and wild wind soon came to an end. The other spirits nodded their agreement and we smiled and said a warm "you are welcome". Then, silence fell upon us as we all reflected all the crazy things that had happened tonight. I thought about how fearless these soldiers were, trying to stop the Japanese, and how we saved Japan earlier on.

Most of all, I was amazed at how brave Red was, facing scary spirits with out fear, and I felt happy that the spirits were going to enjoy life with their families in heaven again.

Mr Chua then broke the silence and announced. "Okay then. We shall go now and meet our families! Goodbye, and we will always watch out for you from heaven!"

However, before they could depart, I whipped out my phone and a slow smile started to spread on my face.

“Wait!”, I called out in English and everybody stopped whatever they were doing, “Let’s take a selfie first!”



# ✿✿ Bukit Ho Swee Fire ✿✿



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

My life is very boring. Every day, I just wake up, brush my teeth, change into my school uniform, eat my breakfast, then go to school and come back home, eat my lunch, take a shower, do my homework, do my own random stuff, then eat my dinner, continue doing my random stuff, take a shower, and lastly, go to sleep. That's boring, isn't it? It was only after this reading this book that my life become less boring.....

It all started one Saturday afternoon when I was at home reading a magical book about the Bukit Ho Swee fire that happened in Singapore's past, in the year of 1961. I had to refer to the book to prepare for a ridiculously boring and time-wasting school project about the Bukit Ho Swee fire. In the book, I saw a button that said "Push this button for a magical and memorable experience".

Without second thoughts, I pushed the button and appeared somewhere that I had never been to or heard of before. The place was dirty, smelly, hot, crowded and noisy. There were Kampong houses everywhere and everything looked very old-fashioned.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!" Red firecrackers were exploding, children in old-fashioned clothes screaming of joy and shouting and people wearing red old-fashioned clothes having fun and playing with fire crackers!

What's happening? I thought I should be having a magical and memorable experience now?

Suddenly, it dawned on me that I had time-travelled back to the day of the Bukit Ho Swee fire which happened on Chinese New Year. Why was I so careless? I should have thought before pushing the button! This was a lesson to me that I should always think before I act.

Everything was so far alright. The only problem was that my parents were not here with me. I was alone, stranded. How was I going to find a way back home on my own? As I was still stuck in my thoughts, suddenly..... "BOOM!!!" A loud firecracker exploded somewhere nearby, followed by a scream...

"Aaaaaahh! HELP! FIRE!" I immediately knew what was going to happen: The infamous Bukit Ho Swee fire. Upon hearing the shouts, everyone reacted differently. Some people ran back home to take many pails of water to fling at the house which was on fire. Some started to panic and scream, some ran to the community centre to call the fire brigade and some ran back home to pack necessary items with them to evacuate from their homes.

I was shocked to see what was happening. Why does this 'life and death' situation have to happen to me although I did not deserve it? Why did this careless person set up a fire that would cause many deaths of others and destruction? This was unfair. Many people were about to get burnt to death and die because of the careless and irresponsible person that had set up the fire!

As I stood there, too scared to move, and saw one person after another getting burnt to death, I could not help but feel like running away like a coward. No, I can't do this, I told myself. I will not be a coward. I will face the situation and find ways to improve the situation. All this happened in one second although it seemed like hours to me. I finally got out of my thoughts and ran to a well to get



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pails of water. I carried the heavy pails and flung them at the house. However, it was of no use. The fire was getting bigger and bigger and I started to feel worried for my own precious life.

Soon, I gave up and quickly ran away to save my life. Miraculously, the fire brigade came and started to spray water with the water hose at the fire. Everyone also helped to extinguish the fire by flinging pails of water at it. Soon, the fire was extinguished and sighs of relief could be heard. However, many villagers had died. Only two-third of the villagers survived. I felt very disappointed by the number of deaths and continued to wonder how I could get back home.

Suddenly, I re-appeared at my study table with the book about the Bukit Ho Swee fire in front of me and when I looked at the clock, it showed the same time that I had pushed the button. Only a second had passed. That 'magical' experience in the book transported me back to time and get a taste of the big Bukit Ho Swee fire!

I could not help but feel proud of myself for some weird reason. Maybe it was because I did not die in the fire or because I was not stuck in the sixties forever. However, I knew that I should learn to think before I act. After this experience, I decided to never do things before without thinking twice.







# A Robbery in the Playground

A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“Wah liaol!” “My grandmother shouted from the other side of the living room. She was munching on some fish balls she had bought from the local fish ball stall while watching the news. The television had broken down and flashed a series of colours.

“And to think it was just at the very exciting news! Now I have to ask nosy Auntie Lin what had happened. Yes, Mia, she owns a television too.” She explained noisily, emphasising on the fact that our pesky neighbour had a television.

Then, she continued, “Auntie Lin bought the last television from that shop down the street. Yes, and your dad’s Uncle wanted to buy it! Oh boy! He had saved up all his money, that desperate fellow. What a shame to find out that they were all sold out! Selling like hot cakes!”

I tried turning on the Rediffusion to listen out for any news, but to no avail. Grandmother’s ranting was so loud! I could not take all the ear-piercing complaints from my grandmother so I decided to ask my sister whether she would accompany me to the playground. Inside my sister’s room, I could hear the delighted shriek of my grandmother, saying it was back on. The television had finally started working!

She started ranting again, intentionally making all of us hear it. My sister sighed, knowing how tiring it was to listen to complaints and grumbles. She willingly agreed to accompany me and asked Mother if we could go.

After pestering Mother for a few moments, I finally got her approval and happily went off with my elated sister. Although my sister and I were really close, we had many differences. I was glad that she was very willing to accompany me down as she usually hated going to the playground.

“Those irritating mosquitos!” my sister would say. We had finally reached the playground, going down the endless flights of stairs from our flat. To my surprise, it was dead quiet. Usually, it was very packed and there even would be long queues for certain rides, such as the rusty swing and the sandbox. But the empty playground was even better. No one to fight with for anything!

My sister and I took turns to ride the slide made of wooden planks. Many adults thought it was not safe and we could get splinters. How would they know! The wood was very smooth, and made with care. There were no little bits of wood sticking out. Sometimes, cheeky kids, probably aged seven to nine, would pour water, and sometimes even soapy water! They would do that to make the ride even more slippery, riding down in almost a second. The other children would have to clean it off if they did not want their ride to be too fast. Ever since there were many complaints, I had stopped seeing those mischievous children.

We were having fun at the little jungle gym area, swinging on monkey bars and climbing on top of them. There were little hopscotch areas where we played at for a good ten minutes. At the heart of the playground, there was a small yet popular wooden box that contained many games. For example, five stones,



*By Marielle Ang  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*



an inflatable coloured ball, chapteh and many others. We challenged each other at five stones, then had a competition of who could hang on the monkey bars for the longest time. We ran around from one rain tree to another, then going in circles around the pong pong trees.

We played a game of tag in the playground. I climbed up to the tallest area in the playground and jumped down, and my faded-blue t-shirt nearly got stuck on a rain tree's branch. We squealed in delight as we chased each other round and about the playground.

After a few more times of exchanging roles between 'catcher', and 'runner' my sister had to go to the toilet. A suspicious looking man shuffled into the vicinity and slumped on the wooden bench. Even though he had a beanie covering his forehead, I could see he had a long, deep scar coming down his eye. His grey jacket, torn and tattered jeans, and his suspicious saunter made him appear very strange. Looking at him sent chills down my spine. He sharply turned his head left and right. His beady eyes, partially covered by his forest green beanie. Underneath the beany hid his unkempt jet black hair. Besides his shaggy and strange appearance, he was shifting from side to side, trying to capture my every move. There was something about him that destroyed the placidness of this playground. I continued minding my own business, hoping my sister would come back soon.

With my back turned, although I was slightly apprehensive, I started my joyous adventure to break my record on hanging off the monkey bars. Suddenly, I heard a gruff roar from behind me. It was the suspicious-looking man!

He held a parang to my neck and shouted, "Give me all your valuables and money!" I stood rooted to the ground, not daring to move an inch. I broke out in a cold sweat that quickly trickled down to my neck.

"I said, give me all your money!" He repeated. I came from a poor family which was in an even worse state after Grandmother insisted on buying the television when it released. I did not want to give up my ten dollars for a threat.

I stammered an 'okay' before pretending to have lost my money, even though I knew it was safely stored in my back pocket. I fumbled about in my pocket, hoping to stall for time.

I knew I had hope when I saw my sister heading back here. Her mouth went agape when she saw the parang at my neck. She ran towards the nearby telephone booth about 15 meters away and called the police. I kept stalling for time and apologising. My sister hid behind a rain tree as he scanned the area for passers-by. As soon as I saw men running towards her in their mighty blue uniforms, I pushed him away and ran. I ran towards my sister and almost cried. She comforted me while the policemen were arresting the robber.

One of the policemen explained to me that he was a very infamous robber and they had been trying to catch him for five months.

"There are many gangsters around here. We have been trying our best to locate more and more gangs, I must thank your sister for calling us on time so we could catch him and make sure no one got hurt. The government has been hiring more policemen to deal with this situation. We are terribly sorry."

Before he could continue, the treacherous robber, hands handcuffed behind him, snarled, "You call this fair? After the war, many things had changed,



the silly government didn't bother to give me education! I never learnt how to earn money, I never learnt how to speak properly! I had to secretly listen to the lessons at the school! I don't know how to make money, pass interviews or find a job! What do you expect me to do!" I took pity on him, but then I remembered he was a sly person, and threatened to kill me. I could not believe he was sorry.

They called him Ah Beng in his gang, but no one knew his real name. It did not matter though. I should not take my education, and safety for granted. I would always be grateful for many things Singapore has but I learnt that low crime did not mean no crime. I was glad that I was safe.



“What! You don’t even know about your own race and you still want to participate in a cultural competition!” Mother shouted. “You are going to disgrace our family, standing at the competition venue with a blank look on your face.”

“Mom! Just because I failed my history test does not mean that I do not know about my race and Hui Lin stood up when Miss Lee asked my class if anyone wanted to participate in the competition. You knew I could not lose to her. If I did, she would give me that smug look she always gives me whenever Miss Lee reads her composition to the whole class,” I argued back.

“Stop competing with her for heaven’s sake, Ming Hui, and stop talking back. Go and eat your dinner now!” Mother screamed at me.

“Fine!” I muttered to myself.

My dinner was the same old boring rice dish, fish and some vegetables. My father works as a cook in one of the hawker centres whereas my mother stays at home to take care of the house. I have a baby brother, Ming Liang, and an elder sister, Ming En, who is 23 years old and works in a supermarket as a cashier when she ends her lessons in university. I study in Victoria Junior College.

Every day, after school, I would rush to my part-time work place - Popular, to put the books and stationery in place. At 8.00 pm, I would walk back home to have my dinner which my mother would have cooked. After that I would do the dishes while my sister would sweep and mop the floor. I would then take a quick shower and start on my homework and at 10.00pm, would be my bedtime.

The next day, when I was walking home from school, I saw a poster about volunteering at the 17th SEA Games that would be held on the 12th – 20th June 1993! That was when I started to get excited. “Maybe I could volunteer with my best friend Yue Ling. Now, that would be fun!” I thought to myself, trying to forget about the argument my mother and I had yesterday. After a few minutes, I made up my mind to ask Yue Ling the next day and hopefully she would say yes.

“Ok! See you at the registration counter tomorrow!” I shouted gleefully.

“Ok, ok, Ming Hui! You have been saying that for the past ten minutes. If you say that one more time, I will not go,” Yue Ling sounded annoyed and I definitely did not want to take the risk so I kept my mouth shut. I could not help but to grin at Yue Ling almost every minute.

Yue Ling has long brown hair that is always tied into a ponytail and she loves to wear her brown sarong kebaya that her father had bought for her when she was 14. She still can fit in even though she is now 18, one year older than me.

When I was eating dinner, I asked my mother if I could volunteer and she said yes. So that night, I was jumping with joy.

My heartbeat quickened as perspiration trickled down my temples. I squinted my eyes hoping to see Yue Ling but to no avail. What should I do? Today is the last day for registration! “Maybe Yue Ling is being held up by something and will register later so I should register first before there are no more spaces.” I mumbled to myself.



*By Chionh Yee Ting  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*





But, she did not register. “Why didn’t you sign up yesterday?” I growled at Yue Ling. “Now I have to be alone during the helping of the SEA Games.”

“My... my... my grandfather just passed away yesterday...” Yue Ling said as tears welled up in her eyes.

Hearing this, my heart melted. “Oh... I am sorry.” I said comfortingly to her.

“No don’t be. It is my fault for not turning up.” She said while her tears slowly dried up.

“Never mind about the volunteering. Now, we just need to get you back to the bubbly, cheerful Yue Ling.” I said while bursting out in a funny dance and she was laughing hysterically.

The day I was looking forward to but dreading at the same time had finally arrived. “Today is the SEA Games.” I said reluctantly. “And I have to be with strangers.” Maybe I can make a new friend there and maybe I will be awarded some kind of certificate for participating or something. I thought to myself, trying to be positive. I then got ready all my necessities like my water bottle and some biscuits in case I got hungry and set off for my adventure.

When I reached the National Stadium, I stared at the number of people there. It was just like a bookstore during a massive sale! In the big group of people, I noticed a girl wearing a sky blue sarong kebaya. She had her long black hair tied into a bun and I immediately knew who she was - my arch enemy, Hui Lin. “Aiyo, jialat liao, if I am in the same group as her, I will kill myself,” I cried out.

Finally, as organisers were beginning to make the announcements, I was praying for Hui Lin not to be in my group. “Lim Ming Hui and Tan Hui Lin, you are both in charge of giving out the water to the participants and .....” “What of all people, HER!” I muttered fumingly.

When we were giving out the water bottles to the participants, I smiled at Hui Lin, hoping she could change her stinky attitude. But as I expected, she scowled at me and walked away. I stared at her in disbelief. How could she! There I was trying to be friendly and she was scowling at me!

Fortunately, my luck seemed to be smiling at me after that. While I was giving out the water bottles, I met a boy and a girl who was around my age. They told me their names were Sandy and Theresa, and they were here from Australia and Malaysia to participate in the swimming relay. I introduced myself, happy that I had made some friends and continued giving out the water bottles.

After I was done, I decide to rest along the line of benches. Sandy and Theresa happened to walk by and decided to sit down with me to chit-chat. At that point of time, I realised that was my chance to increase my knowledge on history so I asked them each about their country and culture. Surprisingly, Hui Lin was also done giving out the water bottles so when she saw us, she joined us. But she continued ignoring me. I asked Sandy and Theresa loads of questions and really learnt more about them, like some of the celebrations Eurasians celebrate and what the Malays eat during Hari Raya, and to my surprise, Hui Lin also told us about her family. She told us that her father is a Eurasian. Hui Lin then told us what her mother told her about the history of Singapore and what they would play when they were young. So I knew more about Singapore and other countries.



As all four of us continued our conversation, I realised we were becoming closer, even for me and Hui Lin. Slowly, Hui Lin and me became close friends.

When it was Sandy's and Theresa's turn, Hui Lin and I cheered for them so loudly that the crowd was literally staring at us. Unsurprisingly, Theresa came in second and, Sandy was three seconds later to come the third. After receiving the award, Sandy and Theresa came to us and we congratulated them. They told us maybe they would come back to visit next year during the holidays.

After the SEA Games had ended, I rushed back home, wishing I could spend more time revising for the Cultural Competition that I momentarily forgot during the SEA Games. Come on Ming Hui! You need to start studying or else you are going to lose! It is already 9 o'clock and the competition is the day after tomorrow! I thought to myself.

Two of my normal days except with more revising and studying had passed. Today was the day. I quickly packed my bag like any other school day and hurried to school. The teacher firstly took my attendance and let me enter the waiting room where there was two students each class.

I played with a student from Class Independence and won and so did Hui Lin. Slowly, Hui Lin and I played against a student from each class and surprisingly, both entered the finals. The finalists should actually be from different classes but since both Hui Lin and I won, the questions given would be harder. But this time, something else was different- Hui Lin and I would be playing as friends instead of enemies.

"Name one game played during the 1970s." the MC asked. I knew this answer so I hit the buzzer- one second later. "Hui Lin." the MC said.

"Chapteh" Hui Lin answered. "One point to Hui Lin!" the MC shouted.

"Next, name one type of food that the Malays will eat during Hari Raya."

Again, Hui Lin hit the buzzer a few seconds earlier. "Ketupat!"

Another point to Hui Lin.

I knew if this continued, I would definitely lose so I speeded up my actions.

"Name one festival the Eurasians celebrate."

This time I hit the buzzer before Hui Lin. "Christmas!" "One point to Ming Hui." the MC shouted. Yes! I made a comeback. I said to myself. Lady Luck was smiling at me after that as I won the next few rounds. Now it was a tie. If I won the last round, I would win or else...

My palms were sweaty and my forehead was beaded with perspiration as the MC said the next question aloud. "When did Singapore separate with Malaysia?"

I immediately hit the buzzer. But Hui Lin was faster. Oh no! If Hui Lin answers the question correctly, all my hard work will be wasted!

Hui Lin hesitated, "Er... 1968!"



"It is wrong!" the MC shouted again. "Ming Hui!"

"1965!" I answered immediately.

"Okay, so now....., the winner is..... Ming Hui!" the MC screamed into the mike gleefully. Yes! I had done it! I was then awarded a certificate and a \$50 supermarket voucher. Later that day, a lot of my friends came to congratulate me and even Hui Lin.

After school, Yue Ling and I decided to celebrate by going to our favourite bakery to have a slice of rainbow cake which was my favourite. But before we went, I asked Yue Ling to wait for a while, and I hurried back to the school gate. I saw Hui Lin there and ran towards her.

"Do you want to accompany me and Yue Ling to celebrate?" I asked.

"What for?" Hui Lin asked.

"To celebrate me making a new friend!" I exclaimed

"Sure. Why not." Hui Lin replied, beaming.

I smiled at Hui Lin. This time, she did not scowl at me or walk away. But instead, she smiled back.



# ✿✿ A Bombing at the ✿✿ Singapore River



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“We can still save Singapore!” I said to my old classmate, Shu Ying, while standing on the rubble of public transports-- hovercrafts, MTT (Mass Turbo Transit), rocket-powered vehicles, etc.

“But how? We’re hopeless. We are the only ones left.”, Shu Ying muttered incoherently.

“I have been working on something that I didn’t tell you...follow me.” I dragged my legs through the rubble as I headed towards my lab. I walked down a sewer with Shu Ying towards a door that was painted black.

I pulled out a key from my suitcase and slipped it into the keyhole. I slowly opened the door and let Shu Ying enter then clapped twice. The lights switched on, revealing a huge, hand-crafted, metal machine with two big words ‘Time Machine’. A large screen, about half the machine’s size was attached to it.

I slipped a photo out of a drawer, “Remember this?” I asked her.

“Of course I do. It was Alan, wasn’t it?” I nodded. “If we could go back in time to get him, Singapore wouldn’t be in this state,” I said while touching the large machine.

“What are we waiting for? Let’s go!” Shu Ying excitedly said.

“Don’t you think we’ll need some equipment first?” I said. I grabbed a device that I had been working on for 10 years. It was the same size as my iPhone 14 plus with a screen and a camera lens. “This is a thumbprint detector. I just have to go to the highest building in the past Singapore, scan the villain’s thumbprint on the video-picture then scan everyone’s thumbprint in the country to find the match.”

“Wow!” Shu Ying said, surprised and amazed.

“Let’s go!” Shu Ying said, full of energy.

After sitting down on the three-seater, leather, cushioned seat, I put on the over-the-shoulder restraints, signalling Shu Ying to do so as well. I tapped the screen twice, entered the security passcode, and then entered ‘Singapore\_1951\_3\_April’ - the day of the accident.

“Let’s GO!” Shu Ying yelled.

I slammed the big red button, an enormous gush of wind slapped us in the face. A blinding light flashed in front of us. Half a second later, we were in an old Kampong village. We stared in bemusement as we walked around the place.

There was a green plate connected to a long metal bar that said ‘Bukit Ho Swee’. Rows and rows of wooden frame huts with thatched roofs filled the area. Then we continued walking through the narrow aisle, until we exited. Residences living in the huts stared curiously at us as if we were aliens from another universe.

We then saw a man pulling a large wooden carriage with cushions on the seats.



*By Natasha Lye Shi Ling  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*





We asked him if he could take us near a statue.

“Shen me?” he questioned. I think he was either speaking in Malay or Mandarin.

“Chinatown, okay?” he asked, realising that we could not speak the language he was speaking. I nodded as Shu Ying gave him thumbs up. He lifted the carriage up with all his might and started walking, the longer he walked, the more momentum we gained, the faster we moved.

Soon, we reached some place that looked like a market. We paid the man then went in to ‘Chinatown’. After buying tons of stuff, we set off to find the statue.

After trying to ask for directions, we managed to get a large river with a large bronze statue: arms folded, leg slightly lifted.

“This must be him!” Shu Ying excitedly squealed.

“Remember we only can catch him after the bombing. If not, we cannot open the statue without being caught or hurting anyone.” I whispered.

We looked at another sign which said ‘Boat Quay’. I dialled the address into the remote to teleport the Time Travel machine to where we were. After I had pressed the teleport button, a second later, a large orb appeared behind us. We crawled into the machine slowly. Then, I pressed the disguise button. A minute later, we were completely disguised.

I then took the Thumbprint scanner and scanned the thumbprint in the photo, then scan the whole of Singapore. Suddenly, a red dot representing the guy in the picture appeared on the screen. As I connected the thumbprint scanner through the large screen, we watched the dot slowly approaching the statue.

“There he is!” Shu Ying shouted.

I put my finger on my lip, signalling her to keep quiet. I pressed the video picture and saw him slowly approaching the camera on the paper and through the screen of the time machine. Luckily, we had put a tracking device on the statue in case we lost track of the tall, lanky, mysterious man. Soon, a group of 10 terrorists dropped a bomb from a large helicopter from above. All the residences evacuated the building, screaming and panicking. If I had recalled correctly, only five people got minor injuries. I did not go out to save anyone. After the terrorist climbed down the ladder from the helicopter, they lifted up the statue and retreated back into the helicopter. Soon, we took off and followed the helicopter closely.

Slowly, the helicopter started to come to a halt, somewhere in the middle of a few clouds. I then realised that it was their hideout. We discreetly landed on the large piece of metal disguised as a very large cloud.

Shu Ying pointed to a dark alley and said, “This way!”

I followed Shu Ying to a large control station with a man wearing a dark brown fedora, wearing a tuxedo and business boots, Alan’s signature look, sitting on a large business chair. He spun his chair around to see our faces and said while rubbing his chin, deep in thought, snapped his finger then said, “Oh, I see! The descendant of Stamford Raffles and his irrelevant friend.”

Shu Ying frowned at him in disgust.



I took a step forward and asked, “Why are you doing this, why do you have to take the life source of Singapore, Alan? We did not do anything to harm you?”

“I want to make my own island instead of becoming the ruler of this pathetic country. So I am going to eliminate every living thing on Singapore, then take everything apart to sell to other countries, to earn all the money!” he hollered.

“Money comes from hard work, effort and time. You can’t just steal a statue and leave!”, I screamed.

Just then Alan pushed a lever. An invisible force field blocked the statue. “Too bad!” he said while walking away.

He then pressed another button, trapping us in a plastic sphere. He walked towards the statue. As I saw him looking at a picture of a family, I heard Ah Gong’s voice ringing in my ears, “Alan’s family passed away many, many decades ago. He has no friends as everyone found him different as he was a nerd.” An idea then sparked, I called, :Hey, Alan! I know you have done many wrong things but, you are a resilient, great, knowledgeable man. I was hoping that I could...perhaps... be your friend...”

Shu Ying glared at me and nudged me. “What are you doing?” she whispered.

“I’d love you to be my friend!” Alan exclaimed.

He then went on and on about how great he was and all about his life story. I handed Shu Ying a pocket knife that I had always put in my windbreaker, behind my back.

After interpreting what was going on, she whispered in my ear, “You’re a genius!”

Slowly but surely she cut a small hole in the corner of the plastic ball, big enough for her to crawl through, while Alan was telling me about the story of the picture of the family. Shu Ying tiptoed towards the lever and carefully pulled it.

I quietly opened my suitcase and took out a tranquillizer dart. As Alan started to weep, he came towards me, switched off the ‘trap’, and then hugged me. At that moment I shoved the dart into his arm. He collapsed on to the ground, tears trickling down to the floor.

“I will never forgive you for what you have done to Singapore!” I exclaimed to his unconscious body.

After helping Shu Ying remove the life source from the statue, we left the 7 foot tall statue there, letting Alan think that we did not do anything. We switched on the force field again and went back to the orb. We discussed on where to put the tiny ball of life source. In the end, we decided to put it somewhere that all Singaporeans know about---The Merlion.

We went to the most modern place in Singapore 1967, after it was just built. We travelled to 1967 and inserted the ball into the Merlion’s mouth. Its eyes lit up like lanterns. After a few seconds, the eyes returned back to its light grey, cement colour.

We let out a sigh of relief, gave each other a hi-five, and then headed back home. When we got back to 2050, Singapore was how I had imagined it to be--- a clean, beautiful garden city, filled with millions of people joyfully laughing and living their lives.



# The Adventures of Xi Yoo and Hon Sheng The Karang Guni Man



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“Honk! Honk! Karang Guni... Honk! Honk!” The usual sound of the familiar horn alerted everyone that he was here. The neighbourhood’s Karang Guni man was well known for his craft and the many rumours that stated that he was able to earn as much as a businessman, a puzzling mystery to some.

“Shut up you! Stop honking your stupid second-hand horn!” Lim Xi Yoo, his neighbour shouted.

“Looking as pudgy as usual Xi Yoo! Just like a pig!” The Karang Guni man shouted back.

“Who are you calling a pig, you dirty freak? You have got no money to buy your own things, that is why you go around taking others!” exclaimed Xi Yoo.

“Up to you, Xi Yoo, whatever you deem fit.” The Karang Guni man sighed, deciding not to add fuel to the fire before another war takes place.

Strolling away, he thought about what Xi Yoo said. “Oh, Hon Sheng, why did you want to become a Karang Guni man? You could have been better off in life – a better pay, a bigger flat-screen television set, a dozen more outfits than you could ever wear. Is this what you really want?

After an exhausting round of collecting second-hand items, he headed home and passed by Xi Yoo’s home. He saw him eating a measly bowl of plain porridge.

“Hey Xi Yoo! Don’t you have enough money to buy proper food? Porridge for lunch for a man like you would definitely not keep you full!” said the Karang Guni man.

“Don’t you know that porridge is healthy and keeps you fit? Stop poking your nose into my business!” Xi Yoo said furiously.

“You finally resolved to stop being unhealthy? That’s a discovery. Well, enjoy your gruel as I go back for a hearty meal of meat and fish and more meat... and more fish!” The Karang Guni man replied with sarcasm as he walked away.

“How is it that he seems so much well off than I am? He is just an old and useless Karang Guni man, unlike me, I work so hard and yet even with Singapore progressing fast, I do not even get a decent enough salary! This is just so unfair!” Xi Yoo said to himself, frowning in the midst of it.

“There must be something fishy going on. I simply do not believe a Karang Guni man is able to make such a good living! I must go and find out for myself the secrets behind this success, or rather, take some for myself...” Xi Yoo thought.

As Xi Yoo observed the padlock on Hong Sheng’s front door, he had pre-empted how to break it and with no time, he was in Hon Sheng’s flat. Walk



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ing into his small flat, the only place he knew Hon Sheng would hide his valuables would be in his bedroom, a small space laden only with the bare necessities. He went to the Karang Guni man's room and searched his bed, surprisingly finding wads and wads of fifty-dollar notes that was even more than expected. Astonished, greed set in in Xi Yoo as he reached out to grab the cash, a vile temptation. However, just as he was about to lay his hands on the notes, he heard the Karang Guni's honk a level below and immediately sneaked out of his house.

The Karang Guni man sighed and told himself, "I ought to get a new lock. The second-hand ones are breaking apart!" Surprisingly, the karang guni man did not suspect much.

While walking on the road, Xi Yoo saw students walking happily wearing their school uniforms. "What is this clothing that the government is emphasising? They are introducing so many economic reforms, such as education! Why are they introducing it only now! I am uneducated because of the government emphasizing on education only now! Since I'm uneducated, how am I going to get a job in new Singapore and earn money! Speaking of money..." Xi Yoo grumbled. Wild thoughts ran through his mind. Xi Yoo had decided what he would do.

The next day, Xi Yoo schemed to steal Karang Guni man's money. Xi Yoo broke into Karang Guni man's house. Just as Xi Yoo was putting the wads of dollar bills into his musty old gunny sack, the Karang Guni Man came home from work. The Karang Guni man thought to himself, "I think I know what is going on. Someone has broken into my house! No wonder my lock was broken yesterday! I should tell those Mata Mata (police) that are patrolling the streets now!"

Karang Guni man immediately ran down to get the Mata Mata but was anxious that he may not have enough time and the burglar would escape!

When Xi Yoo had put every single wad of dollar bills into his gunny sack, he asked himself, "Shall I leave a dollar bill for that pathetic old and useless Karang Guni man?" The immediate answer, no, came to his mind. Xi Yoo was chuckling on his imminent windfall and thought, "This is so easy! I should do this whenever that selfish brat earns money! "

When Xi Yoo was about to escape, Karang Guni man appeared before him. Both of their jaws dropped. "Xi Yoo, you are the burglar! How could you! We are neighbours!" Karang Guni man exclaimed in shock.

"I... I... I..." Xi Yoo stumbled.

"You are going to jail!" The Mata Mata said.

" But I don't want to! How am I supposed to be educated and get a proper job to earn lots of money?" Xi Yoo said anxiously.

" Xi Yoo, don't see it that way! See jail as a new start. You can be educated as you spend your time in jail! Plus, you won't be that lonely as there would be people in the same jail studying as well! I would visit you often too!" The Karang Guni man exclaimed.

Xi Yoo sighed and reluctantly agreed to let the Mata Mata take him away.





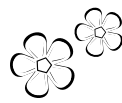
In jail, Xi Yoo decided to study law. Karang Guni man would visit him at least twice a week, as he promised, and Xi Yoo would always look forward to that. He also made friends in jail although there were some gangsters picking on him and his other friend, Nogh Yi. Both of them studied law together and were released together two years later.

Both of them, Xi Yoo and Nogh Yi, worked in a law firm and became lawyers together and eventually became very successful lawyers and partners while Karang Guni man still worked at the same job. Everyone was very happy and became best of friends even as Singapore kept on upgrading.





# Future?



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“Run! Don’t look back! Save yourself...” and that was the end of my father.

Bombs are being dropped, guns are everywhere, food is scarce, water is dirty, and it is world war three. A war against artificial intelligence-SiSi- and robots-ChenMin- a war we mankind made to be.

“Help! Help! My child is dying...” cried a mother sitting by the road with a child probably two months old. Life is hard; people are struggling, SiSis is too smart for any of us to compete with. The SiSis are smarter than Einstein or Thomas Edison, even put together.

We are in trouble and no one is here to save us, we have to fight with our creation. It has been three years since the war started, no one is safe; no one is to be trusted.

My mother and sister were both hypnotized by the ChenMins. I have no plan, no idea; there is nothing I can do to save them. My plans in the past years have all gone to waste, always failing.

I am going mad, my family isn’t safe, and I feel like a failure. I got them into trouble, but I can’t even save them.

I used my father as a shield, my mother as a decoy, and my sister as an undercover spy, and my father is already dead. I used each and every one of them for my own selfish needs, never thinking... thinking of what could happen.

Wait, I hear a ChenMin coming. I feel sweat on my forehead, my breathing is getting heavier, what am I to do?

I am safe again. I am in an old house with a ceiling about to fall, fungus everywhere, cracks in the windows and most obvious, bricks all in halves on the floor.

There are SiSis everywhere, in stores, markets, toilets, homes, schools and anywhere you can imagine. ChenMins patrolling the streets, bow down to them or die by a rifle. SiSi, talk bad about them and become a prisoner. Whatever you do, do not spit on the streets, they will beat you till you drop.

Life is extremely stressful here, the robots and artificial intelligence think they are royalty. Our domestic helpers now their slaves, the construction workers making statues of the SiSis and ChenMins. They are truly ugly creatures, the SiSis look like crabs with feelers like a cockroach and ChenMins like a cross between Ikan Billis and chicken.

A ChenMin is coming, I need to run..... Where am I, where is this place? I hear heavy footsteps, those of...SiSis, these doors look extremely hi-tech, the windows locked and tight security, I am in Arti Head, the headquarters for the artificial intelligence, the controller.

I need to save my family, this is my only chance, and I need a plan. I, I... have a plan. I need to plan my route, but I am tied up with electrical wires, they will tighten if I move, the ropes will tighten. I can’t breathe, I can feel my pulse now, I am going to faint. Wait, I feel my laser, it is on now.



By Deborah Ann Ng Fong Ling  
Primary 5 Lily



5, 4, 3, 2, 1, I am free. I am in the execution room? I can feel sweat on my forehead, my feet stiffening by the second.

I finally left the room, I am behind a big trolley. It's clear I am going in, I am in, in the control room. The person who created this room is extremely silly, putting an execution room right beside the control room.

The buttons have labels all over, this should be easy.

There are ChenMin costumes. Well for protection. Ok a1299hijk usually means good.

Why is my hat off? Oh no! The SiSis are here. That familiar rose smell, that black wavy hair, with those perfect rosy cheeks, my mother is with them. She should be the one in the kitchen making batteries for the ChenMIns and SiSis to eat. Why is she here to kill me?

My mind is going wild, i am baffled, what is going on?

"Muahahahahahahahaha, you thought I was captured by those robots, but your sister and I are the masterminds," she ended off with that disgusting laugh again.

"But, but how, why? You were my role model, you killed dad!" I cried. Warm tears rolling down my cheeks and at that moment, my love for my mother was gone.

"Your father never loved me, he only cared about you and work. Your sister and I were always outcast, you never cared or helped us. Your father never cared. He took your places and ordered us to serve you both. Lee Rong Shi Samuel, you are the true bad guy!" she screamed with tears rolling down her face.

"Bring him to the execution room immediately!" my mother screamed.

"You do not have to do this, I loved you. I looked up to you, I was your follower..." and those were my last words to her.

They brought me to the execution room. They took out the tazer, and my sister with her shirt soaked in water, came dashing in just before the ChenMin instructed the SiSi to kill me. She took me into her arms, and I smiled and said "At least you knew I love you." and that was the end of me, crimson blood was coming from my chest, my mother had shot an arrow into my heart.





# Into the Unexpected Future

A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

"Class, Singapore has just gained its independence. We would like you to think of what Singapore would be in fifty years. This is a project that will account for ten per cent of your mid-year exam scores," Miss Tan said as she held a stack of worksheets.

"And I will be pairing you up,"

Immediately, I grabbed my best friend, Mei Xin's hand.

"Jia Xuan and... Fatimah," Miss Tan announced, eyeing me suspiciously.

"Walao eh!" I cried out. "Cher, can change partner or not? Please?"

"No, you need to learn to work with other people, Jia Xuan."

I grimaced at the thought of working with Fatimah. She was bossy, stubborn and irritating. No one in our class liked her and she did not like any of us either. Fatimah scowled at me as I walked to the empty seat next to her. See? No one even wanted to sit next to her.

"I hope we have a great time together," I said to her, in a sarcastic tone.

A few days after, I dragged my feet to school with a heavy heart. How were we going to work together? Fatimah was so uncooperative and we had not accomplished anything for the past two days. Being the only child in her wealthy family, she always wanted things her way. We needed to do something about the project sooner or later. If not, we were going to have a big problem.

"Hey! Have you thought of anything over these few days?" I chirped, trying my best to sound polite.

"I have thought of a brilliant idea," Fatimah bragged. "I bet you haven't with that tiny brain of yours,"

Stay calm, Jia Xuan, I told myself. After this project, everything will be over and done with. I shrugged off the rude comment, and asked her "So, what is your brilliant idea?"

"My idea is that, Singapore will become a clean and green city," she boasted.

"That's all?" I asked.

"Yeah, what did you expect?"

"That's your brilliant idea?"

"Yeah... Isn't it amazing?"

I stared at her in stupor. That was her 'brilliant idea'! I could have thought of that in a minute!

"Hey, I spent time and effort thinking of such a wonderful idea, and you couldn't even think of one, right? That's why I never wanted you as a partner, you are so dim-witted!" Fatimah jeered.



*By Hannah Low Si En  
Primary 5 Daisy*





I could not take it anymore, this is enough! She had just insulted me in front of everybody!

"I have thought of a marvellous idea, not like your lousy one! Anyways, you are so uncooperative and rude. We will never finish this project on time!" I retorted.

"Oh yeah, what is your marvelous idea?"

"I...I..."

I could not think of anything! But I could not lose to Fatimah!

"Eh, look at them! So retro leh! I going to post on STOMP,"

"Yah, you better hash tag 'retro girls arguing'. Sure get a lot of 'likes' one!"

"Oh gosh, just look at their school uniform and hair! The look is so 60's! I wonder if they are playing dress up,"

"STOMP?"

"Hashtag?"

"Likes?"

"What?!" Fatimah and I turned around.

"Haha! Look at them, they are really into character, acting like they don't know what we are talking about!" A middle-aged lady holding her hand phone remarked.

Where are we? Who are they? Am I dreaming? Also, why is this place so hot? Lofty skyscrapers surrounded us and some were still being constructed. Was that a humongous Ferris wheel? And a gargantuan lotus flower? A plane without wings, on three buildings? Even my favourite fruit; the durian was enormous and placed in the middle of a huddle of buildings that reached the sky.

I could not believe my eyes! I was confused. What was even worse, was that this place was covered in rubbish. The rubbish bins placed along the road were of no use. The river in front of us had murky water and emitted a foul smell. We were surrounded by hazy air that caused the air to have a musty stench.

Aunties and uncles donned in interesting pieces of clothing stopped by us and stared at Fatimah and I as if we were animals in a zoo. Had they never seen two lost 11 year olds? Speaking of Fatimah, she stood rooted to the ground and tears were streaming down her face like an ever flowing river. She trembled in fear as she held the skirt of her pinafore tightly, turning her head left and right rapidly to scan her surroundings.

"Oi, look! National day parade rehearsal!" the same lady pointed her finger at the polluted sky.

A fleet of aircrafts flew past the sky in the formation of a '50'. How cool! Next, a helicopter holding a giant Singapore flag with two other smaller helicopters behind glided through the air. I recognised that flag! Does that mean Singapore is 50 years old? I had travelled through time?

"Here you go, little girl. Thank you for helping us reminisce the old times.



Why don't you and your friend go and get some ice cream?" A middle-aged man clad in a suit and clutching a brief case said with a warm smile. He passed a shiny coin to me and I stared at it in wonder.

"2015?" I muttered to myself. "Fatimah, we are in 2015! We have travelled through time! This is Singapore! Singapore is 50 years old, we travelled through time Fatim-

"I want to go home, Jia Xuan! I don't care if this is Singapore, whether we have travelled through time or even if we are in outer space! I want to go home..."

Ugh! That Fatimah. Although we are in a place that is foreign to us, this is so interesting! I had never heard of time travel. Only in storybooks, that is. I could wait to start exploring '2015' Singapore! However, this Singapore was extremely filthy. There was litter everywhere and nobody seems to care about the environment.

The Singapore I live in was even cleaner than this. If this was going to go on further, Singapore would turn in a giant landfill site. That would not be my ideal Singapore to live in, in the future.

"Robbery!"

"Burglary!"

"Help! Someone stole my purse!"

That was what we heard every thirty minutes. Fatimah had finally agreed to move along. We were not going anywhere with her whining like a baby. What had happened to Singapore? There were gangsters lurking in every alley way, some thieves ready to pounce at you once you walked past. Pickpockets roamed the streets during peak hours. Were there even police protecting the community? Were there even rules here?

If nobody was going to change this, we will. Well, if Fatimah agrees.

Not long after, Fatimah and I had wandered into a deserted part of Singapore. The air was thin, and it was dark and slightly eerie. Buildings that looked like it would crumble if a gust of wind blew and flickering street lights surrounded us. I could feel Fatimah trembling beside me.

"Ha! There is nothing to be afraid of, scaredy-cat!" I said to Fatimah, trying to cover up the fact that I was slightly scared as well.

Just at this moment, a burly gangster with bulging muscles appeared before us and stared at us menacingly.

"Your money or your life!"

He held a knife at my throat while grabbing Fatimah's wrist. Fear robbed me of my speech and I felt a wave of terror rush through me. Strangely enough, Fatimah looked at me with a sense of confidence.

"Run!" Fatimah commanded.

It was as if everything was happening in slow motion. Fatimah pulled out a small bottle from her pocket while struggling to escape from the man's clutches. I swiftly turned around and sprinted towards the empty road. Fatimah



held the bottle near the man's face with quivering hands. Within a split second, she sprayed his eyes and he released his grip on her.

"Arghh!!" The man covered his eyes with his hands, groaning.

Kicking his back, Fatimah ran towards me, arms flailing. She had just saved my life! That was such a brave act. I would have never thought Fatimah would do something so courageous. She was usually very timid, not even daring to talk to teachers sometimes. She went out of her comfort zone, just to save me!

"I can't... believe... I did that!" Fatimah exclaimed, panting.

"Well, that was some pretty cool stunt you did!" I said while pulling her away from that dangerous alley.

"Like me falling on my face flat before kicking him?" Fatimah said, clutching a small spray bottle, which read 'medicated oil'.

Both of us burst out into laughter. Fatimah was not what I thought she really was, she had a kind heart. I felt so guilty about the way I had treated her all this time. Without her, I don't think I would be alive right now! She was a truly a good friend.

"Fatimah, I never thought I would say this, but then again-"

"I hear the ice cream bell! Let's go and get some ice cream! Faster, Jia Xuan!"

Still, Fatimah was quite annoying. And greedy.

Suddenly, a flash of light wiped across my eyes. I looked around and found myself outside my school, and the ice cream man ringing his old rusty bell. I was back in 1965! A familiar silhouette was standing in front of me, I then realised I was queuing for ice cream. I tapped her on the shoulder, and a bewildered Fatimah, turned around and looked equally astonished as I was.

After regaining my composure, I said to her with a smirk, "Don't you want some ice cream after that journey?"

"...and that's why, it is our responsibility to keep our Singapore-" Fatimah said.

"Safe and clean!" I said, finishing the presentation.

"Well done girls! I knew you two would be able to work together. It's as if you two went into future Singapore to gather all these information to create such great work!" Miss Tan praised us, with a smile plastered on her face.

I winked at Fatimah, and she smiled back. It was a secret, only the two of us would ever know.



# Adventures in the Past



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

It is 6.45 a.m. on 23 March 2015. “Waaa!” My mother wailed from the living room. I was getting ready to go to school. My twin sister, Ruby, and I decided to go and find out why our mother was crying.

“M-Mr Lee... K-K-Kuan Yew p-p-passed away... t-three hours ago! Waaaa!” Our mother told us between copious sobs and wails.

“Who is Mr Lee Kuan Yew?” Ruby asked with a puzzled look on her face. My mother stopped crying for a moment.

“He was our first Prime Minister and... and...” our mother replied and burst into tears again. We decided to leave her alone and continue to prepare for school.

After a quick breakfast of bread and jam, my seven-year-old sister, Topaz, Ruby and I set off on our ten minute walk from our bungalow in Chua Chu Kang to school. We were talking and laughing gaily when Topaz suddenly burst out, “Hey! Let me show you something in the dark woods over there!” Reluctantly, we crossed the road and into the woods.

Topaz led the way, pushing away the leaves and twigs. After ten minutes of walking, Topaz turned to me with an embarrassed look on her face. She whispered, “Do you know where we are? I think we are lost...”

Upon hearing that, my face flushed red with fury as I exclaimed, “What? You brought us here and now you say we are lost? If it wasn’t for you, we’d be in school by now!” Furious, I took the lead and continued walking.

Five minutes later, I saw a faint speck of daylight and headed in that direction. “Finally!” I thought as we exited the woods.

We could hear people talking in different dialects; Hokkien, Teochew, Hakka, Cantonese and Hockchew. Wait a minute, people do not speak dialects nowadays! Why is there nobody speaking in English? I studied my surroundings and saw that there were hawkers selling satay and wanton noodles, and squatting on the dirty and uneven floor were the customers eating the food! Who does that? I was thinking a string of thoughts when suddenly, a petite voice whispered into my ear, “Ummm, there is a crowd standing over there. Shall we go check out what the commotion is?” I turned around to find Ruby talking to me. As shy as she is, she never, I repeat, never, talks to anyone. I took my sisters’ hands and led them to the where the crowd was.

“We...democracy....I, Lee Kuan Yew.....” I heard several words spoken by the dashing young man who stood on the platform in front of us. “Is this the Mr Lee Kuan Yew who Mother was talking about? I thought Mother said he had just passed away? This is all so weird!” I mumbled to myself, deep in thought. Then, it struck me! Of course! We had travelled back in time!

Excited, I whispered to Topaz and Ruby, “I think we have travelled back in time!”

Topaz gasped and exclaimed, “Yay! Another adventure! Awesome! Where shall we go first?”



By Leng Hoe Yoke Jade  
Primary 5 Hibiscus





However, Rubystammered, “Noway! I amsc-scared. Please! I wantto go home!”

“Don’t be a coward, Ruby. It’s okay. We will find a way out eventually. Come on, let’s ask the people here whether they know the way to go home.” I assured her.

We approached a young local and Topaz asked him, “Excuse me, do you know how to get back to Modern Singapore? Excuse me? Hello? CAN YOU HEAR ME! ARE YOU DEAF?”

He did not answer and completely ignored Topaz. He only continued listening to Mr Lee Kuan Yew’s speech. “What an impolite person he is!” I thought to myself as I walked to another local to ask. Still the same reaction. He ignored me and talked to his friend instead. Sighing, I told my sisters, “Why don’t we go back to the woods and, perhaps, find our way back home?” My sisters nodded their heads and we headed back to the woods.

I noticed that the trees in the woods were shorter than the trees back in modern Singapore. Must be due to the many decades that had passed. Some time through our journey, Ruby suddenly burst out, “I’m hungry! Can I eat something?”

“Yeah! I’m famished! We can eat the packed lunch that Mom had packed for us,” Topaz added. I felt my stomach grumble too. I looked at my watch. What?! We have been walking for three hours already!

“Okay. We can have a break. Just don’t eat too much as I don’t know how long we’ll be stuck here.” I replied. I found a good spot to sit and sat down. Topaz, Ruby and I ate some food. I tried to call my mother with my iphone 6 but to no avail as there was no wifi connection. Obviously.

Fifteen minutes later, Topaz, Ruby and I had finished eating. We set off again, deeper in the woods.

“Umm...I hear some faint voices in that direction. Can we go there and see?” Topaz pleaded sheepishly.

“Fine. Just don’t get us into more trouble this time,” I replied, letting Topaz take the lead. Fortunately, we exited the woods once again in five minutes.

By that time, the sky was already getting dark. I spotted some kampongs nearby the woods.

“Why don’t we ask the people living in those kampongs whether they can provide us a place to spend the night?” I suggested, feeling a little tired. Topaz and Ruby immediately agreed and we headed towards the kampongs.

I knocked on the door of the first kampong. No answer. I knocked on the door of the second kampong. A few second later, a middle-aged looking woman answered the door.

“Hello! I am Aunty Monica. How can I help you?” she asked. Instantly, Topaz asked politely, “Do you mind if we stay in your kampong tonight? We have no place to sleep.”

“Of course! Come in, come in! Welcome to my home!” Aunty Monica replied, ushering us into her kampong. Once in the house, we dumped our school bags in one corner and settled into chairs that Aunty Monica had pulled

out for us.

“Are you children hungry? I have some rice and soya sauce to spare.” Auntie Monica asked us.

“No thank you, Auntie Monica! We are fine.” I answered, before yawning.

“You three must be tired. You can sleep on the mats in the spare room. I’ll be in my room just next to yours. You can come and tell me if anything happens. Sleep tight!” Auntie Monica told us as she showed us to our room.

“Thank you, Auntie Monica! Good night!” Topaz said before we settled down to sleep.

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!” The chirping of chickens woke me up the next morning. “Chickens? Why are there chickens in my house?” I wondered. Then it struck me. I was not in my house. I was in Auntie Monica’s house! Yawning, I got up and woke Ruby and Topaz who were sleeping next to me.

“Wake up, sleepy heads! We are in Auntie Monica’s house, remember?” I whispered into their ears. Immediately, Topaz opened her eyes and exclaimed, “Adventure time! Ruby! Wake up! What shall we do first? Ruby! Wake up!”

“Shhh! People are still sleeping you know? Don’t be so loud!” Rolling my eyes, I shushed my overly excited sister. Once Ruby woke up, we made our way to the living room.

“Good morning, children! Feeling hungry? My friend gave me some you tiao. Would you three like to have that?” A cheerful Auntie Monica greeted us. Upon hearing that, Ruby immediately squealed, “Oooh! You tiao! My favourite!” Auntie Monica smiled at Ruby and took out a plate of five you tiao. We each took one piece and happily munched on it.

After breakfast, I asked Auntie Monica, “Can you tell me more about Mr Lee Kuan Yew?”

“Oh! LKY just happens to be my brother!” Auntie Monica exclaimed. I stared at her, mouth agape, hardly believing what I heard.

“Well, LKY was the first Prime Minister of Singapore and he formed the People’s Action Party(PAP), the leading political party in Singapore. I am very proud of my brother.” Auntie Monica continued.

“What year is it?” I asked Auntie Monica.

“It is 1974, my dear.” She replied. I thanked her and joined my sisters in their noisy chat.

“Ruby, Topaz, I think we should go back to the woods one last time and try to get home before night falls.” I told my sisters. We carried our school bags and went to look for Auntie Monica.

“Auntie Monica, we have to get going. Good bye!” We bid farewell to Auntie Monica before heading back to the forest.

This time, I took the lead and in half an hour, I got us back home in year 2015. Once out of the woods, Topaz exclaimed, “That was awesome! Let’s



go back again some time!”

“Noooo!” Ruby and I shouted in unison, appalled that our sister wanted to repeat such an episode.

From this adventure, I learnt how Mr Lee Kuan Yew contributed to the hustling and bustling Singapore we have today.



# ✿ A Gripping murder ✿



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

"No! I want to sit here and watch television! You sit at the corner of the sofa and keep quiet!" The obstinate sixteen-year-old Hui Min glared at her even more obstinate sister, eyes glittering with fury. Shan Le stared back just as steadily. With a huge sigh, Shan Le gave in and settled herself onto the three-meter long sofa.

The next day, the two sisters were bickering as loudly as the day before as the chauffeur drove the family car towards the private school that both sisters had attended. Hui Min started to ignore Shan Le and applied her lipstick, looking at her compact mirror at the same time. All of a sudden, the two-meter car screeched to a halt so roughly that Hui Min hit her head on the seat in front of her, causing the lipstick to scrawl over her face.

She hollered at the top of her voice to the driver "Driver! What do you think you are doing, driving like that? I'll complain to.... What on earth is that?"

The scene in front of them was chaotic, people were running everywhere. A beer bottle flew out of nowhere and shattered with a loud 'CRASH' right in front of the car.

"Ahh!!!" Shan Le was whimpering in the back seat.

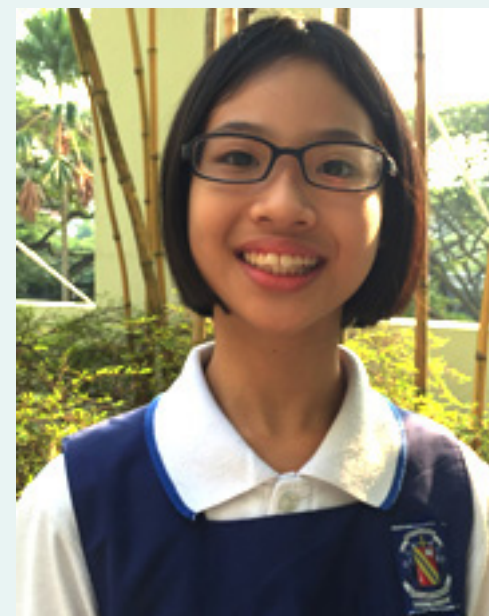
The driver, whose name was He Liang, immediately turned the car and backed out of the chaos. Hui Min's legs were still shaking like jelly as the car sped back to the family's Chinese bungalow.

"Today, a riot broke out. All the bus drivers who were fired not long ago rioted today," the news reporter said in a solemn tone on television. "Buses could not leave the interchanges and the services were disrupted. The riot has left four dead and many injured. The rioters were protesting about the bad working conditions and low pay. The police tried to break up the rioters using water spray and tear gas but it did not work. The public is not allowed to go outdoors from nine p.m. to seven a.m. for safety reasons."

"What! Daddy!! That means that I can't go out to buy my favourite tock- tock sweet from Uncle Tan? I am on my last packet already because of Shan Le!" Hui Min whined.

Shan Le was peeling the layers of the rainbow kueh that their mother had packed for them. "It's not my fault! Who told you to buy such a small packet?!" Shan Le protested through a mouthful of kueh, making her voice muffled and funny-sounding. Hui Min immediately dropped the subject and kept muttering to herself.

The very next day, Hui Min went to the place where the riot had happened. Papers fluttered everywhere, some on fire. Empty cars lined the road, some tipped to one side. The police had cordoned off the entire area where the dead bodies lay. Hui Min walked into the tent. She was turned off by the putrid stench that came from the body there. She almost threw up as the awful smell invaded her sensitive nostrils. Even though she was not supposed to be there, something told her to look at the dead bodies. She approached the body warily, like she was afraid that it would jump up at her.



*By Rachel Lauren  
Chung Shi Qi  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*





“What are you thinking, girl? This person was long dead. RELAX!” Hui Min thought to herself as she forced herself to take in a deep, shaky breath. However, when she looked closer, she realised that the person was her grandfather!”

All of a sudden, the world around her seemed to blur as tears welled up in her eyes. Big, round drops fell down her cheeks. At that same moment, a flame seemed to ignite in her, a desire to find out the truth about the culprit and bring him to justice. She pushed her way out of the tent. She rushed home and grabbed the fingerprinting powder and a brush. Running back, she brushed it all over the body, at the same time saying, “ Sorry Grandpa, I’ll find that person. I SWEAR I WILL!!!!”

After the powder cleared away, some fingerprints that were not there before appeared. She also found that there was a slash right in the middle of the his stomach.

The police officer, a sergeant, looked over Hui Min’s shoulder and commented “That cut looks like it came from a kitchen knife. You know, the kind of knife that is used to cut thin meat, like the char siew that they sell at the wanton mee stall.”

Hui Min nodded, showing that she heard the officer. She decided to go over to the wanton noodles stall. She came up with a plan to distract the owner, Uncle Lim. As Hui Min snooped around the shop, Shan Le would distract Uncle Lim by having a very long conversation with him on purpose.

Hui Min put her plan into action the very next day. She hopped down from her car and started poking around the shop. For this purpose, she wore a plain blue ankle- length dress instead of her usual silk chongsam. ( Obviously, she waited until Shan Le was yakking away to Uncle Lim at the top of her voice.) She found a knife and she also realised instead of two knives at the knife-holder, there was one.

She stuffed the knife into her pocket and took off running back to the car. Hui Min whistled to Shan Le and she, as well, jumped into the car. She asked the driver to drive to the police station and reported her observations so far. The police officer nodded solemnly and told her that they would contact her if they had a fresh lead. After two days of aimless waiting, the police finally called back and said that they had caught Uncle Lim. They said that they interrogated him and he had admitted to working with a Indian curry seller to kill Hui Min’s grandfather. Upon hearing this, Hui Min knew that it was Uncle Abdullah as he was the only person who sells Indian curry in Chinatown. She ran like the wind to his stall. When she reached, she was not panting at all.

“I know that you killed my grandfather!” Hui Min bellowed at the top of her voice.

“So what if I did? He was annoying and loved to insult us about our poor condition. So I teamed up with Uncle Lim, and we killed him!” Abdullah spat back.

Hui Min whipped out her mobile phone at once and the police arrived to take Abdullah away, handcuffed. To Hui Min’s amazement, the police took Abdullah away and he did not make a single protest.

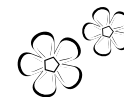
Hui Min walked home slowly, thoughts swirling in her mind. All was peaceful. Well, not quite.

“ Shan Le! Get off my lap! You.... you... never mind.”





# Dwindling Chee



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

You probably have read about small magical creatures, such as fairies that live in whimsical lands. Have you, however, heard about the Chee Hoi? These are fairy-like creatures known in the mystical world for their mysterious ways and potions. Unlike fairies, they do not have wings and are as big as humans. This is a story about one such Chee Hoi.

“Wonderful story, Li Li! I love the part where the mother finds the child. It was so touching.”

Li Li blushed to the colour of strawberries in pride and her small yet strange blue eyes glittered with joy. As she sat down, she felt someone poke her back. Li Li had learnt to ignore the daily bullying from her classmates. If she turned around, her classmates would hurl negative gestures and mock her as the ‘teacher’s pet’. Nobody appreciated this Chinese girl with the strange blue eyes who tried her best to fit in.

As Li Li walked home, she smiled at the passers by at Chinatown. As usual, it was busy and she had to jostle her way through the tiny alleys to get to her shop house. She loved her home as it always reminded her of her mother. Sadly, her mother had mysteriously disappeared.

As she opened the Peranakan gates, a strange feeling engulfed her. This feeling of warmth was always accompanied by a soft tinkling sound that she had gotten used to. In the past, when Li Li tried to follow this sound of tiny handbells, the sound would end abruptly. She quickly pushed the thought out of her mind and went about her chores.

While she was folding the clean laundry, she heard a door click and the rattling of keys. “Baba, is that you? Are you home?” called out Li Li as she ran down the wooden spiral stairs.

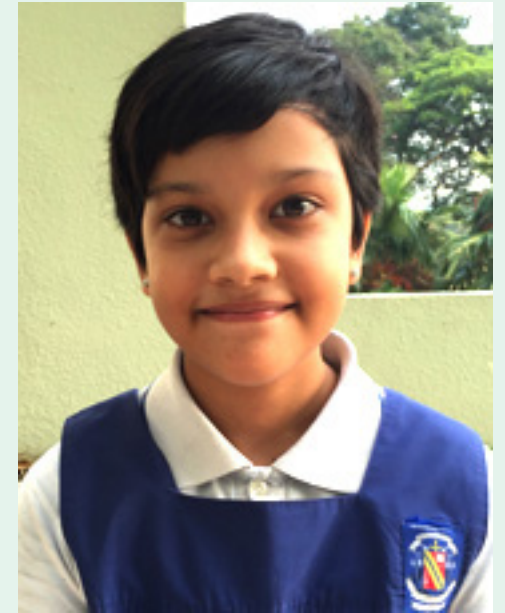
She was greeted by the warm loving smile of her father. She held back her desire to run into her father’s embrace. Her father was not affectionate. In fact, on one occasion he had scolded her for acting unladylike when she tried to hug him. Her father hung his shirt on the door hook and said, “Open up the store, Li Li.” As she reached into her apron for the bunch of keys, Li Li thought about how she always felt that they were not alone in the large shophouse. Once when she shared her thoughts with her dad, he laughed and dismissed her.

The next day, Lili had just returned from school when she heard a faint drumming sound. “Du-dum.Du-dum.” She followed the sound and hoped that it would not stop beating, just like the bells had stopped. As she approached closer and closer, the drumming became louder and louder. Li Li opened a door at the corner of one of the rooms.

“The storeroom?” Li Li thought.

As the door started to creak open, the drumming stopped. “It’s too late, I’ve already found you”. Lili whispered with a grin.

Li Li’s sharp ears had not failed her. She had caught whatever creature that had been lurking in the shadows of her house. Li Li looked around. She then



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started to hear the tinkling sound coming from behind a mattress. Li Li crept over. She pulled the mattress away and pounced on the thing on the floor. She felt something solid in her grip.

“I’ve got you now!” she shouted triumphantly.

She looked at the thing in her hands. To her disappointment, it was a big door knob.

“A trapdoor? Why didn’t Baba tell me about it?” she wondered.

Li Li tugged on the doorknob. It was locked. After some tugging and pulling, Lili gave up. Forehead beaded with sweat and disappointment, Li Li walked back to her room with her head hung down.

“And I thought it was magic.”

That night, during dinner, when Li Li and her father were eating quietly, Lili asked “Baba, do you know that there is a trapdoor in the house?”

Li Li noticed that her father twitched in his seat. Yet, he sternly replied. “I have told you many times before not to poke around the house.”

Immediately, Li Li guiltily looked down at the dim sum Baba had prepared. For the many days that followed, no words were spoken about the “trapdoor incident”. Until one day.

“Li Li, get the mattress out of the storeroom!” Baba shouted from the door front.

It was a tenth of September, Hari Raya Puasa, and the heavy rain brought major flooding. Li Li pulled up her pants as she waded through the flood waters. Just as she was about to open the door to the store room she heard the same tinkling sound as the first time, but now it was louder. Li Li opened the door and dropped the ends of her pants in awe. The trapdoor was not just open, but it was glowing with yellow light.

Li Li slowly walked towards the trapdoor, careful not to stumble over things covered with water. As she bent to look inside the trapdoor, she saw an amazing sight. There were green fields and crystal skies and unusually large trees with thick trunks and bushy crowns. Colourful flowers covered emerald green meadows making the scenery look irresistibly attractive.

Li Li leaned closer and closer to the open trapdoor. Neither did she care about her clothes getting wet nor the amount of water flowing into the door. She just wanted to look at the beautiful landscape for a moment longer. Mesmerized by the beauty of the landscape, she put her hand into the trap door. Then it all went blank.

“Wake up! Wake up!” Li Li’s eyes fluttered open only to be greeted by the stares of a young girl with silvery hair tied in a bun.

“Where am I?” Li Li groaned while checking her surroundings. Apart from the wooden walls, everything was made of an assortment of petals and leaves. Li Li looked around in astonishment, the room looked like it was carved out of a tree! Li Li sat up quickly and felt her clothes. She was no longer in her dirty and soiled dress. Instead she was wearing a dress made



with flowers! She touched her neck and found a wooden necklace. She looked at the girl with the pixie ears and all her memories came flooding back. Where was she? How was she going to get home? Was she still in Singapore?

Suddenly Li Li noticed a large door. Without any hesitation, she dashed for it. As she reached out to the door knob, the pixie-eared girl spun her by the shoulders and yelled, "Are you out of your mind? Nobody leaves their homes. If you open this door, you will get us both killed!" They stared into each other's eyes. With incredulous eyes, the pixie girl let go of her shoulders and stepped back.

"You are Mei Chi Lin's daughter!"

"How do you know my mother? Where am I? Who are you?"

"Everything makes sense now. I am Mei. You are Mei Chi Lin's daughter. Your mother is the head of the Engol Circle. You are in our land now. You see, 46 years ago. Engol was a thriving city of the Chees where everyone lived harmoniously. Then, the leaders of the Engol Circle decided to create a force field around Engol to protect them from invaders. Instead of creating a protective shield, our leaders accidentally blasted the energy into the city and many lives and homes were lost. The great wizard Chai Kong lost his parents in that explosion and swore to avenge his parents' deaths. He promised to kill every single Engol leader and their families. That included us."

Li Li could not believe what she was hearing. She was a content child living a simple life in Singapore. How did she end up in this mess?

The pixie continued calmly, "It is believed that the only way to defeat Chai Kong is to shatter the black crystal around his neck. Although many brave men and women have tried to get a hold of the crystal, they have all failed. He actually turns them into stone with blank eyes staring into space. Their frozen faces etched with horrified looks are unforgettable."

With desperation in her voice Li Li asked, "Mei, I am going to lose my mind. I want to get home. If you don't know how I can do that, then at least tell me who can help me!"

The Chee remained silent and then softly replied, "The only person who ever knew how to get back to your world was your mother. But..."

"Don't tell me, Chai Kong got her too."

After a long pause, Mei replied, "Yes. Your mom was turned into stone by the ruthless wizard. You are stuck in our world, Li Li. I am sorry."

"Mei, with all the magic around you, how can you give up so quickly?"

Mei suddenly looked up from the ground and exclaimed, "I do not know how to save you but I know how to free your mom."

"You do?"

"Yes, we have to break that black crystal of Chai Kong."





Li Li reached for the door again and declared, “I am going to find Chai Kong and free my mom.”

“Li Li! Have you gone mad? What do you think he is going to do to you? Don’t forget, you are a Chee. And not just any Chee, you are Mei Chi Lin’s daughter. He will be yearning to turn you into stone too,” screamed Mei.

Li Li ignored Mei as she picked bottles of potions from the shelves instinctively and shoved them into her backpack. She somehow knew their powers.

“I cannot sit here and wait for him to get me. I am going to finish what my mother started. Are you coming with me?”

Mei rolled her eyes and sighed, “Fine! I will come but I am sure that I am going to regret this.”

Immediately, Li Li rushed over and hugged Mei. Surprised, Mei stood there and felt a familiar feeling of warmth she had not felt in a long time. She had lost her family to Chai Kong and now she shared a special bond with this half-human who knew how she felt.

As they trudged through the forest, the sun shone mercilessly on them. With beads of perspiration trickling down her face, Li Li wondered how she was going to defeat the wizard. What plan did she have to break his crystal? For days, they travelled in the forest. Mei knew how to find food and water in the wilderness. She also taught Li Li how to use her powers. Mei was amazed to discover that because Li Li was half-human her powers were stronger and different from hers. Mei was determined to teach her everything she knew to make Li Li the Chee that she was. Li Li on the other hand grew in confidence and strength. Everything began to make sense and she felt an inner peace and power that she never felt before. The girls’ friendship also grew. They shared stories about their lives and families.

Months later, they arrived at the towering wall of the castle. The dreaded castle loomed over the two girls. They decided to spend the night at a river before completing their journey. The two girls decided to practise making water waves in their hands. Just as Li Li was about to make her wave, a bright light burst out of Li Li’s palm and shot towards Mei. With terror in her eyes, Mei ducked for cover in the bush. The light hit a tree behind Mei and to the girls amazement, it turned into stone.

Mei grinned at Li Li and said, “I think we are going to beat Chai Kong at his own game.”

They entered the palace grounds by making a temporary hole in the wall. On the other side of the wall, they gasped in horror as they saw rows and rows of stone statues. The looks of horrors in all the faces brought tears to the eyes of the girls. The statues were arranged in circles and they faced a statue in the middle of the garden. The statue in the middle was covered with vines.

It was a statue of a lady with her fingers on her right hand holding a single bright red rose. The face of the lady was looking up into the heavens as if longing to be free. Li Li was drawn to the statue. The face was so familiar. As she walked closer, the more familiar the face looked. Only when Li Li stood right in front of the stone figure, did she realise who the lady was. She was her mother.



Li Li held her mother's face in her hands. She then stood back and twirled her fingers and a soft glow appeared around her fingers, lighting up her frozen mother. Slowly, bits of stone peeled off the statue to reveal milky-white skin. Finally, the last bit of stone fell down onto the floor with a loud thud, revealing Mei Chin Lin's perfect face. She remained in her stance with a rose still held up above her head.

After a moment, she recovered from her trance and looked at Li Li. She quickly rushed over and pulled Li Li into a tight embrace. As a tear rolled down her face, Li Li turned to see that Mei had found her parents too. Li Li quickly walked over and freed them. Once the last piece of stone broke off, Mei hugged her parents tightly.

After Li Li had set everyone free, they rushed to the opening in the wall. Everyone entered the opening except for Li Li. Her mother then called out, "Li Li, let's go!"

Li Li shook her head and smiled, "I've got many more lives to save, Mama." As she uttered her last words, she sealed back the stone wall before her mother could stop her.

Li Li ran through the palace grounds secretly and made it to the highest point of the palace. Li Li peeked from behind a door and saw Chai Kong sitting on his majestic throne. All she needed to do was to turn him into stone, walk over and take the necklace off his neck and smash it on the floor.

She aimed her hand in a position facing Chai Kong and fired. A ball of fire shot through her palm and flew towards him in a flash. He tried to dodge the ball, but his shocked cry of terror froze in time. Every part of him was stone except for the sparkling necklace. She rushed over and pulled the necklace off. As she was about to destroy it, she took a glance at his face and saw that his eyes were still alive.

Strangely, they looked familiar. They looked at her pleadingly but she did not want to be deceived by Chai Kong's powers. He had cheated too many people already. As she held the black crystal necklace in her hands, she fought the urge to wear the necklace herself. Without a moment's thought, she threw the necklace onto the concrete floor with all her might.

The crystal shattered and cries of terror echoed through the chambers of the palace. A huge force of power burst out of the crystal and threw Li Li onto the ground. She looked up only to gasp at a familiar figure.

"Baba."

However, the stone sculpture of Chai Kong crumbled into dust.



# ❀❀ mystery in a kampong ❀❀



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“Hit the ball to me!” Li Ting cried out to Mei Ling.

The two of them were playing ‘paper ball’ at the school field. To play ‘paper ball’, players had to hit the ball repeatedly so that it would not touch the floor and the player who drops the ball loses. It was during recess and the two neighbours were enjoying themselves with the game. Good things never last long and before they knew it, the bell had rung to signal the end of recess. Li Ting reluctantly deflated the paper ball and started to drag her feet to class. On the other hand, Mei Ling, the Math whizz, neatened her dress and walked cheerfully to class for the next period was Math.

After a long hard day, Li Ting walked out of school with a slouched back while Mei Ling was as happy as she could be. On the way back to their kampong, Kampong Tiam, the girls started planning on what gifts they should give to their friend, Li Mei, for her birthday. Upon reaching their kampong, everyone was scrambling here and there with a worried look on their faces, looking for something.

“Let’s go ask them what happened!” Li Ting exclaimed.

They immediately went to look for Li Ting’s parents who were together in Mei Ling’s house where Li Ting’s mother was crying.

“What happened?” Li Ting asked, running to her mother.

“Our heirloom... it’s missing!” her mother exclaimed between sobs.

The heirloom was an antique translucent, green jade vase which was as big as the girls’ school bag. It was said to protect the kampong from natural or man-made disasters. The vase was said to be brought to the kampong by a chinese merchant a long, long time ago. It was said that the merchant was in trouble and the people in the kampong at that time helped him at his time of trouble. In return, he gave the kampong the jade vase, saying that it would protect them from all kinds of disasters. The vase proved itself after a series of events and how they overcame them. The vase was kept in the heart of the kampong, in an attap house where the person-in-charge of the kampong stays.

“Missing! How is that possible? That vase is guarded by the most trusted people here!” Li Ting said in the most unbelieving tone.

“Exactly! How can it be missing?” Mei Ling finally said. After placing their heavy bags in their house and changing out of their school uniform, the two girls walked out. After meeting up with each other, they immediately rushed to where the antique vase was kept, in one of the attap houses. Upon reaching there, they saw the person in-charge of the kampong, Lao Ming, standing next to an empty, half opened glass case. He was too busy questioning the people that he did not notice the two girls sneaking in. After going in, they hid in the corner to overhear the questioning to understand what had happened before approaching Lao Ming.

There were five people who were taking turns to take care of the locked box at night. As they listened, the girls understood that all of them had an alibi



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when the vase was stolen.

“They do not seem like the thieves, so who could it be?” Mei Ling thought.

Soon after, a man came running in exclaiming, “There’s a person outside saying that he has a type of treasure that can keep us safe even without the vase!”

Astonished, Li Ting jumped out from the corner.

Frightened, everyone in the room screamed out loud. “What are you doing here?”

At this point, Mei Ling jumped out to save Li Ting, “We are here to help. We want to help to find the thief.”

Lao Ming told us that we were not allowed to be involved but with our persistent begging, he had no choice but to cave in. Upon hearing that, we were elated. We followed them to where the man who we had heard of was.

The man was standing at the centre of the kampong with many people crowding around him. He wore a long-sleeved striped t-shirt with long dark blue pants. He carried a briefcase and had a smirk in his eye. Lao Ming went up to him and asked, “What are you here for? What do you say that you have for us?”

“This...” he mumbled, reaching into the pocket in his pants and pulling out a round green pendant. “It is a magical pendant,” he continued, “that can enable anyone that wears it to be safe. I have been to many kampongs to help villagers. I heard about your troubles and have come to help you.” He introduced himself as Ah Siew. The pendant had patterns on it and had a black cloth chain.

Upon hearing that, all the people crowded around him asking him for a pendant. As they crowded around him, he raised up his hand and signalled for everybody to keep quiet. “One pendant is \$100.”

Gasping could be heard from everyone.

“Why is it so expensive? How can we afford that?” most people asked.

Ah Siew explained that the pendant that he had was unique and he was the only person who possessed it. He said that if they would like to buy it, he would be back the next two days and he would not come after that.

Mumbling could be heard in the background before he finally said, “Since I have told you what I need to, I will be going.” And with that, he turned around and walked away.

Mei Ling stood there, not believing what she had just heard. The next thing that happened, a burning smell filled the air.

“What’s that burning smell?” Madam Neo said, looking around. As all of them looked around, they saw a fire at the corner of the kampong. Everyone rushed to the tap with buckets to fill them up before carrying them to the fire to put the fire out.







As the adults put out the fire, Mei Ling thought to herself, “Why would there be a fire here? The places here are not hot enough to start a forest fire.”

These questions kept Mei Ting thinking. Before they knew it, the fire had been put out and everyone was relieved.

Lao Ming invited them for a talk. He told them what he thought. “I don’t believe that Ah Siew would not have known that our vase was missing so soon after it happened. I think he may be trying to cheat us... or he may even be the thief and is trying to con our money!”

The two girls gasped. “You know, what you have said may be possible,” Mei Ling said after thinking. “We have to check on this person!” Li Ting exclaimed loudly.

Before they could continue with their discussion, they heard piercing screams from outside. Li Ting’s mother ran towards Lao Ming.

“The.. the dogs. They have been poisoned!” she said, half panting. Astonished, we followed her to where the dogs which we kept stayed. There, many people had already flocked the place to look at their dogs. The dogs laid motionless on the ground, panting. Mei Ling’s mother, who owned most of the dogs, was very anxious. She started to inspect the dogs and their surroundings. As she looked into the feed, she saw a few pieces of macadamia nuts in their feed. She immediately ran towards Lao Ming and told him what she had seen.

“Macadamias are harmful to dogs. Who placed it in the dog feed?”

“The vase! What Ah Siew said is true! Without the vase, our kampong is in trouble!”

After hearing those words, everyone ran to their houses and started looking for money to buy the stranger’s pendant. Lao Ming, Li Ting and Mei Ling discussed the misfortunes happening now.

Sitting around the wooden table, Mei Ling brought up, “How is it possible that once the vase is missing, someone comes to say that he has another treasure. After that, a fire breaks out, then the dogs are poisoned. It is too much of a coincidence.”

Li Ting and Lao Ming both nodded in agreement. They finally decided to find out more about Ah Siew.

The next day when Ah Siew arrived, many people flocked to him wanting to buy his pendants. As the three of them snuck behind him, they saw two strangers hiding behind a bush, whispering and laughing to each other. Mei Ling signalled to Lao Ming and pointed towards the bush. Slowly, they inched toward them surreptitiously and overheard their conversation.

“We’re going to be rich! Ah Siew is doing such a great job promoting and selling those fake pendants.”

The other person nodded in agreement saying, “These villagers are so dumb to believe him. Wait till they know that we were the ones that set the fire, gave the dogs macadamia nuts and conned their money, they will be fuming mad!” They started laughing sinisterly.



They were frauds and Ah Siew was their accomplice! Li Ting was dumbfounded. Just as Li Ting was about to shout out to everyone, Lao Ming stopped her.

He explained, "If we just go up to confront them, they may run away and we will not be able to get back the money which they had cheated. Besides, they might have been the ones that stole our vase. We must call the police so they can help to apprehend them." Without hesitation, Lao Ming went to his attic house to call the police with Li Ting and Mei Ling following behind.

After reporting the scheme to the police, the three of them stepped out. As they looked out, Ah Siew was leaving! Without thinking, Mei Ling ran up and invited Ah Siew for tea in Lao Ming's house. At first, Ah Siew refused but Mei Ling was already leading him to the hut so he had no choice but to accept.

As she walked, she whispered to Li Ting, "Wait outside. If you see the police, show them where we are and lead them to the two men behind the bush."

Li Ting understood the plan and nodded.

While Lao Ming was making tea, Mei Ling told Lao Ming her plan. "By bringing Ah Siew here, we can stall him and when the police come, he will have no chance of escaping." Lao Ming commended her for her good thinking and brought the tea to Ah Siew. As they sat at the table, Lao Ming and Mei Ling talked about anything and kept refilling Ah Siew's cup of tea.

Just as Ah Siew was about to leave, the police barged in and pinned him down on the floor, with Li Ting behind them. Ah Siew started to resist arrest but Li Ting shouted, "We have arrested your accomplice, you will not be able to run."

Upon hearing that, he knew that he had nowhere to run and gave in. Ah Siew and his accomplices were taken away, leaving everyone amazed.

Seeing everyone's expression, Lao Ming stood up to speak. "That Ah Siew is a fraud. His accomplices were the ones who had started the fire and fed the dogs macadamia nuts. He has cheated you of your money and may have even stolen the vase."

Upon hearing this, everyone was shocked and started talking among themselves. "But," Lao Ming continued silencing the crowd, the police have apprehended them and are investigating the case, so do not worry. Also, I would like to commend two children in our kampong, Mei Ling and Li Ting. They have helped us to apprehend those frauds so I would like to thank them sincerely."

After more than a week, the police came and returned their precious vase to them. They explained that Ah Siew and his gang were involved in serial frauds and went on to steal heirlooms from different kampongs and houses and cheating people out of their money with their fake pendants.

Apparently, Ah Siew and his gang had sneaked into the village in the middle of the night and stole the village vase to con their money. The villagers thanked the police for their help in apprehending the frauds and returning their cheated money back to the rightful owners.

After the vase was returned to the kampong, peace was restored. Mei Ling and Li Ting were glad that this mystery was solved. They sincerely hoped that such a disaster would not happen in the kampong ever again.



# ✿ Saving Botanic Gardens ✿



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

Ringgggggg! The school bell went off. I swung my sling bag over my shoulder and dashed out of the school. As I walked to my HDB flat, I watched my neighbours teleport with their wands and cheeky boys trying to break the child lock curses on their wand. With my parents at work, no one was at home so I had to take care of myself. Our enchanted clock made the words: 12 September 1971 flash in mid-air. I swung my bag on the floor of my flat, took out my botanic book and my wand out and set off to the Botanic Gardens which was very near. I sat down under my favourite rain tree and started reading, keeping an eye out for the Garden Keepers, which I aspired to be when I grew up.

Ten years later...

“Swერიუვ! Swერიუვ! Swერიუვ!” I chanted while swinging my wand in mid-air and flowers bloomed around me. It was the year 1987. As I finished up, a familiar voice chanted a singing spell behind me. I swept around to catch my friend, Mei En, surrounded by singing flowers. Siti had also caught this and came over shouting the counter curse, her long black hair swaying in the wind and her purple sarong kebaya glistening in the sun.

When she reached us, she bellowed “It is Swერიუვ! Not Swერიუა!”

I watched my fellow colleagues argue for a while before I stopped them. Still in a temper, my easily annoyed best friend Siti stomped off to the other side of the Botanic Gardens. Confused and slightly shaken, clumsy Mei En left too, accidentally trampling on some daisies. I carried on with my work as their fight was a very usual occurrence for me.

The morning dew had evaporated by noon and the scorching sun was drying up the beautiful flowers in the giant garden.. The swans swam gracefully in the pond to keep cool. It was just another day for us to do our job; to keep our plants happy and discover more plant species. Siti was out of sight while Mei En was trying to make a hybrid of a rose and a daisy.

Giggling slightly, I told her, “Raisies are already invented.” She flushed and shuffled off.

When it was early evening, Siti asked me, “Kai Lee, Em... Are the swans meant to act like that?”

At first, I had no idea what she was talking about. Then, I caught sight of the cerulean waters. The swans were going berserk, flailing on the water surface and honking like mad. Before I could say anything, the herbs around me had started to wilt and were dying slowly. Siti had gone into a trance, staring at the dried up tulips. Mei En was running towards us, her face pale and her wand held tight in her hand. It only took seconds for the whole Botanic Gardens to look like a ghost town.

Siti had come out of her trance and was scolding Mei En and blaming her for the dead plants.

“Actronus,” I muttered, waving my wand at the tulips. Nothing happened. Siti and Mei En had stopped arguing and were trying counter curses too. After a while,



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Mei En squeaked frightened, “It’s dark magic!”

Both Siti and I turned and gaped at her, knowing that she was always right when it came to magical facts.

Siti muttered, “It must be En Lee. People who have questioned him must know he hates plants because his parents were strangled to death by cursed plants. Such a law breaker.” I had never heard the name before and was puzzled, Mei En had not either.

Siti then asked Mei En, “What’s the cure?”

Potion master, Mei En immediately said that there was a complex potion that she could make it but the only ingredient she needed left was a strand of En Lee’s hair. Crime and Investigation was Siti’s favourite subject so she heartily agreed to help get the strand of hair. I decided to help too so after some discussion, Mei En set off back to her house while Siti and I looked for clues. It was dark when we finally found a book entitled Dark Curses by Bala Ahmad in a bush. At the bottom of the cover, the words En Lee were written on it.

Siti was bouncing up and down, a big smile on her face. She started to do different spells on it for more clues while I looked around for more items. After a while, Siti squealed with excitement. When I went over to look, she had found an invisible note which said, “Dear brother, when you have broken out of prison, meet me at the abandoned house along Upper Serangoon Road.”

“I know where that is! He must have dropped the book here while escaping! What are we waiting for! Let’s go!” Siti exclaimed before taking the book and half dragging me to the main road. We managed to catch a bus to our destination. Even though the cool night air brushed against our face, it was still very hot and stuffy in the bus as everyone was heading back home after work. The bus stop was only a stone’s throw away from the abandoned house.

I casted invisibility charms on us before we entered the house. There was no door at the front. Inside, it was dark and everything was covered in a layer of dust. There was a disgusting smell of decaying food that lingered in the air. There was only two rooms in the house. We caught a glimpse of the silhouette of a man sitting on a rickety old chair. He laughed in a maliciously happy way, “Another garden destroyed successfully and it’s a big one, the Botanic Gardens!”

He laughed and continued, “If only I could be left alone for my celebration. Who’s there!”

Siti raised her voice and demanded, “Drop your wand and come out here immediately! We know what you did to the garden!”

“Quite smart to find out. You can be a great partner you know. Well, I can’t afford someone knowing what I have done,” he said in a matter-of-fact tone. He acted too fast for us. Our invisibility charms broke and curses came whizzing towards us. A freezing curse missed me by inches. I dived under an old table which had moss stuck to it. Siti was hiding behind a cupboard. More curses whizzed to us as we fought back. After seconds of the fight, Siti suddenly fell to the floor with a thud as she was hit by a freezing curse.

“Siti!” I screamed in horror. She did not move a muscle. My face turned pale white and I went into a trance. Killing charms which came whizzing to me





brought me back to my senses. I ducked to avoid them and pointed my wand at him. My heart was in my throat. It was up to me now. It was up to me to stop En Lee. I ducked down to get an accurate shot and blasted an unconscious curse at him. En Lee screamed in fright before falling to the ground in a heap. I immediately dashed to Siti when the coast was clear, muttering the counter curse. To my relief, she got up and looked around pointing her wand at dark corners.

When she finally found En Lee on the floor, she muttered “What happened?” I filled her in while she unceremoniously pulled a bunch of hair from En Lee head.

The distant sound of sirens could be heard. Siti had called the ambulance. After praising us, they arrested En Lee and brought him back to prison. Siti and I rushed back to the Botanic Gardens immediately after the police had left the scene. By the time we reached there, Mei En was waiting there with a cauldron in front of her. There was slight relief on her face but you could still see how worried she was. A bubbling dark purple liquid filled the cauldron. As Siti dropped the hair into the mixture, it turned a silky white. I filled some watering cans with the potion and started pouring them on the plants. Siti and Mei En started to help too.

The plants started blooming upon contact with the potion. By dawn break, Botanic Gardens was looking better than before. The swans had gone back to their graceful gliding on the pond surface. Happiness as well as relief coursed through my veins. We had done it. We had saved Botanic Gardens.



# ❀❀ The Stolen Recipe ❀❀



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

“Hey, Dad! What are you up to to-” I stopped halfway as I saw the worried look on my father’s face. Dad was rummaging through the drawers looking for something while muttering something incoherent under his breath. He was about to turn the whole house upside down! Judging by the look of everything, I knew something important was missing.

“What are you looking for?” I asked curiously.

Dad turned around and looked straight into my eyes, “Have you seen my latest recipe, the one on Chilli Crab with all the other Singapore original recipes?”

I shook my head. Dad had been appointed by the government officials to create a new and completely out of the ordinary dish for SG50 celebrations. Dad is Lim Soon Heng, a very famous chef. He works at a five-star restaurant and the food he cooks is so delicious that the government even wants him to create a new dish!

He had many sleepless nights as he was busy creating the recipe. Dad was under a lot of stress as it was due in two days. If he does not submit it by then, he would be fired. Dad said he had tried remembering the recipe but his mind was fuzzy from all the sleepless nights.

After helping Dad search for his recipe for almost a whole day, I started to suspect that it was stolen. I noticed that some of the things in the house were misplaced.

I called my best friend, Hannah. I told her everything that had happened and she started squealing.

“I love this stuff! It’s just like in the movies! We are so going on the adventure to find the stolen recipe,” she said, emphasizing the last three words.

Ten minutes later, hands slithered around my neck. I was about to scream when one of the hands covered my mouth. I slowly turned around and to my relief, it was Hannah.

“How did you get here so quickly?” I asked, shooting daggers with my eyes at her.

“Oh, I came in from the window. I had a feeling that you would need me. It’s called best friend’s instinct,” she replied nonchalantly, as if it was something she did daily.

“I’m dead tired. Let’s look for the recipe tomorrow.” I suggested, yawning. Together, we got into my bed and fell asleep. This was the norm as we always have sleepovers.

The next morning, we quickly got changed and had our breakfast. We quickly got ready and set off for the ‘missing recipe’ mission as Hannah likes to call it. At first, we contemplated calling the police but after much thought, we decided to settle the problem ourselves as my father might lose his job if word got out that he had lost the recipe.

First, we looked around our house for some more clues. When I was look



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ing through the drawers, I stumbled across a few old photographs and a charm bracelet. The bracelet was under Dad's drawer where he had placed his recipe the night before. In the middle of the picture, stood a young girl and an older boy. The girl was slim and she had piercing blue eyes. The boy had brown hair which was swept back and large, black eyes. Somehow, the children in the picture looked very familiar but I could not put my finger on it.

Suddenly, it dawned on me. It was Dad and our neighbour, Lana Tan! Dad and Lana were enemies but I never knew why. Dad always told me that they were enemies ever since they were young. He never told me anything more. Could Dad have lied to me? He never lies to me! I felt disappointed and curious at the same time but I knew he must have a reason.

"What are you looking at?" Hannah asked me.

I showed her the picture and she gasped.

"Isn't that-"

"Yeah, it is. Do you think it is an important clue?" I asked, still looking at the picture.

"Yup! But first, we need to go to your Dad for an explanation. Mr Lim! Mr Lim! We want to ask you something!" Hannah yelled, running down the stairs, almost tripping during the process.

I followed her and walked to the living room where Dad was rummaging through the drawers, still searching for the recipe.

"Dad, what is this?" I ask him, holding up the bracelet and picture.

He turned around and seemed puzzled for a moment. His expression suddenly turned from a stressed look to a sad one.

"I should probably explain it to you," he said while walking to the sofa and sitting down.

"It all happen a few years back. Lana and I were best friends since young. On her 11th birthday, I gave her this bracelet. We both shared the same dream—to be a cook. When we were thirty, we opened a restaurant together. We were both equally skilled. One day, the Minister of Food from the government came to our restaurant. Incidentally, he ate the dish I had cooked and he loved it. He then promoted me to be the head chef in one of his five-star restaurants. I, of course, accepted the offer. It was one of the best days of my life but the only thing I regretted was forgetting about Lana. I was so caught up at that time that I even forgot to say goodbye to her. She was very angry with me. She even tried to sabotage me by spreading rumours that I poison people with the food I cook. From then onwards, we became enemies. I didn't want tell you because I didn't want to recall the past. I'm sorry."

"It's okay Dad but I think I know who had stolen the recipe! It's Lana! Who else would want you to lose your job?! That would also explain why there was a bracelet on the floor. It's Lana's, right? It would be familiar as you were the one who gave it to her!" I said.

"Yeah! She must have hidden the recipe in her house. Now we just need to come up with a way to sneak into her house," Hannah said enthusiastically.



“Sounds like a plan! Dad, are you coming?” I asked Dad.

“I better follow you just in case you get into trouble. And it’s also the only hope I have left. Let’s do this!” he yelled.

I was shocked. I knew I had asked him if he wanted to go but I didn’t expect him to agree. Hannah grabbed my hand and pulled me out of the house with Dad trailing behind.

“Keep your mouth shut if you don’t want to get caught!” I yelled to Hannah. She kept on humming. It was annoying and it would blow our cover. We were hiding behind a door, watching Lana’s every move. She was sitting at her desk, doing some paper work. Lana was a very pretty lady. She looked exactly like how she was in the picture. She had high cheekbones and a button nose. The only difference was that she had wrinkles on her forehead and that her hair was short and curly--just like the usual Singaporean senior citizens’ hairstyles. By now, you are probably wondering how we got into Lana’s house. We actually climbed through the window. Who knew it was that easy to break into someone’s house? On the way to her office, we walked past a lot of her furniture along the hallway that screamed ‘expensive’! Lana is indeed rich.

Suddenly, something in Lana’s pocket caught my eyes. It was a folded piece of paper with some words scribbled on it. I looked closer and realised it was the recipe for my father’s dish! I needed to get it!

“Dad! Hannah! Look! It’s the recipe!” I said, pointing to Lana’s pocket.

They looked up and gasped at the sight of it. Suddenly, I thought of an idea.

“Hannah, pass me the bobby pins that you always keep in your pocket.”

She passed them to me with a confused look on her face. I smiled at her, showing my gratitude. I quickly took them and started to bend them, making an S-shaped hook and connected it to a straight line of bobby pins. Then, I stretched out my arm and tried hooking it to the fold of the paper. After a few tries, I finally got it.

Out of a sudden, Lana’s hand grabbed the end of the string of the bobby pins, snatched it and turned towards us. She had a creepy smile on her face.

“Lim, do you really think I would allow you into my house so easily, take the recipe, then leave? When the government officers do not see you at the meeting, I’m going to go in and propose this to him! After that, they would use the recipe and I will finally have my destiny! I know you so well Lim. I even hired some guards for today because I knew you would come to get the recipe. Guards!” she shouted.

Three guards came out of the blue from behind the door. Each of them grabbed our hands and pushed us through towards a room. Dad was silent the whole time. I wonder what was going on in his mind. After they had closed the doors, they locked it and their footsteps grew fainter and fainter as they walked away.

“I can’t believe she has guards! This person is crazy!” Hannah said.

“We need to get out of here by tomorrow morning or I will lose my job!” Dad said.

“Look! There’s a vent up there! If we can get boosted up, we can remove the metal lid and go to any part of the house!” I suggested.





“Great idea! Mr Lim, can you boost us up? After that, we can pull you up!” Hannah added.

Dad nodded and squatted down. He then placed his hand on one of his knees. I quickly stepped on his hand then Hannah climbed on top of me. She removed the lid and crawled into the vent, pulling me along with her. We then turned around and faced Dad. We stretched out our arms and together, pulled him into the vent with us.

We then crawled towards the direction of Lana’s voice. Her voice was very loud and squeaky, making it very easy to identify where she was.

Once we were above her, I scanned the room below us. She was on the phone with someone and her legs were stretched on a table. The door was on the opposite end of the room, making it tougher to escape. I quickly thought of a plan and told Dad and Hannah.

They looked uncertain at first but I managed to convince them.

“Jump at one at the count of 3. 1...2...3!”

Dad and Hannah both jumped at once, causing the metal lid to fall open and us falling from the vent but I remained in the vent, waiting for the right time. They both landed on the floor but luckily, the carpet and some pillows on the floor cushioned them.

“What-!?” Lana screamed in disbelief.

Taking advantage of the shock he had given Lana, Dad ran towards the door to block it, in case Lana ran out of the room. He then took out his mobile phone to call the police. After which, he recorded the scene secretly. Hannah, who was trying to distract Lana, was running around the room, trying to escape from Lana who was trying to catch her. It was quite an amusing sight. As for me, I was waiting for the right moment to jump! Closer... Closer... Now! I jumped onto Lana and pinned her down, straddling her waist.

“You will never get away with this! Only I can be the best chef. The minister should have chosen me instead of you, Lim! I need that recipe! Guards, seize them!” Lana wailed while waving her hands around, trying to struggle out of my grip.

She was still quite flexible and strong for someone her age but since I was younger and more flexible, I managed to keep her under my grip.

Suddenly, the guards came rushing in. They quickly analysed the situation and grabbed us.

“Why are you doing this, Lana? We can still be best friends like how we were in the past. I can recommend you to the minister. What about this?” Dad managed to wriggle out of the guard’s grip and took the bracelet out of his pocket.

“Remember this? I gave this to you on your 11th birthday. You must have dropped this while you were in my house searching for the recipe. I know that you still cherish our relationship and so do I. I forgive you, Lana. Friends again?” Dad asked.



While listening to Dad, Lana's expression changed. The face which was red with anger has changed to one filled with guilt.

"I-I don't know what to say. After all I've done to you, you'd forgive me?"

"Yes, Lana. What happened in the past is in the past."

Lana took the recipe from her pocket and handed it to Dad. By then, the police had already arrived. Lana was supposed to be sent to prison along with her guards right after Dad showed the police what he had recorded but Dad decided against it and let the matter rest.

After the long adventure, it was already morning. Dad quickly took us back home to freshen ourselves up before we went for breakfast and to attend the meeting with the government officials.

"And now I would like to present my recipe. It has..." Dad spoke confidently as he presented his recipe to the government officials.

A loud round of applause could be heard around the room after Dad had ended his presentation.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to make a small request. I was wondering if you could hire Lana, my best friend here. She is a great cook and to proof that, she has prepared us her speciality," Dad said.

After Dad had helped to serve everyone Lana's dish, Lana and Dad stood aside as they wait for the officials to sample the dish. They soon nodded to one another, complimenting the dish. Dad and Lana knew then that good news will soon follow. They waited in anticipation.

"Ms. Lana, welcome to the kitchen!" the officials said.



# ✿✿ The Arson ✿✿



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

It was a usual Thursday evening in Singapore. A man stopped his car, got out and headed towards one of the many stalls by the roadside to grab a light snack before returning home. Just as he was about to order some Satay, a loud explosion sounded.

A nearby stall selling Wonton Mee was going up in flames! People screamed for help and ran around frantically. Everyone was panic-stricken except a lone figure who was slowly walking away, a smug smile of satisfaction spread across his face.

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Cassandra Starling was an aspiring detective in Singapore. She had dark eyes and raven black hair that always seemed to cover her face no matter how she brushed it. She was called up at six o'clock in the morning by a police officer to investigate an arson that had happened the day before. Almost immediately, she called her best friend and partner, Allison Pang to help her solve the case.

"Hey Allison, did you hear about the arson yet?" Cassandra asked.

"Yeah, and I'm guessing you need my help to solve it," Allison replied.

"Meet me at the crime scene in fifteen minutes," Cassandra said with a sheepish smile. She grabbed her notebook, her lucky pen and stuffed it into a bag with an elaborate pattern of dragonflies on it. Then, she set off to see Allison.

A few minutes later, Cassandra and Allison were trying to interrogate a fuming Wonton Mee stall owner. Chimes dangled from the low ceiling and charred leftover decorations from Chinese New Year were scattered all over the place. A tin of pink paint stood in a corner, forgotten and covered with flakes of ash from the fire. Cassandra had to hold her nose at the lingering smell of smoke as she carefully lifted up a piece of paper which turned to dust the moment she touched it.

"There's nothing but dust and ash in here! I'm getting out!" Cassandra exclaimed, thoroughly exasperated. She was not known for her patience. She was known for her fiery and impulsive nature, which did not help things in this case. Cassandra stomped away, leaving Allison alone in the stall. On the way out, Cassandra accidentally tripped over an object that was half buried under the ash and fell flat on her face. Getting to her feet with nothing bruised but her dignity, she realised that the object was a lighter! Now, they could finally start solving the mystery.

One hour later, Cassandra and Allison were at Cassandra's house, sipping tea and peeling the layers of Kueh Lapis, one by one as they stared at the lighter, their only clue.

"Okay, we've got the lighter, so now what?" Cassandra asked Allison grumpily. She did not expect solving the case to be this hard.

"Now we need to figure out where this lighter came from, why the culprit did this and how we're going to find him or her. We could start by checking out the stores that sell this," Allison replied, adjusting her red glasses. She held



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up the lighter and examined it closely. Then Allison smiled.

"I think I know exactly what to do now. Come on, we have to go to that hardware store at Bukit Merah for our next clue." Cassandra said.

"Please! This is important! The fate of many lives depend on it!" Allison pleaded, more than a little too dramatically. She and Cassandra were at the hardware store that sold the lighter found at the crime scene. They were trying to find out if the store owner had sold a similar to the criminal but it was turning out to be increasingly difficult. The unfriendly store owner was reluctant to help the pair until Cassandra gave him ten dollars.

"Well...I think I sold it to a man...but then again...Wait, didn't I sell another one yesterday?" He scratched his almost bald head and fingered an old rag that hung around his neck. Cassandra sighed and rolled her eyes. They were not getting anywhere. Finally, after a while, they managed to get some information from the forgetful store owner. Apparently, he had sold a lighter to two people: one a week before the arson and one on the day of it. He had also recalled that the man who had purchased the lighter on the day of the crime was Hiang Lee Wem as he was wearing a uniform with the said nametag on it and he lived in Chinatown.

"Yes! We have found our culprit! Hurry, let's go to Temple street!" Cassandra cried, overjoyed.

"Uh,Cassandra?" Allison said softly. "Are you sure he's the culprit? I mean..." Allison faltered when she realised that Cassandra had already left the shop.

Cassandra and Allison spent over an hour searching for their prime suspect. When they eventually found him by knocking on all the doors of one of the block of flats, he was wearing a threadbare shirt and had just woken up from an afternoon nap.

"Well? You better have a good explanation for this," Lee Wem grumbled, still half-asleep.

"You are under arrest for setting fire to a Wonton Mee stall!" Cassandra exclaimed triumphantly.

"Wha'?" Lee Wem stared at Cassandra, shocked. "I did not! I don't even know wha' you youngsters are uttering about. Now go away, I need to continue with my nap which you so rudely interrupted. "

Allison placed a hand on Cassandra and whispered urgently in her ear. "I don't think it's him. The real criminal could be the one who had bought the lighter the week before."

Cassandra tipped her head to a side, finally considering Allison's theory. She agreed and then stomped to the nearest bus stop. Allison sighed. Her friend hated to be wrong. Next stop, Serangoon Road.

Cassandra and Allison had arrived at their destination. "What," Ahmad growled, sounding more than a little hostile. "do you want?" Ahmad had black hair, bushy eyebrows and a long scar across a cheek. Determined not to be afraid of him, Cassandra bravely looked at him in his eye.

"Did you set fire to a Wonton Mee stall?"





The tension in the air was so thick that you could cut it with a knife. Cassandra and Allison, fists clenched, awaited their crucial response. Ahmad laughed a hollow laugh. "Yes, I did."

"Why?" Cassandra asked as Allison muttered something about Ahmad being crazy under her breath.

"Very well. But be warned. Not every story has a happy ending. Last year, my mother was killed in the bus riot. My father was arrested for drink driving a month after that. And now, I am alone. Unwanted. Unhappy. So, I decided to ruin other people's lives too. That's why. Go ahead. Arrest me. It won't make a difference anyway."

Ahmad looked up at Cassandra and Allison. Cassandra swallowed nervously. She looked at Allison for help. Allison just shrugged. Cassandra sighed and said, "I'm sorry." She whipped out her mobile phone and dialled 999. Within mere moments, the police arrived, handcuffs at the ready.

A few weeks later, peace was restored to the neighbourhood. Ahmad was sentenced to seven years in jail and Cassandra and Allison were finally able to relax.

Well, not really.

"Allison? Did you hear about the recent murder case?" Cassandra asked after receiving a phone call from the police station.



# ✿✿新世界酒店倒塌事件✿✿

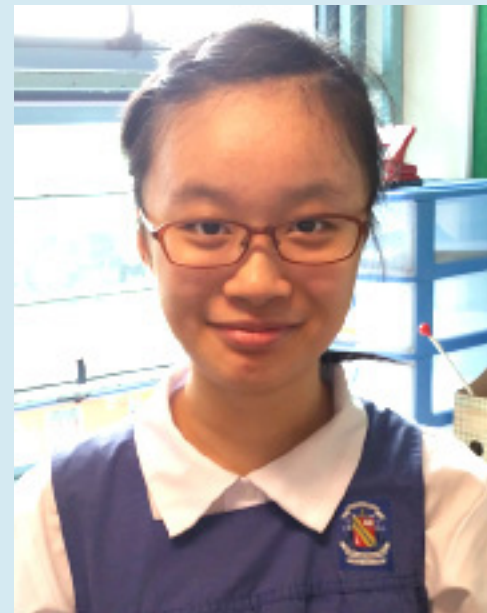


A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

新加坡是一向以宁静、有序和高效而闻名亚洲。然而，一九八六年三月十五日，一场突如其来的灾难阻碍了整个地区的运转——坐落在欧文路上的新世界酒店倒塌。这场灾难也启动了全国史无前例的救援行动。消防局、警察、医护人员，民防部队以及各方拯救人员冒着生命危险，在废墟里抢救受困者。事故当天的上午十一点二十五分，整栋楼房在不到一分钟内倒塌。这让酒店内的许许多多的人没有时间逃出。目击者诉说是听到了爆炸声，楼房才倒塌。但警方已排除了炸弹袭击的可能性，这起倒塌事故可能是由瓦斯爆炸所引起的。但之后，人们发现制图员只顾考虑“活动负载”，却忘了“固定负载”。由于这栋楼的重要支柱无法承受大楼的重量、大楼的许多支柱也支撑到了极限，酒店自然而然就倒塌了。

这是这场灾难造成了十七人被困、三十三人死亡。在死亡人数中，二十三个是新加坡人，其余十个来自其他国家。这样的大楼倒塌是新加坡史无前例的。

我认为，事故当天，普通民众表现出的高尚品格和勇气，仍然令人赞叹。这起事故让许多无辜的人失去了宝贵的生命。人为的疏忽、失责是塌楼的主要原因。这让人们吸取了教训。新加坡全面修改了建筑工程的规章制度，以确保由建筑师计算的所有“固定负载”和“活动负载”，还要经过一次独立审核。这有效地减少了类似事故的发生，建筑物倒塌事件已越来越少。



By XiaoChuan ShuQing  
Primary 6 Acacia



一天晚上，奶奶跟我说起一件在70年代发生过的灾难：

在1978年10月6日，斯皮罗斯号抵达了新加坡裕廊船厂，为了进行一项专题调查和维修。

在同一年的10月12日，大概下午2点15分，斯皮罗斯号爆炸。爆炸发生时，约150名工人，包括妇女，都从午餐时间回到船只的发动机和锅炉房。有32船员也在船上。

因为爆炸把杂物扔到船只的100米外，结果造成了火焰，所以阻止了码头工人抢救那些被困在船内的工人。

事故发生几分钟后，一个紧急救援行动随即展开。救援队伍包括了警察，军队和医疗服务。所有医院都接到紧急通知以做好准备提供医疗服务给伤者。

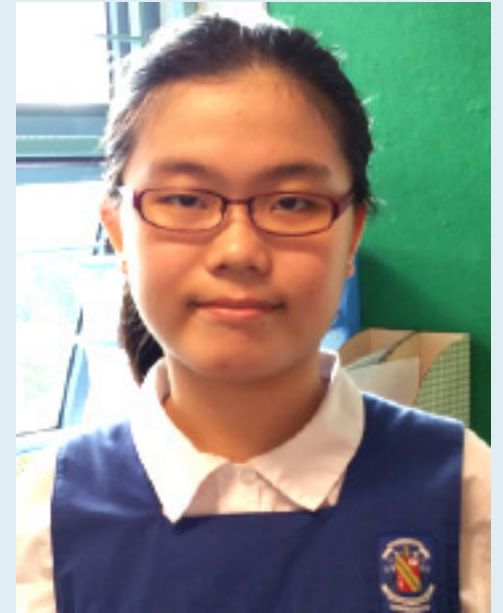
救援人员进入船舱的发动机和锅炉房，寻找失踪人员。八辆消防车和救护车赶到了现场，把火浇灭后，才让更多的救援人员涌进船舱，以帮助伤者。救援人员用救护车和直升机把伤者送到亚历山大医院和新加坡中央医院。

事故发生时，共有76名罹难者和许多人受伤。其中大部分的伤者遭到严重烧伤。其他人，包括4名消防员，因吸入有毒气体和休克的情况而需接受观察。

调查过后，才发现当船只进行维修时，安全措施竟然被忽略了。事故发生后，造船方面提高了维修和日常作业的安全意识。

斯皮罗斯号灾难是新加坡发生过的其中一个灾难，这场事故是有史以来最严重的工业灾难。

经过了这场灾难，我觉得新加坡人都变得更团结。在危险时刻，我们也能够冷静地面对它，并互相帮助。我们也加强了船厂工业的安全措施，让在船厂做工的工人更有安全感，也让他们不容易受伤。



By Tan Yi Xuan  
Primary 6 Angsana



# 新加坡大水灾



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

1978 年，新加坡发生了两次大水灾。第一场水灾发生在11月10日至11 日。在一场暴风雨后，由于风势强劲，街道上的大树都倒了下来、房屋内淹水，导致两个人丧命。巴耶利峇气象站当天记录了大约75毫米的雨水。这场水灾导致交通严重堵塞，巴士服务也受到影响。

12月2日至3日，即发生第一场水灾的几个星期后，过早的季风暴雨造成新加坡再次洪水泛滥，24小时内已下了大约512毫米的雨水。这场水灾则使到新加坡陷入窘境。 由于这一次的雨量占了新加坡全年平均雨水的4分之1，情况十分罕见，因此这一场水灾称为新加坡有史以来的“特殊情况”。

新加坡两次的大水灾，造成超过1000个人必须撤离他们的家园，农夫无论是财产、牲畜或家禽都受到惨重的损失。多数地方的电力供应和电话服务也因为水灾而受到干扰。此外，当时也有滑坡倒塌的事件发生，滑坡倒塌事件甚至发生在组屋区内。英文报《海峡时报》（Straits Times）指出7个人因此丧命；最小的受难者是一名跌入溢满雨水的水沟的10岁小学生。华文报《南洋乡报》指出最少8个人死亡或失踪。

天灾的发生，由不得国人控制或阻止，但我认为只要国人团结一心，彼此互相帮助，就能够挽救更多的生命。我们不能只顾着自己，也应该要懂得帮助他人。



By Cheong Wan Qin  
Primary 6 Cherry





“Nek! Iqah lapar! Tiada makanan di kabinet ini!” jerit Iqah, cucu Nek Salmah.

“Iqah, kamu berumur 15 tahun. Bukankah kamu boleh beli makanan sendiri?” jawab Nek Salmah sambil dia berjalan keluar dari bilik tidurnya.

“Nek, mari kita pergi beli makanan,” kata Iqah sambil tersenyum.

Nek Salmah hanya menggeleng-gelengkan kepalanya lalu masuk ke bilik untuk menyalin baju. Beberapa minit kemudian, Nek Salmah keluar dari biliknya dan ternampak bahawa Iqah sedang menungguinya. Nek Salmah dan Iqah keluar dari rumah lalu berjalan ke Jurong Point yang berdekatan dengan kediaman mereka. Iqah tersenyum lebar setibanya di Jurong Point. Iqah berlari ke arah pintu masuk Jurong Point. Tiba-tiba, ada seseorang yang menarik lengan Iqah untuk melarang Iqah dari masuk ke dalam Jurong Point. Iqah panik kerana dia tidak tahu siapa yang sedang menarik lengannya. Dia menoleh dan ternampak Nek Salmah. Dia menghela nafas lega. Rupa-rupanya Nek Salmah tidak mahu Iqah terjatuh. Mereka mempercepatkan langkah mereka masuk ke dalam pusat beli-belah itu.

Tiba-tiba, Nek Salmah berhenti di hadapan sebuah kedai kecil bernama ‘Mama Shop’.

“Akhirnya kita berhenti berjalan!” bisik hati kecil Iqah.

Nek Salmah melangkah masuk ke dalam kedai tersebut. Iqah mengikut Nek Salmah dari belakang. Dia berasa sangat teruja kerana dia tidak pernah melihat kedai yang penuh dengan makanan yang boleh didapati pada tahun 80an. Ada biskut coklat berjenama ‘Kinos’. Ada barang yang dijual pada harga 10 sen sahaja seperti sebatang air batu, sate and juga ‘bubble gum’! Ada juga pelbagai makanan dan minuman yang terdapat di kedai ‘Mama Shop’.

Iqah tidak tahu yang kedai seperti ini masih lagi wujud.

Nek Salmah mula menunjukkan beberapa makanan yang menarik kepada Iqah.

Nek Salmah juga mula bercerita tentang bagaimana beliau dan adik-beradikinya sering ke kedai runcit untuk mendapatkan makanan-makanan tersebut. Iqah mula tertarik kerana banyak makanan di situ yang disertakan dengan mainan sekali.



*By Nur Ilyana Insyirah  
Binte Abdullah  
Primary 6 Jacaranda*

## Synopsis

A story of Iqah who was amazed to see a shop filled with 70s - 80s candies. The best part was, each candy will definitely have a toy in it.



# Our Past, Our Future



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

"Ibu! Ibu! Cikgu saya kata bahawa dahulu, tidak ada iPhone dan iPad. Betulkah, Ibu?" tanya anak emasku, Amirul.

Aku menganggukkan kepalaku. Aku pun mula bercerita kepada Amirul tentang kehidupan aku pada masa dahulu. Semasa aku hendak ke sekolah dahulu, aku hanya berjalan kaki ke sekolah. Dahulu, tidak ramai orang mempunyai kereta, justeru, ramai warga Singapura akan menaiki bas atau menunggang basikal. Orang yang menaiki bas harus membayar tambang bas dengan menggunakan duit syiling. Sekarang, kami masih boleh menggunakan duit syiling tetapi ramai kini sudah menggunakan kad ez link. Ia lebih mudah dan tidak perlulah kami mengira wang syiling.

Semasa pengajaran di sekolah, guruku akan menulis di papan hitam dengan menggunakan kapur. Sekarang, guru-guru mengajar dengan menggunakan papan putih. Pengajaran dahulu tidak cenderung pada penggunaan ICT. Guru lebih menggunakan banyak bahan-bahan bacaan atau bahan maujud. Seronok! Kadang-kala Cikgu Sadiyah akan membawa kami ke taman sekolah untuk melukis atau menyentuh tumbuh-tumbuhan. Aku paling gemar subjek ilmu hisab.

Semasa waktu rehat pula, aku dan kawan-kawanku akan bergegas ke gerai Mak Cik Jah untuk mendapatkan nasi lemak yang hanya berharga sepuluh sen. Mana boleh dapat nasi lemak harga semurah itu sekarang. Setelah kami selesai makan, kami akan pergi ke belakang sekolah dengan segera untuk bermain permainan kegemaran aku seperti capteh. Capteh itu akan sentiasa ada di dalam sakuku.

Aku menoleh ke arah Amirul, aku dapati Amirul sedang sibuk melihat telefon bimbitnya. Memang jelas bahawa teknologi telah sedikit sebanyak membantu kehidupan kami sekarang. Rupa-rupanya Amirul sedang melungsuri internet untuk mencari gambar-gambar Singapura pada tahun 70an.

"Ibu, di manakah ini? Tempat ini masih ada?" tanya Amirul.

Aku memandangnya sambil tersenyum.



*By Nuzha Sufie Achary  
Primary 6 Cherry*

## Synopsis

A story of Mak Aliah who starts to share her experience about her past in school with her son, Amirul. Amirul was curious about the past and was very interested to know of what Singapore was like in the 70s and 80s.



"Nenek, lihat ini. Lihat, saya dapat markah yang tertinggi untuk permainan ini!" kata cucuku, Sarah selepas menunjukkan ipadnya kepada aku.

Aku hanya menganggukkan kepalaku. Aku pun sambung membaca suratkhbar dengan senyap. Tiba-tiba, mataku terbeliak melihat sebuah artikel yang mengejutkan. Lebih ramai kanak-kanak menggunakan alat-alat elektronik dan banyak masa telah diluangkan bersama alat-alat tersebut. Ini menyebabkan mereka menjadi orang yang tidak suka bergaul bersama orang-orang di sekeliling mereka. Aku mula menggelengkan kepalaku lalu menoleh ke arah Sarah yang sedang khusyuk bermain permainan itu.

Memang betul kata artikel itu. Pada masa dahulu, tiada sebarang alat elektronik untuk mengisi masa lapangku. Kenangan pada masa dahulu semasa aku masih kecil mula terbayang di benak fikiranku. Ia sememangnya masih segar dalam ingatanku seperti aku hanya mengharunginya semalam.

Aku amat gembira bermain permainan-permainan pada masa dahulu. Permainannya lebih seronok, bukan seperti sekarang di mana kanak-kanak hanya tertumpu pada alat elektronik itu sahaja. Selalunya, aku bermain bersama kawan-kawan sekolah, saudara-mara, adik-beradik dan juga jiran tetangga.

Jika bermain permainan sembunyi-sembunyi, kami meletakkan peraturan baru. Kami hanya boleh sembunyi di satu blok dan tidak boleh keluar dari blok itu. Kami boleh naik ke mana-mana tingkat tetapi jangan keluar dari blok itu. Jika seseorang keluar dari situ, dia akan dianggap 'mati' dan tidak dapat bersembunyi lagi.

Setiap kali bermain sembunyi-sembunyi, aku akan sengaja cadangkan untuk bermain di blok aku. Aku akan mengambil kesempatan ini untuk bersembunyi di dalam rumahku walaupun peraturan permainan kami tidak membenarkannya. Yang lucunya, aku sempat makan dan minum sementara orang yang perlu mencari aku masih mencari-cari aku yang kononnya masih bersembunyi. Memang nakalnya aku ketika itu! Permainan sembunyi-sembunyi boleh berterusan sehingga ke lewat petang. Namun ibuku selalu berpesan agar segera pulang sebelum matahari terbenam kerana takut disembunyikan oleh 'hantu tetek'!

Aku juga masih ingat akan gelaran yang diberi oleh rakan-rakanku iaitu 'Ratu Yeye'. Permainan yeye yang menggunakan getah ialah permainan budak-budak perempuan. Setiap budak perempuan pasti akan tahu bagaimana hendak bermain Yeye. Di dalam kocek seragam sekolahku, pasti akan ada getah Yeye. Kami akan bermain Yeye setiap waktu rehat. Pada zaman itu, sekiranya seseorang budak perempuan boleh melompat setinggi-tingginya melebihi rintangan getah yeye yang direntangkan ke atas melebihi paras kepala, dia dianggap hebat dan mahir dalam permainan itu. Aku sememangnya pemain Yeye yang terhandal semasa di bangku sekolah dan tiada orang yang dapat menandingi aku. Sebab itulah aku digelar sebagai 'Ratu Yeye'.

Lamunanku terhenti di situ apabila jam berbunyi menandakan sudah pukul empat petang. Aku mengalihkan pandanganku ke arah Sarah. Sarah masih bermain permainan itu sejak pukul dua petang. Sarah sanggup men



*By Nuryl Nuha Wafeeqa  
Binte Abdul Jaleel  
Primary 6 Acacia*

### Synopsis

A story of Nek Jah and her grand daughter, Sarah. Nek Jah is amazed on how technology has gotten into the youngsters especially her grand daughter, Sarah, who is often seen playing games using her mini iPad. Nek Jah then started to dwell about her past and how much she truly enjoys her childhood. She recalled several games played during her childhood, Hide and Seek and 'Yeye'.



ahan matanya. Ini tidak boleh jadi. Dengan perlahan, aku mendekati Sarah lalu bertanya kepadanya jika dia ingin ke taman permainan. Dengan pantas, Sarah bersetuju setelah beberapa kali gagal bermain permainannya di iPad itu. Tanpa berlengah, aku membawa Sarah ke taman permainan.

Angin tiup sepoi-sepoi bahasa dan matahari bersinar terang. Aku menikmati cuaca itu dan Sarah mula mempercepatkan langkahnya sebaik sahaja ternampak sebuah taman permainan. Tanpa berfikir panjang, aku mengejar Sarah. Perasaan keriang meruap di dadaku semasa bermain-main bersama Sarah. Aku berehat di bangku sekejap, penat mengejar kerana usia sudah lanjut. Aku melihat Sarah bermain di gelongsor sendirian dengan senyuman sebesar bumi.

Aku tidak dapat melupakan peristiwa itu. Aku merenung di sekelilingi aku lalu menikmati panorama Bandar Singapura yang telah berubah. Aku telah melihat perubahan Singapura dari sebuah kampung ke sebuah bandar yang sibuk. Singapura telah melalui banyak kesukaran serta kesenangan. Akhirnya, Singapura menjadi lima puluh tahun ini. Aku berharap rakyat Singapura masih menghargai kami warga perintis. Jika tiada yang dahulu, maka tiadalah sekarang. Semoga Singapura kekal berjaya, aman dan makmu





# Transport System in the '70s

Berjalan melalui jalan-jalan yang sibuk di Singapura, Nek Joan tidak dapat membantu dan dia sedari bahawa jalan raya Singapura kini dipenuhi dengan teksi.

“Semua teksi kini begitu selesa tidak seperti semasa zaman kanak-kanak saya,” kata Nek Joan kepada cucunya, Luna.

“Mengapa kamu berkata begitu, nenek?” Luna bertanya dengan rasa ingin tahu.

“Oh! Pada tahun 70an, teksi memberi penekanan kepada kos operasi yang lebih selesa. Kerusi teksi dibuat daripada kayu dan kulit dan enjinnya ialah unit petrol. Ia juga tidak mempunyai hawa dingin tidak seperti sekarang. Kemudian, pada tahun 80an, bahan kerusi teksi telah digantikan dengan kelengkapan plastik murah dan tempat duduk PVC. Insulasi telah dibuang untuk menyelamatkan berat badan dan enjin diesel generasi awal menggantikan unit petrol asal. Teksi yang terhasil adalah mudah untuk mengekalkan dan amat dipercayai tetapi kurang selesa,” jelas Nek Joan panjang lebar.

“Oh, begitu. Apa kereta kegemaran nenek?” Luna bertanya.

“Oh! Kereta kegemaran saya ialah Toyota Crown. Ia adalah kereta yang paling cantik yang pernah saya lihat sepanjang hidup saya. Malangnya, datuk terlibat dalam kemalangan jalan raya 10 tahun yang lalu,” Nek Joan menjawab.

“Terima kasih kerana berkongsi dengan saya tentang kereta. Sekarang, saya sedar bahawa saya perlu menghargai apa yang saya ada sekarang bukannya mengadu,” Luna menjawab. Carissa



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965



By Carissa Metta Fernandez  
Primary 6 Angsana

## Synopsis

A story of Nek Joan and her granddaughter who were walking down the streets of Singapore. Nek Joan started to explain about the taxis that were in the past to her curious granddaughter, Luna.



# ❀❀❀ Racial Harmony in the 70s ❀❀❀



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965

கதிரவன் காலையிலேயே எழுந்து தன் பொன்னொளிக் கதிர்களைத் தரணி எங்கும் பரப்பினான். வெய்யோனின் வருகையை எதிர்பார்த்திருந்தபடியே பூக்களும் செடிகளும் பூத்து குலுங்கின. இன்றைய பொழுது ஒரு நல்ல பொழுதாகும் என்ற நம்பிக்கையுடன் நான் நித்திரையிலிருந்து கண் விழித்தேன். நான் என் காலை கடன்களை முடித்துவிட்டு என் அம்மாவிடம் சென்றேன்.

“அம்மா! இன்னும் கிரண்டு நாட்களில் நல்லிணக்க நாளை கொண்டாடுவதற்காக எங்களைப் பாரம்பரிய ஆடைகளை அணிந்து வருமாறு கூறியிருக்கிறார்கள். நான் அந்த நாளை பற்றி எழுதவும் வேண்டும்!” என்று செப்பினேன்.

“இன நல்லிணக்க நாளில் சிங்கப்பூரில் உள்ள எல்லா பள்ளிகளிலும் பாரம்பரிய ஆடைகளை உடுத்தி வருமாறு ஊக்குவிக்கப்படுகிறார்கள். அன்று பாரம்பரிய தொடர்பான கொண்டாட்டங்கள் இடம்பெறுகின்றன. இந்த நாள் ஜூலை 21, அன்று நடந்த 1964 இனக்கலவரங்களை நினைவுபடுத்துகிறது. 1964 ஜூலை 21ல், சுமார் 25,000 முஸ்லீம்கள் மத ஊர்வலத்தில், முஹம்மது நபி பிறந்தநாளைக் கொண்டாட சிங்கப்பூர் பாடாங்கில் கூடினர். 212 முஸ்லீம் அமைப்புக்கள் பேரணியில் கலந்து கொண்டது. இதற்காக ஓர் ஊர்வலத்தை தொடங்கினார். இஸ்லாமிய மத ஊர்வலம் விரைவில் வன்முறையாகத் திரும்பியது. நாடு மகிழ்ச்சியாகவும், அமைதியாகவும் வைத்திருக்க இந்த நாள் உதவுகிறது!”, என்று அம்மா நவீனறார்.

நான் இன நல்லிணக்க நாளின் முக்கியத்துவத்தைக் கற்றுக் கொண்டு என் அம்மா கூறிய குறிப்புகளோடு ஒரு கட்டுரையை எழுதினேன். நான்,

'முக நக நட்பது நட்பன்று நெஞ்சத்து  
அக நக நட்பது நட்பு'

என்பதைப் புரிந்துக் கொண்டேன். நாம் எந்த இனத்தை சேர்ந்தவராக இருந்தாலும் எல்லாருடனும் நட்புடன் பழக வேண்டும் என்று கற்றுக்கொண்டேன். இந்தச் சம்பவம் என் மனதில் பசுமரத்தாணிப் போல பதிந்தது.



By Sivaramalingam  
Jayashree  
Primary 6 Cherry

## Synopsis

A story of Jayashree asking her mother the importance of racial harmony day and understanding the story behind the day.

# Unity leads to success



A Growing Nation  
1945-1965



By Subhadhra Manikandan  
Primary 6 Angsana

## Synopsis

A story of that took place during Deepavali. Subhadhra's grandfather shows the 1970's photographs and talks about his experience living in 1970s and how our forefathers transformed Singapore into a prosperous nation.

அன்று தீபாவளி. என் தாத்தா எங்களிடம் 1970களில் தாம் எடுத்த புகைப்படங்களைக் காட்டினார். அவர் தனது கதையைத் தொடங்கினார். “சுதந்திரம் பெற்று 5 ஆண்டுகளே ஆயின. நமது தேசத் தந்தை அமரர் திரு லீ குவான் யூ சிங்கப்பூரை வழி நடத்திச் சென்றார். அவர் பல்வேறு திட்டங்களை அறிமுகப்படுத்தி அவற்றை மிக குறுகிய காலத்தில் நடைமுறைப்படுத்தினார். சில ஆண்டுகளிலேயே சிங்கப்பூரை உலகத் தரமிக்க வர்த்தகத்திற்கு ஏற்ற நாடாக உருவாக்கினார். நம் முன்னோர்கள் வியர்வை துளிகளை முத்துக்கள் போல் சிந்தி அயராது உழைத்தார்கள். அவர்கள் பாலங்களையும் அடுக்குமாடி கட்டடங்களையும் கட்டினார்கள். அவர்களின் கடின உழைப்பினாலேயே நாம் இன்று இவ்வளவு வசதிகளை அனுபவிக்கிறோம். 1970களில் முதல் சிங்கே ஊர்வலம் தொடங்கியது. சிங்கப்பூரர்கள் பலர் அதில் சூரியனைக் கண்ட தாமரைப் பூப் போல் மலர்ந்த முகத்தோடு கலந்துக்கொண்டார்கள். மேலும், தேசிய விளையாட்டு அரங்கம் அச்சமயத்தில் கட்டப்பட்டது. நான் அப்போது புதிதாக கட்டப்பட்ட தேசிய தொடக்க கல்லூரியில் படிப்பைத் தொடங்கினேன். உங்களுக்குத் தெரியுமா? 1979ல் சிங்கப்பூர் உலகிலேயே 2வது பரபரப்பான ஏற்றுமதி இறக்குமதி துறைமுகமாக விளங்கியது. இன்றும் அந்த நிலையை நாம் தக்க வைத்து வருகிறோம். இது நம் சான்றோரின் அயராத உழைப்பினால் கிடைத்த வெற்றியாகும்.

1972ல் சிங்கப்பூர் ஏர்லைன்ஸ் இயங்க தொடங்கியது. பிறகு சாங்கி விமான நிலையமும் கட்டப்பட்டது. புதிய சிங்கப்பூர் ஏர்லைன்ஸ் நிறுவனம் துரிதமாக வளர்ச்சிக் கண்டது. அது பக்கத்து நாடுகளுக்கு மட்டும் பயணம் செய்யாமல் அமெரிக்கா மற்றும் கனடா போன்ற நாடுகளுக்கும் சென்றது. இதையெல்லாம் சிங்கப்பூரர்கள் புன்னகை தவறும் முகத்தோடு வரவேற்றார்கள். இப்பொழுது, சிங்கப்பூர் ஏர்லைன்ஸ் உலகில் 6 கண்டங்களில் இருக்கும் 35 நாடுகளில் உள்ள 61 இடங்களுக்குச் செல்கிறது. சிங்கப்பூர் ஏர்லைன்ஸ் இச்சமயம் ஏறக்குறைய 108 விமானங்களை வைத்திருக்கிறது. பயணிகளின் வருமானத்தின் அடிப்படையிலான தரவரிசையில் 15வது இடத்திலும் சர்வதேச பயணிகளுக்கான சேவையின் அடிப்படையில் 10வது இடத்திலும் சிங்கப்பூர் ஏர்லைன்ஸ் இருக்கிறது. இது சிங்கப்பூரர்கள் பெருமைபடவேண்டிய செய்தியாகும்.

நாம் பல கஷ்டங்களைக் கடந்து வந்ததற்குச் சிங்கப்பூரர்களின் ஒற்றுமையே காரணமாகும். சிங்கப்பூரில் பல இன மக்கள் நல்லிணக்கத்துடன் வாழ்ந்தனர், வாழ்கிறார்கள் தொடர்ந்து வாழ வேண்டும். அனைவரும் ஒருவருக்கு ஒருவர் உதவிக் கரம் நீட்டி ஆனந்தத்துடன் வாழ வேண்டும். 'ஒன்று பட்டால் உண்டு வாழ்வு' என்ற பழமொழிக்கு ஏற்ப நீங்களும் நடந்துக்கொள்ள வேண்டும்.” என்று கூறி எங்களைக் கட்டி அணைத்தார். அச்சமயம் நான் நிகழ்காலத்திற்கு திரும்பினேன்.

"இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த

வகுத்தலும் வல்ல தரசு"

என்ற திருக்குறளுக்கேற்ப நமது அரசாங்கம் நம் நாட்டை முன்னேற்ற பாதையில் கொண்டுச் செல்கிறது. நான் என்றென்றும் அதற்காக என்னால் இயன்ற பங்கினை செய்வதாக உறுதி பூண்டேன்.

# ❀❀ Mr Devan Nair ❀❀

5 Aug 1923 - 7 Dec 2005  
Place of Birth: Malacca, Malaysia

Mr Devan Nair was called to be one of the convenors of the People's Action Party (PAP). He was also a Member of the Central Elective Committee. Mr Devan Nair was our 3rd former President who went across lot of struggles. Mr Devan Nair was the founder of National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). He is one of our pioneers of Singapore. He spoke up bold and had resilience. His wife, Dhana is Mr Nair's strong pillar of support.

Mr Devan Nair joined teaching profession as there was a dire need for teachers. He first taught in St. Joseph's Institution and then St. Andrews School. In 1929, Mr Devan Nair stood for elections at the Anson constituency and gained himself a seat. His Member of Parliament status stood only for two years. On 23 October 1981, Mr Devan Nair was elected by Parliament as Singapore's third president and he assumed office the next day.

During his term as president, Mr Devan Nair continued to champion worker's rights. On 28 March he resigned from his position as president on the grounds of ill health. He had won awards such as Public Service Star for his role and leadership in the labour movement, and the National University of Singapore, conferred upon him a Honorary Doctor of Letters. He was also the founder of Devan Nair Institution.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Devan Nair**

*Contributed by  
Aswini Senthil Kumar  
Primary 5 Ixora*





# ✿ Gan Eng Seng ✿

1844 – 9 September, 1899  
Place of Birth: Malacca, Malaysia

Gan Eng Seng was one of the early Chinese pioneers of Singapore known for his generosity during many charitable causes during the era of the British Straits Settlements of Malaya and Singapore.

Mr Gan Eng Seng worked hard to contribute considerably to charities like hospitals and schools. He began the Gan Eng Seng Free School in 1885 in his shophouses along Telok Ayer Street. He is known for his generosity to many charitable causes in Malaya and Singapore during the British colonial era.

His dream was to build a school for the poor which taught both English and Chinese.

In 1885, he built the Anglo Chinese Free School for some boys in shop houses at Telok Ayer Street. In 1923, it was renamed as Gan Eng Seng School (GESS) in his honour.

His specialties were the only one initiated, established and maintained by a local citizen with a gift of freehold prosperity, builds and adequate funds, until his demise. Most other schools of that time were established by missionary or communal organisations.

In later generations, Gan Eng Seng's descendants chose to return to serve the school.

Fan Eng Seng contributed by donating money to places which have a good cause. One of the places he donated to was the Tan Tock Seng Hospital because he realised that there was not enough schools and hospitals readily available for the people in Singapore. He donated to lots more. And because of his donations, the ones who were sick have been cured.

Doing that, you can see that Gan Eng Seng was a selfless man. He represents one of our school values, graciousness.

Gan Eng Seng is an all-rounder role model. From him, we can learn to be selfless, putting someone before ourselves, contributing to the society. Gan Eng Seng was always among the first to respond to pleas for donations, giving thousands of dollars to local hospitals. He also helped to pay for coffins to bury the poor.



Pioneers of  
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**Mr Gan Eng Seng**

*Contributed by  
Salunkhe Aarushi Sameer  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*

*Grace Woon  
Trista Siew  
Primary 4 Allamanda*



# ✿ Goh Keng Swee ✿

October 6 in 1918 - May 14 in 2010  
Place of Birth: Singapore

Dr. Goh Keng Swee was considered a pioneer of Singapore because he found a way to make Singapore more attractive for tourism and to improve the quality of life for Singaporeans. He is credited as being the “economic architect” of Singapore as he shaped the development of Singapore into a prosperous nation. He held several key appointments in the Singapore government, including Minister for Finance, Minister of Defence, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and various government-led companies.

A newly-formed country needs to quickly build up its economy, defence, industry, and educational achievement. In each of these fields, Dr Goh set up key institutions which still stand today. Thus he was instrumental in laying the foundation of a first-class metropolis - Singapore.

He was appointed Minister for Finance in 1959. He set up Singapore’s first industrial estate in Jurong, which was a swampy wasteland at the time. In August 1961, he established the Economic Development Board (EDB). Via EDB he attracted foreign investments and developed Singapore’s economy.

When Singapore attained independence on 9 August 1965, Dr Goh became the first defence minister. He quickly built up the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and implemented compulsory national service for all male Singaporeans above 18 years old.

In 1980, as Minister of Education, to stem the high dropout rates from school, he introduced educational streaming. Streaming allowed students to learn at their own rate.

As chairman of MAS and the Board of Commissioner of Currency in 1984, Dr Goh amended three major financial regulations, namely the Banking Act, the Monetary Authority of Singapore Act, and the Finance Companies Act. In this way, he spearheaded Singapore’s growth as an international financial centre.

Through his initiative, Jurong Bird Park and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra were launched.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Goh Keng Swee**

*Contributed by  
Keya Niranjana Kaulagekar  
Primary 5 Ixora*

*Sarah Chan  
Primary 4 Congea*





# Joseph Yubarakaj Manuel Pillay

30 March 1934 – Present  
Place of Birth: Klang, Malaya

Mr Pillay served 34 years till 1995 as a top-ranking civil servant and an entrepreneur. He helped build the Singapore economy after its separation from Malaysia in 1965. He is one of the founding fathers of the Monetary Authority of Singapore and was its managing director from 1985 to 1989

His most significant contribution was building Singapore Airlines into a world-class carrier.

Mr Pillay played a crucial role in the setting up of Jurong Town Corporation, Sembawang and Jurong shipyards, in developing the country's petrochemical sector, in transforming Sentosa into a popular tourist resort, and in establishing several defence projects.



**Mr Joseph Yubarakaj  
Manuel Pillay**

*Contributed by  
Amelia Chua  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*



# Mr Lee Kuan Yew

16 September, 1923 – 23 March, 2015  
Place of Birth: Singapore

Mr Lee Kuan Yew's thinking was different from others. He did not just think for himself, he thought for the whole country. Many people say that he is the founding father of Singapore. That is because he defended Singapore and he had a lot of resilience. He always told himself not to ever give up and have more resilience.

At the end of the day, Lee became the first Prime Minister of Singapore.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew fought for self-Government from our British colonial masters and later led Singapore into merger with Malaysia believing that this was the best option for Singapore's future. When merger did not work out, he took Singapore out of Malaysia and built a nation from nothing during our most difficult years.

He built up a strong defence capability to protect our sovereignty, a vibrant economy which created good jobs, a sound education system and excellent infrastructure, housing and environment. He transformed Singapore from a Third World to First World country.

The way he went about his work also mattered – he was meticulous, persistent, with tremendous drive and spirit, never quitting. He also saw to the continued success of Singapore beyond him through leadership succession.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Lee Kuan Yew**

*Contributed by  
Mrs Joy Zhang*





# Mr S. Rajaratnam

25 February, 1915 – 22 February, 2006  
Place of Birth: Jaffna, Sri Lanka



Pioneers of  
Singapore

Mr S Rajaratnam played a major role in shaping the development of Singapore. Together with Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Dr Goh Keng Swee and others, he assisted to form the People's Action Party in 1954. He was one of the pioneer leaders of independent Singapore as it achieved self-government in 1959 and later independence in 1965. Mr Rajaratnam was also known as a strong believer in a multi-racial Singapore and envisioned her to be a global city.

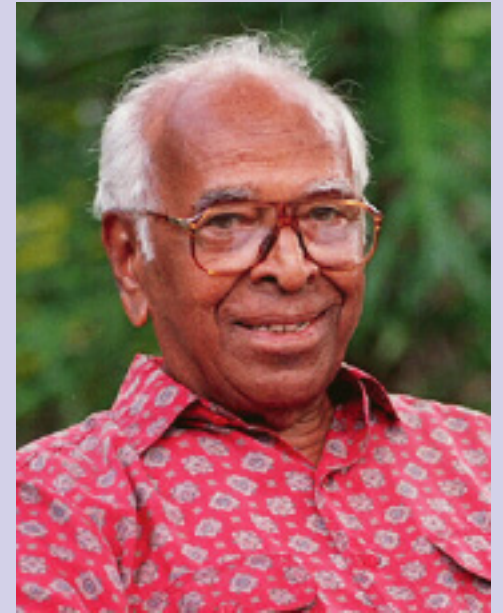
As Singapore's first foreign minister, Mr Rajaratnam worked from scratch to set up a foreign policy to put then little-known Singapore on the map of international politics.

He was also one of the founding fathers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and worked together with representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand to establish the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967.

Mr Rajaratnam is remembered for writing the Singapore National Pledge in 1966 containing the words of "One united people, regardless of race, language or religion."

A far-thinking visionary, Mr Rajaratnam devoted much of his adult life to public service, and helped shape the mentality of Singaporeans on contemporary issues. Throughout his political career, he came up with many such big-picture ideas that embrace the future, and led by example in establishing the fundamentals of good leadership for a vulnerable country with no natural resources. Mr Rajaratnam played a key role in the People's Action Party that radically improved Singapore's economic situation, alongside huge developments in social development on the island with massive expansion of healthcare programmes, pensions, state housing and extremely low unemployment.

In recognition of his visionary leadership in helping to shape Singapore's development, the S. Rajaratnam Scholarship was set up in 1990; it was renamed S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies in 1999. In 2006, Raffles Institution named a new building in the school after him. The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies was established in 2007 in one of the schools in Nanyang Technological University to honour his contributions. Launched in October 2014, the S\$100-million S. Rajaratnam Endowment set up by Temasek Holdings supports programmes that foster stronger ties in the region and internationally.



**Mr S. Rajaratnam**

*Contributed by  
Amy Koh  
Primary 5 Daisy*

*Mahendran Krisha  
Primary 5 Lily*



# Mr Tan Kah Kee

21 October, 1874 – 12 August, 1961

Place of Birth: Jimei, Tong'an, Quanzhou, Fujian, China

Tan Kah Kee was one of the most prominent ethnic Chinese Malaysians to financially support Chinese efforts in the Second Sino-Japanese war which broke out in 1937 and organised many relief funds under his name. Tan Kah Kee also exercised considerable effort against the then-governor of the Fujian province, Chen Yi, for perceived maladministration.

Tan Kah Kee was also the de facto leader of the Singapore Chinese Community, serving as chairman for the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and helped organise the Hokkien clan association. However he lost this role when the Chinese Civil War divided the Singaporean Chinese Community into Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Kuomintang sympathizers. Tan Kah Kee was a CCP supporter as he was disillusioned with the corruption within the Nationalists.

Mr Tan contributed to various educational endeavours. In Singapore he helped to set up schools like Tao Nan, Ai Tong, Nan Chiau Girls' and Chong Hock Girls'. In 1918, he founded the first Chinese secondary school in Singapore, Nanyang Chinese High School. Originally located at Niven Road, it moved to bigger premises on Bukit Timah Road six years later. He also donated large sums of money to two English-medium institutions, the Anglo-Chinese School and Raffles College. In addition, he developed key educational institutions in China, establishing Xiamen University (also known as Amoy University) in Fujian in 1921 as a private university and maintaining it for the next 16 years. Mr Tan was a strong advocate for education as he believed that education was the key to preparing the young for the demands of a modern society.

Mr Tan was a founding member of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce established in 1906. His appointment as president of the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, the clan association, further enhanced his position as a leader of the Hokkien community in Singapore, but he encouraged all dialect groups to unite and join forces when it came to rendering support for China, and executing community reforms such as eradicating opium addiction, improving housing and personal hygiene and shortening the duration of funeral wakes.

Mr Tan was a social activist during tumultuous times, aiding relief efforts such as the Fujian and Guangdong Flood Relief Fund, and was closely associated with the Kuomintang and the nationalist movement between 1906 and 1912. By the time the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, the Hokkien and other Chinese dialect groups were behind Mr Tan in his leadership of fundraising efforts for the China Relief Fund, which was used to contribute to China's war efforts against the Japanese invasion. In October 1938, Mr Tan was unanimously elected as chairman of the Federation of South Seas China Relief Fund Union that represented the China Relief Funds set up across Southeast Asia. Besides raising funds, Tan also recruited volunteer drivers and mechanics to help China in the transportation of military supplies via Burma during China's war against the Japanese.

Also, when the Japanese invaded Singapore, Mr Tan helped to recruit Chinese to assist the British.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Tan Kah Kee**

*Contributed by  
Joan Tan  
Primary 5 Ixora*



# Mr Tan Tock Seng

1798 – 24 February 1850  
Place of Birth: Malacca

Being the first Asian to be made a Justice of Peace by Governor Butterworth, Mr Tan Tock Seng rose from a humble vegetable seller to become one of Singapore's greatest leaders. He did what he could to contribute to the nation by giving back to the community and helping the early Chinese immigrants settle disputes as his role of Justice of Peace.

Mr Tan Tock Seng contributed generously to charity and became a renowned philanthropist amongst the Chinese. He was known to provide burial costs for the Chinese poor. His most famous gesture was the donation of Spanish \$7,000 to the building of the Chinese Pauper's Hospital (later to be named after him, the Tan Tock Seng Hospital or TTSH) in 1844 at Pearl's Hill. The building was designed by John Turnbull Thomson and it was opened in 1849. He was also a founder of the Thian Hock Keng Temple at Telok Ayer Street, Singapore's oldest temple, which had been the center of worship for the Fujian Chinese.

From Mr Tan Tock Seng, one can learn that it is important to give back to the community and we must strive to contribute to our nation's development, as we are never too young to make a difference. Mr Tan Tock Seng showed care and concern to Singapore's people by contributing generously. He has certainly epitomized the quality of perseverance with his never-say-die attitude and his tremendous drive.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Tan Tock Seng**

*Contributed by  
Rochelle Lee  
Primary 5 Ixora*

*Jacia Lee Min Yu  
Primary 4 Clematis*





# Mr Wee Kim Wee

4 November, 1915 – 2 May, 2005  
Place of Birth: Singapore

Mr. Wee Kim Wee was the fourth president of Singapore. He served from 2 September 1985 to 1 September 1993.

During his illustrious career, Mr Wee was appointed as the chairman of the Singapore Film Appeals Committee, board member of the National Theatre Trust, panel member of the Land Acquisition Board, and patron of the Chinese Swimming Club, Singapore Cancer Society, Singapore Turf Club and Singapore Repertory Theatre. He also served on the boards of several charitable organisations including the Singapore Anti-Tuberculosis Association or SATA.

After Mr Wee retired, he was awarded the Doctor of Letters (honorary degree) by the National University of Singapore for his contributions to public service and his contributions to the University of Singapore as its chancellor till 1993.

A year later he was appointed as the 4th President of Singapore, determined to make the Presidency as accessible as possible to ordinary Singaporeans.

His genuine concern for others and natural warmth touched many lives. Citing to his age, health and Constitutional amendments which provided for an Elected President, Mr Wee Kim Wee retired from the Presidency in Sept 1993.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Wee Kim Wee**

*Contributed by  
Dion Fan  
Primary 5 Hibiscus*





# Yusof Bin Ishak

12 August, 1910 – 23 November, 1970  
Place of Birth: Minangkabau

The presidency was a natural transition as Inche Yusof had been the Head of State of Singapore since 3 December 1959, after Singapore achieved self-rule. Yusof Ishak became Singapore's head of state six months after the People's Action Party (PAP) won the first election in self-government Singapore on 30 May 1959.

Yusof bin Ishak contributed significantly to containing the latter challenge by steadfastly promoting multi-racialism in Singapore. He went out of his way to interact with people of all races to help restore trust and confidence amongst the different ethnic groups during the 1964 race riots. His appointment as President also convinced Singaporeans of different races that citizenship did not depend on the color of their skin, but on their contributions to their shared homeland and their merit as individuals.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Yusof Bin Ishak**

*Contributed by  
Leanne Soh  
Primary 5 Daisy*



# Mr Zubir Said

22 July, 1907 – 16 November, 1987

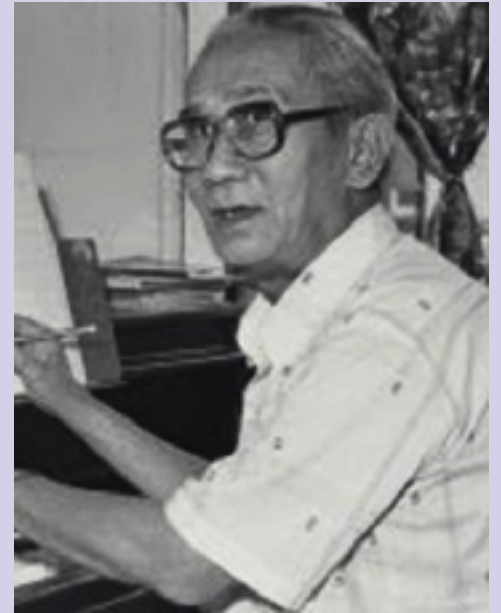
Place of Birth: Bukittinggi, Indonesia

Zubir Said, also affectionately known as Pak Zubir (pak means “father” in Malay) or Mr Mari Kita was the composer of the Singapore national anthem, “Majulah Singapura”.

Outs In 1958, Zubir wrote the music and lyrics for “Majulah Singapura” as the official song of the City Council of Singapore, before he became a Singapore citizen in 1967. With a strong sense of patriotism towards Singapore, he refused to accept payment from the government for writing the song, stating that the honour was rewarding enough for him.



Pioneers of  
Singapore



**Mr Zubir Said**

*Contributed by  
Suzanna Chan  
Primary 5 Daisy*

