Student: Renee Chou

School: Canadian International School of Hong Kong

Questions:

1. Please share with us a few benefits of entering a writing competition?

I think the biggest benefit of entering writing competitions for young writers is the recognition and the encouragement aspect. The most important takeaway for me is the encouragements these writing competitions give me, as it has, in a sense, validate my skills in my own eyes. For a young writer who is unsure of their own abilities, gaining recognition in these competitions can motivate them to further pursue this interest.

1. Describe how you felt when it was announced that you were the winner of Fiction Group 5?

Pleasantly surprised. School had been rather stressful, and the email I received from my teacher breaking this news certainly made my day better.

1. How did you prepare for HKYWA 2020?

I spent the majority of the time deliberating over the themes and planning my work. I had to do some research about the Greater Bay Area to supplement the world building of my story. Then, I to outlined the short story. I’m more of a plotter, so I had to at least have the general direction and key scenes of the story before I wrote my first lines.

1. Do you have any writing tips for students looking to enter this year’s competition? (1 about research, 1 about writing skills)

Research: Make sure you not only have a big picture understanding of Huangshan, but also little specific details of the mountains. You can use these in the short story to build a more vivid image. This prevents the writing from being too generic and non-specific.

Writing: Adding on to the previous advice, specificity is key to building a realistic world. Especially with a location-driven prompt such as this one, the world building plays a big role in writing an interesting story. Being specific about certain elements, events, or fun facts about the mountain helps illustrate the mountain in a more vivid manner.