



Fiction

Group 1

The Magical Museum

Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Lui, Ching Yin Devon – 8

I leaned against the cold glass to peer at the vibrant robes embroidered with gold thread and pearls. The tiny writing on the panel caught my attention. I wiggled my way through the crowd and when I finally gripped the railing to read it, I felt a small gust of wind tugging my hair. Soon, I was playing tug of war with the wind which grew stronger by the second. I searched for help but I was too tiny for anyone to notice me. I tumbled into a flashing and swirling wormhole. Fuzzy images of a man with dark skin and a crescent-shaped scar on his forehead zipped past. Everything was topsy-turvy.

Thud. Thud. Thud. I opened my eyes to a man dressed in shiny armour who was beating me with a stick. Surprisingly, I felt no pain! I had never seen people dressing so strangely! Where am I?

A familiar stern-looking old man yelled in fury, “Beat this cunning rock until it confesses why it stole the boy’s hard-earned money!” A tear-streaked young boy whimpered sadly as he clutched his basket of fried breadsticks. I tried to explain that I did not steal but I was speechless. My body felt stiff and cramped as if I were trapped in a box. Oh! I am the rock! That man must have gone cuckoo! Who would think a rock could move, let alone steal money?

Many people stopped to laugh at him. Even the crying boy smiled. However, the old man did not flinch and ordered his men to beat harder. I was petrified. Would I stay here forever? He whispered in a soldier’s ear. They came back with basins of water.

I racked my brain to recall who the man was. It was then that I remembered I was at the Judge Pao exhibition and his portrait was hung at the exit. No wonder I had seen him before! His deep voice rumbled, “I know we all pity the boy for losing money which he uses to buy his mother’s medicine. I urge you to drop a coin in the basins to support him through this difficult time.”

Everyone eagerly placed their coins. When a suspicious man with twitching lips dropped in his, oil droplets appeared and formed a layer on the water. “Seize him!” Judge Pao thundered. No one understood him until he showed the bowl to the crowd. I finally realized that the rock beating was just to attract attention so that he could lure the crowd in and test whether their coins were drenched in the oil of the breadsticks. What a deviously clever man!

Whoosh! I felt as light as a cloud and was sucked back into the wormhole. “Rock!” I heard my mom shout, “We have been looking for you. Turns out you’ve dozed off here! Let’s leave before the museum closes.” As I walked out, I turned around to see the portrait of Judge Pao winking at me. I would never forget this adventure!

Tale of Two Brothers

German Swiss International School, Chadha, Ziya – 7

Once there were two stepbrothers, Ming-Tao Huang, and Zi Rui Wang, in the town of Nanjing. Over the years, they had several quarrels over the inheritance of their family property. Even though they lived next door to each other, they barely met each other.

One day Ming-Tao approached Zi Rui and said, "Let's forget our past differences and learn to live happily together. Come over to my home for some tea this evening." Zi Rui felt that his brother had taken an initiative to be friends, so he gladly accepted the invitation. Little did he know that Ming-Tao's intentions were not good.

In the evening, when Zi Rui arrived at Ming-Tao, they greeted each other happily. Ming-Tao asked his wife, Hui Ying, to get tea ready for them. Once it was ready, Ming-Tao excused himself and went to collect the tea from his wife. Both the brothers had an enjoyable evening and Zi Rui went home glad. But soon he started to feel uneasy and sick. His wife, Xiao Dan, called in the doctor. The doctor said, "I am afraid he has been poisoned and I cannot save him." Zi Rui passed away the same night.

In the morning, Xiao Dan, approached the Court of Judge Pao seeking justice for her husband and to imprison Ming-Tao Huang for his misdeed. Judge Pao called Ming-Tao to his court. Ming-Tao approached the court; his heart was thumping with fear.

Judge Pao asked him, "Have you poisoned Zi Rui Wang?"

Ming-Tao replied, "No. I did not. He met me in the evening for tea and was completely fine when leaving my home."

Judge Pao said, "Why did you unexpectedly call him for tea to your home after so many years of quarrelling?"

Ming-Tao said, "I had a change of heart and wanted to make amends for my past behaviour."

Judge Pao asked, "Why the sudden change of heart?"

Ming-Tao replied, "I wanted the relationship between our families to improve."

Judge Pao then said, "In that case, I believe that you had good intentions towards your brother and would be glad that I have decided to grant the ownership of the disputed property to Zi Rui Wang's family for their well-being."

Ming-Tao got scared at this announcement and questioned Judge Pao, "How can that happen? How can you do that? How can my brother's family get the share when he is not alive anymore?"

Judge Pao smiled, and realisation dawned on Ming-Tao that he had blurted out his own secret and had fallen into the trap that Judge Pao laid.

Judge Pao said, "In your greed, you confessed that it was your intention to kill your brother for the property. No matter how hard one tries, one cannot hide the truth forever. I order that Ming-Tao is imprisoned for his crime and the property in question is to be equally shared between the two families."

Everyone praised Judge Pao for his quick wit and justice.

Judge Pao and the Mysterious Flood

German Swiss International School, Ho, William – 7

The city of Hefei boasted a hero – Judge Pao. He stood 7 feet tall with a stern and intimidating look. He had downturned eyebrows and an extremely long goatee. Despite his appearance, he was one of the most intelligent and revered officials in Ancient China.

Resting in his courtyard, an ancient Confucius scroll resting gently on his lap the Judge was interrupted by panicked shrieks from the locals. “Everyone, run for your lives!” an anxious villager exclaimed as he bolted for his life. Judge Pao peered through the red doors of his house and witnessed the chaos. In the far distance, a torrent of water came surging down from the peak of Hefei’s tallest mountain, uprooting everything in its path. Thinking quickly, he climbed onto his green-tiled roof and reassured the surrounding civilians in a firm voice, “Stay calm, everyone! I will investigate!”

As the flood receded, Judge Pao donned his shimmering lamellar armour, the individual metal plates chinking gently. As the Judge began to move through the chaos, his black leather boots gripped the mud, and he tightly held his Zhuge crossbow. His investigation started by scouring the foot of the mountain for clues.

As Judge Pao combed through the area, he spotted a scrunched-up parchment. He unfolded it and revealed a blueprint for an illegal pavilion, the location astride the source of the flooded river.

“Aha! This must be what caused the flood!” he exclaimed. At the bottom of the parchment paper was a red seal from a prominent and influential family. Judge Pao was utterly stunned, but more than that, he was angry at the selfishness exhibited by the family.

Further up the mountain, he found weapons littered across the grass. “Very suspicious indeed ...” he whispered while stroking his beard, “this certainly implies that someone is guarding this place”.

He saw five flashes in the distance. He looked at the sky and watched several arrows rain down on him. Within seconds, four had missed, glancing off his armour.

“What is going on!” he bellowed, running resolutely towards the danger on the mountain’s summit. When he reached the top, he saw five ballistae lining the walls of an imposing imperial-style pavilion. A loud voice nearby yelled, “FIRE!” Quickly dodging the danger, Judge Pao returned fire, shooting arrows at the walls. He made footholds and ascended. Looking down at the pavilion, he realised he had to blow it up to restore the river’s natural course.

Judge Pao set gunpowder charges on the pavilion’s supports, lit the charges, and jumped into the water. With a “BOOM!” the pavilion vaporised, and the river rushed in, returning the landscape to normal.

Judge Pao arrived home with the arrogant family in chains for trial. All the villagers celebrated for five months and erected a golden statue of the Judge in the town centre. Centuries later, the statue still stands in the town square as a reminder to all who see it of the importance of justice, equity and the rule of law.

Trial of a Rock

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheuk, Ching Yan – 7

My mother was busy all the time. She needed to do the housework, cook meals and take care of my little brother. I hoped I would do something to help my mum. One day, my brother lost his temper, mother was comforting him. I told my mum I could help her buy the food for tonight dinner. My mum appreciated the gesture and gave me some money.

I went to the market and bought some soy-sauce chicken and barbeque pork. The shopkeeper gave me a lot of oily change. Going back home, the path seemed a bit different to when I came before. I suddenly felt tired and sleepy. I thought it's still early. So, I leaned on the rock nearby and fell asleep. When I woke up, all my food and money was stolen. I cried loudly. A strong man with a dark face came up to me and asked, 'What happened, little child, why are you so sad?'

I was scared so I asked 'Who ...who are you?'

'I am Justice Pao!' he replied.

I told him what happened. He mused for a while. Then he asked Guard Zhan to move the rock, he said 'We will have a trial on it!' All the people wanted to see how to trial a rock, the court was full of citizens in a minute.

'Poor rock, the girl dozed off and lost coins on you, the thief must be you who told us the truth.' However, the rock kept silence. Justice Pao was irritated and shouted, 'You must be guilty, you will be beat with thirty planks!'

At the same time, Justice Pao asked the crowd, 'Should we help this poor girl, give her some coins, so she can buy some food and go home?' Justice Pao put a wooden bucket full of water in front of the door. He threw the first coin in the water and stood aside. Everyone followed but a dubious man who was reluctant to do so. Guard Zhan forced him to throw coins into the water. A layer of oil floated on the water. Justice Pao shouted loudly, 'You are the thief!' The man kneeled down immediately and said 'Sorry! Please forgive me!' Everyone was curious, how did Justice Pao know the man was the thief? He explained, 'The girl had oily change so when the coins were thrown in water, the oil must float up.' Everyone realized the trial of the rock is just the pretense to lure the real thief.

The thief gave back the money and said 'Sorry!'. I was upset, because there was no food I could take back home. Justice Pao shared some food with me. After a second, I opened my eyes, I was standing in front of my home. My mum and little brother welcomed me. They saw the food I brought and said 'How delicate is this food? Where did you buy it?' I was smiling, 'This is a secret!'

The Curious Case of the Missing Painting

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Ho, Hin Yeung, Austin – 7

Judge Pao stood in the gleaming white halls of the M+ museum, studying the empty panels before him. His eyes were heavy with tiredness, it was 6:00am when he got called in to solve this bewildering mystery.

“Are you sure it was a small painting?” he asked the curator standing next to him.

“Yes, we have already checked the inventory. It’s strange, isn’t it?” the curator answered.

Judge Pao nodded in silence. The wall had been lightly scratched, but there was no other evidence to suggest any culprits. No windows were broken, no doors unhinged, and CCTV cameras only caught the thief’s back.

What’s most perplexing, is that the missing work of art was a small portrait of Queen Clare. It was easy to haul away for sure, but the painting was worth much less than the masterpieces by Monet, Cézanne and Van Gogh hanging intact in the very same room.

After a breakfast of fine toast and scrambled eggs, Judge Pao began his investigation interviewing all fifteen members of staff at the Museum. His mind whirled with different hypotheses; could there have been a hidden emerald in the canvas? By day end, he still had no suspects until he overheard a conversation.

“I am going to visit my daughter at the hospital. I took out some history books from the archives to share with her,” said conservator Albert.

“Well, I hope she finds our present day mystery exciting!” replied guard Liam.

Intrigued, Judge Pao headed down to the library and asked which books Albert had taken out. To his surprise, the scripts on loan were all about emperors! Content with his discovery, Judge Pao headed home and dived straight into bed.

The next morning, Judge Pao walked straight into the conservation studio. Head down and focused on restoring a painting, Albert hardly noticed his entrance.

“Albert. What were you doing yesterday morning and why did you borrow books on kings and queens? I have my suspicions that you stole the painting.” Judge Pao confronted Albert with a fishy look.

Taken aback, Albert jumped from his seat. “Um...er...ee...you see...” Albert stuttered, almost choking on his own words. “I went to visit my sick daughter, and she adores stories about kings and queens.”

Judge Pao cuts in, “So you stole the painting to gift her, in hopes that it will lift her spirits?”

Looking guilty and ashamed, Albert nodded. “I just wanted her to feel inspired, to have hope that she will get better and to see a smile on her face. I know I have to return it.”

Empathizing with Albert’s predicament, Judge Pao realised that although Albert had committed a crime, it was not out of malice. With that, he arranges for the painting to be returned to M+, and a framed print of it delivered to the hospital. Inviting Albert’s family to a special tour of the Museum, they resolve the mystery with grace and kindness.

The Cattle Slayer

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lai, Ka Kiu Kaye – 9

It was a busy day in Hoi Fung Fu, the imperial court of justice in the capital of Song Dynasty. A peasant, called Mr. Fung, rushed into the courtroom and asked for help from Judge Pao.

It was the strangest case that Judge Pao and his subordinates had ever heard of: Fung's cattle had had their tongues cut off!

Fung introduced himself to Judge Pao. He worked as a farmer and grew his crops on his own piece of land. Fung was not very rich but was regarded as better-off than the other farmers of the time.

During the medieval era, farmers utilized cattle for sowing, cultivation, harvesting and all sorts of difficult labor in the paddy fields. The Song government emphasized the importance of cattle in agricultural society by legislating laws forbidding anyone to kill cattle privately. Anyone who broke this law would be subject to one year of imprisonment.

Judge Pao realized that Fung had no reason to lie and break the law, because his cattle were his most valuable assets. If the cattle had lost their tongues, they would not be able to eat or work anymore. The owner would be forced to slaughter them. Pao pondered for a while and said to Fung,

“You can slay these cattle, dismantle them and sell their meat at the market.”

Whilst Fung worried this would be illegal, Pao promised that Fung was fully exempt in this case, as it was a crucial step in finding the culprit.

The next day, Fung carried the beef and sold it at the public market. Since the government prohibited anyone from killing cattle, beef was extremely scarce. However, the masses would not worry about where the meat had come from, because *purchasing* beef was not illegal. Therefore, within an hour, all the beef was sold out.

On the same day, a landlord named Mr. Yung ran into Judge Pao's court and wished to report the case that Mr. Fung had violated the cattle law. The culprit fell into his own trap. In the court, Yung and Fung recognized each other. Judge Pao sent his detectives to search for evidence in Mr. Yung's barn and found a sickle full of blood.

Yung began to confess to his crimes.

Fung and Yung were neighbors. They were also competitors of farm products and local farmlands. Their prolonged disputes developed into a hatred of each other. In order to get ahead, Yung set Fung up by cutting off the tongues of his cattle.

If Fung killed the cattle, Yung would report the case to the court and Fung would be punished. If Fung didn't kill them, his business would be hampered in any situation. However, Judge Pao traced the culprit by looking for the motive of committing this crime.

Justice descended upon Yung. He was fined ten taels of gold as compensation for Fung's cattle and was sentenced to two years of imprisonment for his crime of injuring the cattle. Fung was waived of any charges for slaughtering his cattle. The court case was broadly publicized as a lesson to society.

Who Stole my Time?

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Hoi Wai Desmond – 7

Judge Pao, well known for his intelligence and calmness, faced many difficult cases during his time in civil service. However, there was a new tale of Judge Pao that had not been recorded before. It was about Pao and his friend, Li, who was lazy, and his habit was sleeping only.

Pao and Li were classmates while they were young. They lived next to each other in a village.

One day, Li went to visit Judge Pao because he found his time was stolen by someone. Pao asked, “What was going on?”

“When I was dozing on the bench in my courtyard yesterday, suddenly, something horrid appeared, a pale shadow popped out nearby and whispering in my ear.” Li said.

“Fetch me all your precious stuff that you own.” A shrill voice from the shadow.

“I was trembled, so I immediately woke up.” Told by Li.

“What did you lose then?” Pao wondered.

“I searched in the entire house already, including each room and garden, but nothing lose. Just the sky was turned into dark. I believed my time was stolen.” Li complained.

“It’s ridiculous. No worries, I will help you to find out the truth.” Pao promised.

Afterwards, Pao arrived at Li’s house and looking for proof. He asked Li’s parents whether they saw any stranger at that moment. They replied nothing unusual. Pao then trotted into every room and seek if there was any information left by the suspect. Unluckily, there was nothing can be traced.

In midnight, Pao pondered to visit Department of Hell and asked for Yama’s assist. “Young Pao, what can I do for you?” Yama asked solemnly.

“My friend, Li, who suspicious that his time was stolen while dozing by a pale awful stranger. Do you have any idea about that?” Pao answered.

Yama announced, “Um...I know exactly what’s happened on Li. In fact, he was in a dream, it’s not realistic. Time is the most valuable for people in the world, we cannot chase the time after it was past, therefore we ought to make good use of your time every day. Do you understand it now?”

The following day, Pao beckoned to Li and explained the reason in detail. “Time will not be stolen, only if you waste it.”

“Thank you, Pao. From now on, I know how to spend my time well.” Li realised.

Since then, Pao started to work hard and learned a lot of brilliant skills that led him to become a young detective and a successful judge in future.

The Mysterious Case of Bernard's Death

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Ching, Lauren – 8

A ghost of an old man stood behind two humongous glass doors. He was like a shivering kitten, lost in the rain.

The ghost, Bernard, took a glimpse of the sign stuck on the doors, it said: "Judge Pao – Yama of the Infernal Bureaucracy". He knocked twice.

"Enter." came a voice from inside.

Bernard shuffled in after shyly opening the door. Seated behind a desk was the famous detective, Judge Pao. He was scribbling in his notebook.

"Sir—" Bernard's voice drifted into the distance. "Sir—how—how"

Judge Pao had noticed Bernard, a little anxious. Judge Pao raised his eyebrows and set his pen down onto the table.

"H—Help, Judge Pao, I want to know h—how I died." Bernard spluttered.

"Everybody dies." Judge Pao answered.

"You're the world famous detective, will you help?" pleaded Bernard.

"Fine." bellowed Judge Pao, standing up and placing his notebook on his desk. *I know just the thing*, he thought as he strode towards a wooden drawer.

"Thank you!" he heard Bernard whisper gratefully.

Judge Pao pulled out a drawer and took out a glimmering sapphire.

"This is a time jewel, we're going back to the time of your death." explained Judge Pao. Bernard kept silent as the dead.

"Let's go." announced Judge Pao. "Back to the time of Bernard's death!" Judge Pao took Bernard's hand and the pair of them sank into a pale glittery mist.

Time whooshed by – Judge Pao saw many images flashing and vanishing like sparks from a lightning storm. Then slowly, the fog in his mind cleared like clouds after a rainstorm as they finally landed on solid ground.

They saw a younger, alive version of Bernard. He had the same white beard and glimmering green eyes and was stalking around the restaurant trying to find a free seat. The restaurant was very busy, it sounded like a zoo. Bernard, on the other hand, was silent as a mouse. Waiters and waitresses were hurrying back and forth, delivering meals. Chefs were shouting over each other in the kitchen. Suddenly, something happened.

THUD!

All was silent.

Everyone in the restaurant turned, including the chefs, who peeked through the kitchen window.

Someone screamed.

Bernard was lying on the floor. Some people stood frozen as if they were stuck in an ice block, some inched closer and crowded around Bernard.

The ghost of Bernard drifted out of the body, looking confused and upset then everything paused.

"*THAT'S IT?*" shrieked the ghost of Bernard.

Judge Pao kept silent.

"What?!" Bernard's mouth hung open so wide it almost reached the floor. "I just can't believe it." Bernard continued.

"You died of old age, Bernard. Dying is a part of life and you lived a full one." Judge Pao said.

Bernard's frown turned into a smile and he giggled in embarrassment. "You're right."

"Let's go, Bernard." Judge Pao said, waving. "Back to my office!" He reached into his pocket and pulled out the sapphire.

In Judge Pao's office, Bernard thanked Judge Pao for his help, he waved goodbye, then vanished.



Creative Writing
Fiction
Group 1

Irreplaceable Judge Pao

Kowloon Rhenish School, Lung, Yin Wang – 8

Once upon a time, there was a little town in China. In that town, there was Judge Pao. He always judged justly. Many people liked the way he judged and some people even pretended him to judge in court. This endangered Pao's fame and sometimes put Pao in a dangerous position.

One of the "fake Pao" was Peter. He had a dark face, dark mustache, long beard, and was of medium-height, like Judge Pao. He always judged recklessly and incompetently.

In a sunny afternoon, Peter saw an argument outside the court, so he looked into the case. It was about Mrs. Tse and Mrs. Cho claiming back their "son". In fact, that little boy belonged to either one of them. Peter checked the identity of the boy by dropping their blood in water. However, the bloods of the boy and the two women all matched. At that moment, Judge Pao was listening to court in casual wear and said, "Matching blood only means the same blood type, and different families can have the same blood type." He suggested that Mrs. Tse and Mrs. Cho to pull the son's feet and hands if they wanted to get their "son" back. "The lady who can get the boy can have her son back," said Pao. The crowd thought it was a ridiculous way to check the identity. First, the women pulled very hard and the boy's face turned red. At last, Mrs. Tse stopped pulling and cried. "Mrs. Tse is crying because she is afraid her son will be hurt. She is the mother of the boy," Pao announced. However, Peter thought Mrs. Cho could get the son and she was the mother instead. The crowd admired Pao and asked who he was. Pao showed his identity and sued Peter for pretending him.

After a week, Peter didn't admit his defeat, so he called his smart dad, Martin, for help. Martin pretended Pao to judge again. On a windy day, Martin saw a butcher and his customer argued in the shop and took them to the court. "What are you arguing about?" asked Martin. The butcher answered, "He went to my shop and stole my money." The customer exclaimed, "He is lying! Judge Pao." Martin questioned, "Can you prove these coins are yours?" They could not think of any evidence. After a while, the real Judge Pao passed by and said, "I have a way to find out the truth." Martin puzzled, "How?" Pao replied, "Please put these coins in a basin of water." Martin had no other methods but followed. They saw some oil floating on water surface. "The customer stole these coins because if the butcher touched the coins before, they should be oily," announced Pao. Next, Pao sued Martin for pretending him. The crowd in the court all applauded.

After that, more people in town admired Judge Pao because they knew more about his intelligence and fairness. However, nobody dared to pretend him again.

Lin's Corruption

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Chung, Zhuo Feng Jayden – 9

In the year of 1046, in Kai Feng Province, there lived Judge Pao. He was a judge who solved all reported cases. This was one of the many cases that Judge Pao solved.

The greedy senior officer of the royal court, Officer Lin, wanted to ascend his rank to prime minister, so he bribed the current prime minister into promoting him to be his replacement, by giving him a lot of money. The prime minister accepted the offer, but at this point in time Officer Lin did not have the money he promised. To get the money, he threatened to sell the citizens' children unless they gave him their hard earned money. The citizens didn't know what to do because the money they save was supposed to be used to pay their taxes.

No one wanted their children sold, so they worked extremely hard and did what Officer Lin told them to. Mr. Wong was not an exception. He wanted to keep his children, so he started to work 20 hours a day and died of overworking as a result. Mrs. Wong and the children were all very sad, so Mrs. Wong reported the whole incident to Judge Pao. She told him how they had been threatened by the officer. Judge Pao raged, "Outrageous! Extremely selfish! I will have my men bring him here at once!"

One of Judge Pao's best fighters and a former palace guard, Zhan Zhao, was ordered to lead a team of men to arrest Officer Lin and have him brought to Judge Pao's court.

The Judge asked, "Will you confess to your crime?"

Lin lied, "I do not know what you are talking about as I have never committed a crime of any sort. I am just an innocent citizen and you have arrested the wrong man."

Mrs. Wong said, "He is lying! The senior officer has also threatened a lot of other villagers!"

Judge Pao said, "I am aware of this, and other villagers have already reported to me as well. I already have all the evidence on hand to prove Lin's guilt."

Pao then said to Lin, "The villagers was told to me how you treated them, so I decided to check if it was true. I sent Zhan Zhao to spy on you for a long time and he has gathered all evidence of your wrongdoings. So there is no way you can deny your crimes. Confess now!"

The officer said, "Yes, I committed those crimes but now that I have admitted what I have done, please do not punish me!"

Pao said, "You need to be punished for what you have done. I hereby sentence you to 30 years of prison!"

Mrs. Wong said, "Thank you Judge Pao for saving us and bringing Officer Lin to justice. It is lucky for us citizens of Kai Feng to have Judge Pao as our governor!"