

# Fiction

Group 2



## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chan, Sin Yu – 11*

Judge Pao is known for having a strong sense of justice. If the wealthy wanted to get away from crimes by bribing Judge Pao, he would turn them down without hesitation.

Christmas had just passed, and some people were disappointed when on Boxing Day, they came to a realisation that Santa Claus broke the chimney when climbing it down to send presents. So Judge Pao went all the way to the North Pole to find him for justice. Santa was surprised for having a visitor after Christmas, but he opened the door to see the world-known Judge Pao. He anxiously bit his fingernails and said, “To what do I owe you for the pleasure of your accompany?” Judge Pao replied, “I heard from my citizens that you’ve broken their chimneys, is that true? Santa signed, “Yes, it is. But I can’t help that I’m over-weight. Also, my presents gave them happiness, so it should make up for the loss, right?” Judge Pao signed in annoyance, “Mate, I’m sorry but I still have to fine you for breaking properties. Your fine is 1,000 USD.” Santa unwillingly took out the amount of money and gave it to Judge Pao. With a satisfied smile, Judge Pao went back to give the money back to the victims. He thought he would have some free time, but not for long. He received a complaint from the Emperor.

The Emperor was making red packets the night before, but he could not find them today. He was worried that the red packets could not be delivered out in time. Judge Pao rushed to the palace, and knelt down. “Your highness, I would like to know, who was beside you when you were managing the red packets?” The Emperor spluttered all the answers Judge Pao wanted to know, and Judge Pao patiently jotted down the notes he needed. After some investigation, he finally knew that it was one of the Emperor’s guards who took the money. The Emperor could not believe his ears. He was the guard he trusted most. Judge Pao was sorry for him but he was happy to help.

Night time came, Judge Pao went to a secret place to solve a crime that people were most curious about. He saw a man who was killed, lying on the floor with blood spreading all over. A bloody knife was also beside him as the moonlight sparkled. There were no footprints nor fingerprints which made the case even more mysterious. It was an open land, anybody could cross it. But there were no buildings, so it was close to impossible that anybody witnessed the tragedy. Judge Pao looked around, the body was as pale as paper, and the skull was showing clearly. He did not want to believe in aliens, but in this case, aliens were the only exception. Judge Pao looked at his surroundings and looked at the map he brought. Originally, the place was quite crowded with lots of buildings. With lots on Judge Pao’s minds, he searched the dead man’s pocket for belongings. Surprisingly, he found a phone, unlocked. He looked for voice messages and found some recordings. Curiously, he pressed “Play” and there were creepy humming noises. Suddenly, someone screamed, “Meteorite! Run, everyone!” A big crash was recorded, then all there was left, was silence.

Judge Pao went through all the things he heard, and remembered that a tornado occurred two days ago. Perhaps the tornado collected dead bodies, swept houses away, but one remained. His assumption was that, when the meteorite hit a building, a knife fell down, stabbing the man in the heart so he died. During the tornado, the place that the man rested was not close to the tornado, so he was not captured.

Judge Pao returned back to where he lived, exhausted. He was always showered with praises and compliments, but he never was too proud. So Judge Pao had some rest and got ready for another adventure.

# Bowing to the Future

*Kownloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chow, Chi Wai Samantha – 9*

1006 AD, Kaifeng, China.

Pao Hiren tiptoed through home, holding a hideous black cockroach. He slipped it into his dad's robe, at the nape of the neck, and giggled. Mr. Pao felt a tickle; he shook left and right; he jumped, he wiggled, until the bug flopped right into his cup of green tea.

"HIREN!" Mr. Pao roared, gripping his son's robe hard.

This was not the end of the story.

As Hiren was dragged through the village, townspeople giggled behind their sleeves. As fishermen sang coming into town, their catch glinted in the sunlight.

Finally, Mr. Pao dumped Hiren into a dry, dirty, square stone well. Hiren's head hit the bottom. His father turned away without a second look. Hiren slumped. His eyelids felt heavy. He let the light slip out from his eyelids...

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Hiren sat up and rubbed his eyes. He squinted at the sky. It was light-blue, covered in sunlight, instead of the cloudless and grayness in the sky in his village. Is this paradise? He wondered, curiously.

He rose. Blue sky gave way to a row of pink buildings – the tallest and squarest he'd ever seen.

Their sweet colours clashed surreally. Before him a Chinese crowd scurried about. But they kept babbling into little black boxes. And behind him were roaring metal chariots. The air was dusty, but it was an alien, metallic fug, not an earthy dust; he felt no red dust under his feet.

There was a sign in front of him, by a tunnel releasing a stream of faces – "Sung Wong Toi". He peered closer. Chinese characters: "Fragrant Harbour." Hong Kong. Hiren looked down. He was dressed in tattered robes, as if homeless. In a way, he now was. But he'd learn his heart was here.

A man dressed in shiny black came towards him, muttering. "Hey, kid! You look down on your luck. Wanna make some money?"

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Hiren hid behind crates in a school's back alley, which smelled vaguely like old butter, and his eyes caught onto a girl older than him walking into it. She was chewing something, but didn't swallow it. Hiren quickly ran over to her and handed over his packet to her. "Hey, this is for you," he said.

Here he was, a homeless person forced to sell stolen goods to survive. The girl shrugged, and suddenly grabbed it from him, even though Hiren was gripping it tightly. "Well, thanks anyway." She grinned behind her mask, then pulled it down for just a moment, to take out a sticky, gluey thing and threw it. Hiren's jaw dropped. She looked like family. "Wait—"

But she then turned her back and put something in the box. "I've changed my mind; take the stash to him – Smith! Under the tree!" She pointed out of the alleyway, towards another truant in the schoolyard. Hiren blinked, startled.

He walked towards a boy under the tree, and said uneasily, "Hello, this is a package for you." The boy took it and opened the lid. Then came a bloodcurdling scream. Inside laid a dead slug. Hiren's heart skipped a beat, and his face went white as a sheet.

"How dare you do this to me?" The boy screamed, terrified. His friendly smile now became a cold glare. "I paid for what I want, and you think you can—" Smith clenched his fists, and punched the boy in the stomach.

Suddenly, a hand grabbed Hiren. “What were you doing, Smith?” It was the girl. She took Hiren’s hand and they ran for their lives, passing street lamps and houses as tall as the sky. Hiren felt the breeze blow past his cheeks. A sea of faces swirled around them. They cut through them like a blade.

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There was an aroma of jasmine, as the girl pulled him into a café and sat down. Newly invisible, they ordered a plate of what looked to Hiren like spongy flatbreads, topped with strange berries and cream. They proved perfect fortification for the coming chat.

“I’m sorry, but I didn’t mean to endanger you. Can you forgive me?”

“It is not good to play pranks on others. You should know that.” Hiren shuffled on the chair, and recalled what he did to his father.

“Let me introduce myself again. I’m Pao Hui Qing, the great–great–great–granddaughter of Pao Qing Tian?”

“R... really? What do you think about me...I mean him?” Hiren blinked, startled.

“The greatest judge of all time. A Song Dynasty Solomon. A detective too. He feared nothing and nobody. When justice demanded it, he sentenced the guilty... my parents said he was our role model, to learn from.” Her face fell a little.

“I see...” Hiren was speechless, he dared not tell the truth; I am Pao Qing Tian.

“But my dad told me: Pao Qing Tian was naughty too when he was small. So alright, I’m just like him. Look where our shenanigans took both of us.”

“That’s not an excuse for you to be like that!” But Hiren wondered how – or if – he should influence his own descendants.

Hiren decided to make a change if he could. He scrambled to his feet and asked Hui Qing the way to Sung Wong Toi station. “C’mon! I have a lot of explaining to do ...”

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They stood by the square well. It was lined with centuries of dust, but its meaning shone brightly.

Hui Qing was still puzzled by how magic worked. But she promised to rethink her life. The well felt like the law, or a black hole of shame, threatening to swallow her up, like Hiren.

They hugged and crossed their fingers.

He took a very deep breath, and dived, head down, into the well. “Bye...” he thought he heard Hui Qing’s once–defiant contralto behind him. He sighed, relieved his descendant wouldn’t be bad anymore. Is being a judge really my destiny? But before Hiren could think, there was a “THUMP!”, and all was blackness...

## Pao's First Case

*Kownloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chu, Long Yan Coleman – 9*

“Ding Dong!” the doorbell rang. Pao opened the door and saw a man standing there. “Do I know you?” Pao asked curiously. The man held a dried up marker pen and said, “It’s me!” Pao was amazed and gave him a warm big hug. But then, the man said, “Pao, the town needs you again!”

I am Pao Qing Tian. My dark skin, a distinctive crescent birthmark on my forehead together with my supernatural power to fight crime, made me a prestigious person. I have lived more than 1000 years. If I born in recent years, I was sure I would associate with the Justice League! In the past, I dispensed justice as a human during the day, but at night, I became the immortal Yama of the Department of Hell sorting out Afterlife’s affairs.

Everything started in a day when I was in the fifth grade. I was playing with Zhao, who was my best friend, in the school playground. All of a sudden, a basketball hit on my forehead. It hurt so much that I buried my forehead in my hands and there were some beams emitting between my fingers. It was my crescent glowing and shining. Zhao and I were astonished. At the same time, we heard a public announcement, “Dear students, the portrait of our schoolmaster in the school garden has been vandalized, if you have any information, please contact director Yip. Thank you.” After that, my glowing crescent went dim.

During recess, Zhao saw big bully Derek talking to Director Yip. A few minutes later, my sister Qing Hua was brought to the headmaster room. Later, Qing Hua coming out sobbing and I asked her what had happened. Qing Hua was accused vandalizing the headmaster portrait because she was in the school garden and had the same marker pen.

Then, my crescent hurt and some scenes flashed in my mind. There was a blue marker pen in a green trash bin in the first scene. I also saw a white handkerchief with some blue stains in the second scene. Derek was the only person in the last scene. Zhao related these with Qing Hua’s case and we determined to carry out an investigation so as to free Qing Hua from the accusation.

When I was comforting Qing Hua, Zhao invited another two friends, Roy and Herman to carry out the investigation. Derek was put under surveillance by Zhao. Roy was responsible for searching all green trash bins in school. Herman was responsible for finding the white handkerchief with blue stain. Under closely surveillance, Zhao only found Derek jumped the line in the tuck shop, threw trash on the floor and copied homework from others. But Zhao also noticed Derek’s marker pen set lost a blue one. Roy wearing a mask and gloves and dug into all green trash bins. “What a hard job!” Roy murmured. At last, he found a dried out blue marker pen. Herman searched all over the school playground, garden, toilets and classrooms. He only found water bottles, jackets and badmintons. He decided to return them to the school lost and found box. When Herman arrived at the lost and found box, he immediately discovered a white handkerchief with blue stains. Also, there was a letter D stitched on it. “What a joke! I should come here in the first place.” Herman yelled.

The three detectives and I met in the school garden and discussed what they had found. I gathered all information provided, closed my eyes and had a deep breath. Then I walked towards the vandalized portrait and stared at it. “We overlooked an important fact!” I opened my eyes and uttered. The other three got closer to the portrait and Herman shouted at once, “Oh my god! Originally the portrait was vandalized by a blue marker pen. But on top of it, all blue ink was almost covered by black ink. Who did it?” I followed, “The white handkerchief belongs to Derek. The stitched letter D refers to Derek.” Zhao quickly elaborated, “Derek must use his own blue marker to destroy the portrait and threw it into a trash bin.” Herman added “and he tried to wipe it with his own hanky but he did not succeed. That’s why there was some blue ink.” Roy could not understand and asked “But the marker pen I found in the trash was blue not black.” “The black maker pen belonged to Qing Hua. Derek used her black marker pen to cover the blue marks on the portrait.” I reckoned. All our eyes beamed.

We rushed to Qing Hua and embraced her merrily, “Qing Hua, you are free. We have found the true villain. You are framed.” Qing Hua asked contentedly, “Framed? Who is it?” We four shouted confidently, “Derek the big bully!” Five of us immediately seized Derek to meet Director Yip and told him all about our investigations. Derek could not deny and pleaded guilty in front Director Yip. Director Yip said sorry to Qing Hua and the headmaster gave us a compliment for our kind heart and the pursuits in truth and justice.

It was Pao's first case when I was in Grade 5. Until now, I really did not know why I would have the supernatural power to flash back the scenes of crime. Just because of the basketball hit? It was a mystery. From then on, whenever my crescent hurt or glowed, no matter small cases or serious cases, four of us worked as a team, fought against crime and helped the innocent persons for many years until the jobs were taken by police, detectives, lawyers, judges and the courts.

But now at 2023, Zhao is at my door again and my crescent is glowing. The town must be in big trouble. Some people must be facing a great grievance which no one can solve. I got to go. I need to save the town and the innocents. Wish me luck. Bye!

## Meeting Judge Pao

*Kownloon Tong School (Primary Section), Guo, Bing Xian Abraham – 11*

When Henry woke up, he found himself lying in a dark, gloomy prison. The prison cell was full of gross hay. It was as silent as the grave. Feeling puzzled, Henry saw a man, whose face was as white as a sheet, sitting next to him, shaking mournfully. He murmured to the man, “Where are we? Where is this horrible and smelly place?” The man remained silent. Henry tried to break the silence. “What’s your name? Why are you here? What crime have you committed?” Henry asked him. Henry stared at the man, waiting for his reply, but the man didn’t give him any response.

Soon, some prison guards came and broke the silence. “Mr Wang, it’s your turn to see Judge Pao! Follow us!” one of the guards shouted at the man. Henry overheard them and remembered Judge Pao — the honest and upright judge with a black face and a crescent moon on his forehead! He learned about Judge Pao in his History class! Mr Chen, Henry’s History teacher, told them the stories about Judge Pao! Henry now realized that he was at the time of Song Dynasty. The guards were taking Wang to see Judge Pao.

After Wang left with the guards, Henry started considering himself, “Why am I in prison? What happened to me? Will I be the next one to see Judge Pao?” Although Henry jumped out of his skin and shook like a leaf, he kept telling himself, “Judge Pao is the most significant and legendary figure of justice and righteous. I am sure he can tell me what’s going on.”

Few hours later, the prison guards came again. “Mr Han, you are accused of a theft. Please follow us. You will be taken to Judge Pao for interrogation.” Henry was tied tightly that he could not move or run away but to follow the prison guards to walk slowly to the tribunal court where he met Mr Pao finally. He could not recognize Mr Pao at first as his face was not black at all! Mr Pao, who was about 50 years old then, had a crescent moon on his forehead! When Mr Pao saw Henry, he asked, “Why did you steal a kid’s coins?” Feeling puzzled, Henry questioned, “Your Honour, please may I know why am I the one who stole the coins?” Mr Pao replied, “Huh, that was because someone found you asleep on a rock next to the boy’s oil tank.” Henry remembered he heard this story before. He tried to recall his memory

When Henry tried to figure out what was happening, Mr Pao asked him, “You have to tell me why you slept on a rock next to the boy’s oil tank.” Fortunately, Henry came up with a brilliant idea. “Your Honour, I was exhausted when I was trying to help the boy find his coins, so I felt asleep next to his oil tank. Believe me please, Your Honour! I can help you search for the thief! .....”

The next morning, Mr Pao told the villagers that he was going to interrogate the rock, which laid right next to the boy’s oil tank. The villagers were curious, so they gathered at the tribunal hall as they all wanted to know how Mr Pao interrogate the rock. Mr Pao asked the rock angrily, but the rock was still and made no responds. Mr Pao kept scolding the rock, “If you stay silent, I will beat you! Why don’t you just tell me the truth honestly?”

All the villagers were stunned and went gobsmacked. “Was Judge Pao mentally sick?” “Why was he talking to a rock?” “Did he expect the rock to speak to him?” “Oh my god! Poor Judge Pao!” Some villagers even burst into laughter which provoked Mr Pao, hence, he took a revenge and told the villagers, “How dare you laugh at me? You are not respecting me. I will punish you!” As a result, he ordered each villager to pay a fine of one dollar. The villagers were obedient and put a one-dollar coin into a water tank one by one. Suddenly, when a man put his one-dollar coin into the water, Mr Pao said, “You are the one we are looking for!” and asked his guards to arrest the man.

Mr Pao explained, “After you put in your coin, there was oil floating on top of the water surface. The little boy sells oil, so all his coins are always oily. That’s why I am waiting for an oily coin to find out who the thief is!” Mr Pao thanked Henry for giving him such a great idea to help him catch the thief easily. Henry was on cloud nine and felt Mr Pao’s taps on this shoulder...

Tap. Tap. Tap. Henry felt Mr Pao tapping on his shoulder happily. He woke up and said, “You are welcome, Your Honour...” and suddenly found his History teacher, Mr Chen, staring at him furiously. “I’m definitely NOT Your Honour, Mr Henry!” “I’m sorry, Mr Chen. I thought you were Mr Pao...” All his classmates cheered at this laugh-out-loud moment.

# *A New Tale of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Guo, Yeuk Yee Claire – 9*

Have you ever heard of Judge Pao? He is a famous judge and lives in Kaifeng, Dynasty Song, Ancient China. At first, he is like any other normal judge. But one day, an accident happened and Pao's life changed forever...

It is a cloudy day in Kaifeng, early in the morning. Pao is walking down a very quiet street while humming a little song to himself. Everything is as normal as possible when suddenly, the ground shook and opened a gap just big enough for Pao to fit in. He fell in and above him, the ground closed with a CLANG!

After a while, faint images of clocks appeared and Pao found himself floating through time. Then in a flash, a long line of images appeared and each showed a amount of time. The images went from the English kings to famous vikings to brilliant composers to American presidents. But Pao knew none of them. His eyes only grew wilder and wilder every one or two image until they almost pop out but he said nothing. At the very end a image of a group of children at the background of the Hong Kong Police Station. Suddenly, a bright flash of light and a crack of thunder. THUND! And he is there.

The sound of laughter filled the air as the children laughed and played in front of the gate. When Pao found himself somewhere unfamiliar, he went up to the children and asked "Where am I? What time is it now?" "You are in Hong Kong, China, 2016. We are now at the Hong Kong Police station." answered the children playfully. Pao asked again "What is Police?" The children burst out laughing "We will show you." They said. "And do not worry, my father is the chief police, as long as we do not do anything dangerous or run after each other, we can go in." Said the oldest child who is called Sally. "Follow me!"

As Pao followed the children, he asked "Why are there people small enough to fit inside your big and flat box?" "Those are called television." "What is the big white box stuck to your wall?" "That is the air-conditioner." The children soon found that Pao is different, so they asked "Where are you from and what is your name?" "My name is Pao and I am from Kaifeng on 1040 BC." Answered Pao, the children are amazed, "I came by accident." Pao said. The children took Pao to a room and they showed him a book, it has a picture of an old Judge Pao. The children told Pao that in the future, he will be famous and his way to judge people is still used to today. Pao asked them how did he judge the people. The children said that he used the fingerprinted of the suspect to judge people. Nowadays, people use CCTV and other technologies to solve crime.

Pao is amazed that he inspired the future of judging. The children asked him if he really fingerprint to judge people. "I didn't use that way yet, but when I go back to my home, I will use the fingerprint idea to solve crime." Then, Pao noticed a little upside down glass bowl-shaped thing on the roof. "What is that?" Asked Pao. "That is the CCTV" the one we used to solve crime now." Then the children took Pao outside to discovered new technologies. But Pao did not know that there are more amazing things for him to find...

The children took Pao to a computer shop. The shop owner showed them the new computer that just came into the shop. After they visited the computer shop, they went to the toy shop to see the electronic toys.

Suddenly, the ground shook and thunder cracked and a gap opened. The children looked back and saw Pao waving at them and saying "Thank you for the wonderful trip, I have seen many amazing things although I can not bring any of your things back to my world. I will use the fingerprint and other ideas to help me judge. The things you have shown me today have given me many new ideas. Thanks again for your help." Then, Pao jumped into the gap and travelled back in time and arrived back to the Kaifeng city, no time had passed and it is still quiet as the before. Pao went back home to think about all the amazing things he had seen today. "The world is filled with wonder and magic!"

And soon, after he used the ways he had seen at the police station he soon became famous and it is all because of the wonderful trip he had with the children.



## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Hung, Ching – 11*

In the earlier Song dynasty, Pao was a famous judge. He was fair and humble, always admired and esteemed by people.

One day, a child was selling oily fried snacks when he fell asleep on a rusty rock. Pao was nearby patrolling when suddenly the boy let out a shrill scream as he discovered that all his money had disappeared! People laughed at the thoughtless idea that Pao scolded the rock. However, Judge Pao ignored the laughter and took a bucket of water. The pedestrians were then asked to throw their money into it. When the last person tossed the coin into the water, it floated up... Pao glared at him, the man was confused for a second and instantly realized the situation. He instantaneously dashed away, trying to get rid of Pao's emerge, and led to a long chase...

They raced down the slope, and with frustrated sighs, Pao finally caught the thief beside the jail. The thief's hands were greasy, and his face was caught red. Pao arrested him with ropes and stubbled him to jail. Right when Pao was explaining the situation to the security, in a split second the thief twisted his arm, led Pao into panic, and set free his hands like a piece of cake. He got out of the bondage and kicked Pao into the cell after a fancy combo of kung-fu moves.

Pao widened his eyes and can't believe this twist. He was searching for help from security but was disappointedly refused. "I am Judge Pao, why do you still lock me here!" Pao protested shockingly. "We have no choice..." The security pointed toward the criminal who changed into a judge uniform and held a pile of false documents reading "Blamed innocents misusing the judge's power". "Do you have any questions?" the "judge" asked. Without the chance of answering, the stubborn security slammed the steel gate leaving Pao honing over the bars.

Being locked in the cell, Pao had no access to any evidence. The ordinary cell was dusty with bar windows covered with thick curtains. The pile of hay used as a bed was beside the water tap under a mirror. Soon, this recalcitrant judge thought of an escape plan. Pao began by measuring the walking speed of the guards who inspects the corridors. Following that, he removed the mirror using a water pipe. Pao waited patiently until sunrise when the sunlight directly shot through the window. He immediately placed the mirror under the sunlight, reflecting the heat toward to lock. Pao tore the curtains when the compartment's gate broke free. With the well-designed plan and accurate measurements, he slipped through the guards when both passed by oppositely. Pao grinned from ear to ear.

In order not to be seen, judge Pao chose to escape up the ceiling. Pao flung the curtain so that it hanged on the wooden bars. This allows him to climb up efficiently and slide towards the exit. After ensuring his own safety, he slide down the bars with the curtain. "Woosh" Pao flew down swiftly creating a wave of wind that blew off the candles. The jail transformed into a dark haunted house at once. The security and the criminals all panicked and shouted for help. Judge Pao made use of this chance to get closer to the exit. Fortunately, the guards were all away from their positions, leaving Pao taking the key and set himself free.

Judge Pao sneaked away and arrived at his office by noon. Judges were astonished to see him back as they were all misled by the rumors. The court instantly filled with suspicion. "Why are you here?" "Weren't you still in jail?" "We are all really disappointed with what you've done." "Just give me an evening and I could prove that all of you have misunderstood the situation." Pao answered.

Using the newest technology of printing, Pao produced hundreds of notices which would gather witnesses of the incident the day before. To his expectation, almost half of the crowd yesterday have received the notice and came

to support Pao's stance. The witnesses all told the judges about their observation on that day. Besides, the victim selling snacks brought the water bucket that Pao used. Judge Pao collected all the evidence and proved in front of others after printing out the documents needed with the movable-type printing. Following that, this intelligent judge identified the thief by comparing the property of the oily coin and that of the snacks. To prove so, judge Pao first separately dip a wooden stick into the oil and burned it on fire. As a result, the burning characteristics of the two samples could be compared by observing their appearance, colour and intensity. To his belief, all the witnesses and judges agreed that the two fires were similar. It proved that the criminal did steal the coin from the boy and has wrongly accused judge Pao.

When they are about to leave the court, the security arrived to the clearing and ordered the people to stay away from Pao. However, the judges showed the evidence and commanded the guards to find the thief instead. Soon, the thief showed up in the court. The judges punished him for stealing and not committing to crime, feigning documents, pretending to be judge as well as misusing judge's power. At the end, the thief was penalized for at least fifteen years in prison.

Through this incident, the thief regretted his behavior and promised not to involve in any crime again. "Action have consequences", no one can slip through punishments after violating the rules. When all was said and done, Judge Pao was satisfied with the punishment. However, when the other judges asked about how did he escape of the jail... Judge Pao replied, "I have a plan."

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lam, Chun Wang – 10*

Once upon a time, Judge Pao came to a town called Macondo. Upon his arrival, he saw a considerable number of people surrounding an old man. He heard someone saying “This old man stole a lot of stuff, he has stolen from almost everyone who lives here!” The townspeople felt as angry as an erupting volcano.

They planned to kill the old man. The old man's eyes were tearing up and he said, “I steal because I have a son at home and he has a broken leg”. Nevertheless, nobody trusted him. This time, Judge Pao came out and stopped the townspeople from killing the old man. Then the townspeople came up with another plan, the plan was to send him to another town.

In response to this, Judge Pao said, “No, because he will not change, he will steal those townspeople’s things!” The community were enraged and said, “Are you a judge? We planned to kill him, you said no, we planned to take him to another town, you said no too!” Judge Pao responded, “I am a judge. Your plan will not work because when you kill him, who will take care of his son? I have a plan to stop him from stealing. My plan is to give him a job to earn money honestly. If he does not change, you can come to tell me, I will ask him why he stole again.” The townspeople shouted, “We don’t care about his son, how can he even prove that he has a son? Or is he telling a lie?” Judge Pao said, “Let's go to his home and see if it is true!” They asked the old man where his house was. When they arrived at the old man’s house, they saw that there sat a boy. The boy was thin, smelly and had a broken leg. When the townspeople saw this, they all felt shocked as a rabbit in the headlights.

Judge Pao said, “See, the old man didn’t lie to all of you, let us give the old thief a punishment according to his crimes to make him learn a lesson! Is that okay or not?” The townspeople discussed the problem at length and said, “Okay we will give him a punishment, what is the punishment? Do we need to give him a job?” Judge Pao responded, “Yes, and the punishment is low pay. Is your town dirty? If it is, make him cleaner.” Judge Pao continued, “This is an appropriate job because if your streets are full of rubbish, it will have a lot of mice and if there are a lot of mice, then nobody will come to this town! The thief’s labour will benefit everyone because he will help you to clean the streets and a lot of people will come to this town and you can have a lot of money! Does anybody have any questions?” Judge Pao paused. Nobody made a sound. “If not, then you guys agree to give him a job!” Judge Pao concluded. The townspeople responded, “Okay, we will give him a job!”

The old thief never stole again and he was happy about the way things worked out. In the past, everybody hated him and wanted to kill him but now everybody treated him well and respected him. He became a welcome member of the community and integrated with the townspeople. Everyone appreciated the work he did and even though he earned very little, he always worked with a smile on his face because of the kind heartedness they showed by giving him a job.

The old man thanked Judge Pao and worked hard every day. Every day the old ex-thief thought about Judge Pao and thanked his lucky stars that Judge Pao was passing through that day. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.”

# *New Tales of Judge Pao: Finding The Tiger And Getting The Rabbit In The Meta Universe*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lam, Yan – 9*

December 31, 2022, the Hong Kong Palace Museum, Exhibition Hall 9, the display of the 12 zodiac signs of the tiger, a gift from the Central Government. I, Judge Pao, working in Hong Kong for many years, visiting the Hong Kong Palace Museum at that day. Firstly, I take a picture in front of the main door. After entering the museum, I, one by one exhibition hall, slowly walk and take a picture. I, very appreciate the precious antiques.

Suddenly, one of the museum staff shouted: “Oh no! The tiger head statue has disappeared. It was in the 9th exhibition hall, but now it has disappeared. ”Other staff and members of the public citizen heard this and looked around in the exhibition hall. Everyone took the initiative to help find the tiger head statue, some suggested watching CCTV, some suggested calling the police, some suggested closing the museum, some suggested ..... When I approached the staff, I calmly identified myself and my expertise.

I looked around and slowly advised everyone to calm down. And then I meet with the staff member who first found the lost tiger head statue, Ah Kam, to find out when the tiger head statue was still there this morning and when it disappeared.

I also went to the security room to look back at the CCTV and checked the relevant footage one by one, and saw that a suspicious person, a middle-aged man wearing a sports cap and black mask, had watched the tiger head statue for about 20 minutes, and after he finished watching it, the tiger head statue then disappeared. I can't see from the clip what method he used, but, he left a sticker, which is still there. I immediately asked the staff to take a look at the sticker, it shows :“The tiger head statue is still in the museum and must be found on or before 12:00 p.m. on December 31, 2022, otherwise the tiger head statue will disappear forever. ”I, seeing this sticker, smiled a little, stroked my beard, coughed gently, took out a water bottle, drank some warm water. And then I told the staff: “Don't worry, it looks like someone is trying to fool everyone, the tiger head statue is still in the museum, as long as you look carefully throughout the museum.” After listening to this, everyone was half convinced, so they had to take action and mobilize all the people.

The curator took the initiative to close the museum and asked everyone to assist in the search. I, Judge Pao, said loudly: “Who can find the tiger head statue first will be rewarded with a prize of \$100,000.” Wow! Everyone heard there was \$100,000 and ran around looking for it. I watched and ordered a cup of chocolate coffee from the cafe inside the building, and took out my cell phone to watch TV dramas and news.

At this time, the police had arrived to investigate and report to me the progress of the investigation, I, slowly and deliberately, waiting for the results of everyone's efforts, but the time passed, still 30 minutes, 12:00 will soon come. Outside, many people have gathered on both sides of the harbor to watch the fireworks display and countdown to New Year's Eve.

At 11:59pm, some people gave up looking, some complained that they couldn't find it, and some were still trying, but I, Judge Pao watched the time on my watch and said loudly, “Stop looking! Let's count down together to welcome the new year!

10...5.4.3.2.1, Happy New Year! ”I, again, said loudly: “Please look at the place where the tiger's head was originally placed, but a rabbit's head has been changed. ”

I, happily, say: “Happy New Year to the tiger and to the rabbit! Good health! ”

Dad said loudly : “Judge Pao, it's time to turn off the computer, it's time to go to bed! It's late, We have done counting down, Jasmine put down your virtual glasses and quit the Meta Universe ! ”

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lau, Sum In – 11*

The famous historical figure, Bao Zheng, commonly known as Bao Gong, is probably no stranger to students from China. Bao Gong, was a Chinese politician during the reign of Emperor Renzong in China's Song Dynasty. During his twenty-five years in civil service, Pao consistently demonstrated extreme honesty and uprightness, with actions such as sentencing his own uncle, impeaching an uncle of Emperor Renzong's favourite concubine and punishing powerful families. Many people see him as a courageous, honest and a justice icon, but before knowing about his true story, some may see him as a mean and manipulative person simply because of his face.

Judge Pao was born with brown skin, thick eyebrows and a winged-eye. Because of this, when he was young, he was often seen as a mean person. Many people from his village feared him simply because of how he looked. He was often discriminated and bullied by other people. As you can see, most of Judge Pao's childhood wasn't even close to decent, but only most of it. When Judge Pao was down in the dumps, there was one person who made him feel better, a person who wasn't afraid of him, who would cheer him on no matter what, and that person, was his best friend, Mei Tak. Unfortunately, Mei was blind, but he was always in high spirits and cheerful. His upbeat attitude always made Pao lighten up. Mei was your typical best friend. He would cheer Pao up, talk to him all that kind of stuff. But what's different about him was that he believed in Pao when nobody did. When Pao was being bullied, he would stand up for him when nobody did, he would try to get revenge for Pao. He always says 'Even though I'm blind, based on your voice and personality, no matter how you look, our bond will never break!' Their relationship and bond were definitely stronger than friends, like brothers. But one day, their relationship was shattered and Pao's life turned upside down.

One day when Pao was around 14 years old, he got involved with the wrong bunch of kids. The group wanted Pao to join them in a serious crime. 'Your face is intimidating and mean, what perfect way to put that in use than doing a crime! You would definitely threaten victims, you would be great use for the team. You got nothing in your past life, why not make a new one?' Pao realized that he had nothing in his life, the only good thing about life was Mei. Even though Pao's gut screamed no, he said calmly 'I'll think about your offer.'

That night, Pao couldn't sleep. On one hand, he didn't want to do crime since it is unlawful and might hurt other people, but then, he had nothing better to do in his current life. Everybody already is afraid of him or disrespect him. It was like he was lost in his own mind, not knowing the direction of this outlandish maze that made him feel confused. The next day, he met up with the group, and with a heavy heart, he said 'I accept your offer.' And with that single sentence, Pao's life turned upside down. He started doing small crimes with the group like bullying and pick-pocketing, people were afraid of Pao and didn't even hesitate to obey them, until one day...

When Pao was on the way with the group to do another crime, he heard a very familiar voice, 'Pao! Wha...what are you doing. I heard that you became a criminal. But I didn't believe them, so I wanted to ask you here.' It was Mei! 'What are you doing here Mei? Get away now.' Pao said harshly. With tears in his eyes, Mei said 'Why did you do this?' 'I'll talk with you later' Pao said with a stern voice. Even though Pao looked calm, he was heart-broken inside. That night, Mei came to his house to sort things out. 'Now answer my question, Pao.' Pao has never seen Mei that sorrow before. 'There was no other choice, every one already hated me, might as well start a new life.' 'But I don't!' Mei cried, he couldn't hold back his tears. 'Even with your looks, you can also be a great icon. Even though people say you look intimidating, you could use that for great things. You can be a lawyer and intimidate your client's enemies. You could also be a solidier, actor and many other things, remember, all humans are born good, I trust you!' Mei's words made Pao stunned, he would've never thought of that and remain on the dark side of things. It was like Mei was the light, the glimpse of hope that was always right around the corner, he just never noticed. With Mei's words, Pao carried his courage and decided it was time to change, for the good this time.

Pao first quit the group despite their warnings. Then decided to peruse a career in being a politician. Despite all the warnings and threats, with Mei's help, Pao pulled through and became one of if not the most well-known and powerful politician. Not long after, Pao also became a marvelous judge. He initiated a number of changes to better hear the grievances of the people, made him a legendary figure. During his years in office, he gained the honorific title Justice Bao due to his ability to defend peasants and commoners against corruption or injustice.

Bao Zheng today is honored as the cultural symbol of justice in Chinese society. We should all learn from his honesty, uprightness and desire to change. We should also learn from Mei the importance of positivity and how all people can change, we should also never judge a book by its appearance. As Mei said 'All humans are born good!'

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Leung, Jane – 11*

Judge Pao — China's Sherlock Holmes played a clever and powerful role in history. He was known for his incredible intelligence and was great at solving mysteries or crimes back then.

Let me tell you one of his most famous cases. One morning, Judge Pao was having a peaceful morning walk in the streets. Suddenly, a boy sitting on a rock was bursting into tears. Judge Pao being the nice guy that he is, kneeled down and asked the boy with a kind voice, 'Hey there little boy, why are you crying on such a beautiful day?' The boy wiped his tears and stuttered, 'I..I was selling some oily bread sticks earlier today and earned some coins. I was a bit tired so I slept for a while, but when I woke up, the coins were all gone!' some passersby were staring at them and gossiping. Judge Pao thought for a moment, and he turned around saying, 'Are there any people that are kind enough to give this poor boy a coin to cheer him up?' Judge Pao then grabbed a wooden basin filled with water, and told people to put the coins in there. Soon after, many people had put some coins in the basin. When a young man put his coin in the water, a few drops of oil appeared in the water. 'Guards! Capture this young man! He is the thief!' yelled Judge Pao, leaving the people nearby shocked, later even clapping for him. And the case was closed — Judge Pao had cleverly Used simple science to help him find the thief. As oil doesn't mix with water, Judge Pao was extremely smart to think of this plan in such a short period of time.

After reading this story, I'm sure that you're truly amazed by Judge Pao in so many ways. Even until now, the present, people still praise him for his excellence in solving crimes, And as he is, and will forever be, China's Sherlock Holmes — Judge Pao.

## *Travelling into the past and beyond!*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Li, Hengxuan – 11*

On a seemingly ordinary day, the brightest student in class, Christine Pao, went to the library as usual for her. When she was gathering information about a case study about Judge Pao, one of the most famous judges in ancient China, a strange portal suddenly appeared in front of her! Then, a strangely familiar man came out of the portal and said, “I am your ancestor, Judge Pao. Will you come and solve a case with me?” Christine was astounded. She is a descendant of the legendary figure! Without much time to think, Christine agreed to Judge Pao’s request...

Travelling through the portal, Christine felt dizzy. Spinning around and travelling through time is undoubtedly fun but nauseous. After five long minutes, she finally arrived. It looks like she has landed in Kaifeng court, and Judge Pao is the judge, with his student, Gongsun Ce, as the commentator. With a moon crescent on his face, wearing a black uniform with gold Qilins beautifully carved on it, the plaque overhead saying justice, and the guards bellowing “Mighty”, but in Chinese, whenever someone has entered the court(with Judge Pao’s permission), the setting seems strict.

Like in the film, the Principal graduate Chen Shimei, From Chen Jia Cun, Luzhou, who committed serious crimes, is about to be executed. He betrayed his wife, Qin Xianglian, in favour of marrying a princess and becoming a royal, exchanged his identity with a monk that is from Baiyunsu, also in Luzhou, who has the same name, left his parents starving to die, and asked Wei Ming to kill two people and his former wife and children. Instead of killing the people, Wei sent his assistant to kill them. The assassination of his former wife and children did not succeed, and Wei’s assistant killed himself in pity for the family. Shocked by Chen’s crimes, Christine screamed! Soon, she realises she is invisible to the people around her, like Ebenezer Scrooge when he travels through time in *The Christmas Carol*. “Did you have a wife before you married the princess?” Chen Shimei said no, and put the responsibility on Wei Ming, who was executed the day earlier. Unfortunately for Shimei, Wei Ming has pleaded guilty to the killings of three people the day before, and the truth of the case of Chen Shimei. He had been executed with a dog-shaped guillotine. Judge Pao decided to execute Shimei. At that moment, the empress and the princess arrived at the court. They feel that Judge Pao should not execute a royal. However, Judge Pao scolded them. Judge Pao said that not executing a royal who has committed serious crimes violates the state motto, and it would not be fair if he were not executed. However, the empress scolded him and told him that if Shimei were executed, Judge Pao would lose his role. Judge Pao ignored the warning in favor of the state motto. In the end, he was executed with a dragon-shaped guillotine.

When the crowd left, Christine was suddenly not invisible anymore! Judge Pao gave her a gift, a scroll, and a pen. Keep, protect this, and pass it to your descendants, and continue the glory of the Pao Family, said Judge Pao. A portal appeared again! As before, Christine walked into it, but this time without hesitation. Well, I hope I will have another adventure with you, said Christine to Judge Pao. Unfortunately, it is time for her to go.

Feeling the swirling dizziness she had felt earlier, Christine wanted to go home so badly. Instead of landing in the library, though, she landed at home. First, she put the gifts in a beautiful wooden box. Then, she continued her case study. Well, this will help me very much, said Christine. Judge Pao arrived at the right time.

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Poon, Charlene Juliana – 9*

It was a great day at Kaifeng, when suddenly two boys came running in. One seemed younger and was crying loudly all the way long, and the other one looked very annoyed. “What brings you two here?” asked Judge Pao. The younger one said, “I’m Wong Qing, and this is my big brother Wong Ting. He damaged our sky lantern, the last thing our father gave us when he was alive. He died years ago, the sky lantern was the only thing left to represent him, and Wong Ting damaged it.” “For the last time,” said Wong Ting, shaking his head. “I didn’t damage it!” Then they argued all the way to the court, and even more at the court.

Days passed, and they still didn’t admit that any of them was wrong, so Judge Pao decided to investigate in their house to find some clues, so he hopped on the horse-cart and off they go to the village.

Once he was there, he asked Wong Qing where he put the sky lantern, and Wong Qing walked into his room and pointed at a hook which had the broken sky lantern hanged on it. The sky lantern had a lot of drawings of everyday activities that Wong’s brothers did with their father. Then Judge Pao looked around the room few seconds and said, “I know who damaged your sky lantern, the fireplace did!” “What!” Screamed Wong Qing and Wong Ting. “The hot air went straight into the sky lantern causing it to fly, and it flew too close and scraped quite hard against the sharp spear hanged on the wall. So who idea is it to light the fireplace?” Wong Qing raised his hand slowly with embarrassment, and quickly apologized to Wong Ting, “I’m sorry brother, I didn’t know that lit up fireplaces can damage sky lanterns. I will remove the sky lantern before lighting up the fireplace next time.” “I accept your apology, just don’t skip to conclusions next time, okay?” Wong Qing thanked his brother and jumped for joy. “Hey! Let’s make another sky lantern to show apology to Dad! Let’s go!” The two brothers said thanks to Judge Pao and went to decorate and make the new sky lantern.

“Case closed.” Said Judge Pao, smirking.



## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Qu, Pui Ka – 11*

One night, as Judge Pao was reading a book in his study, one of his servants came in. “Judge Pao, your time as a Judge here in Zhao Qing will end after a month,” said the servant, “The king said you can take three or four servants with you.”

One day later, when the villagers heard about the news they were extremely disappointed. Before they knew one day Judge Pao would leave, but they did not expect the day came this soon. An old man suggested, “Let’s present him the best thing we have. How about our most precious ink stone?” Other villagers looked one another—although they all had ink stones, but only ordinary ones. Who had an extraordinary ink stone deserved to be presented to Judge Pao? Just then a little boy who was passing by said, “My grandfather has a house full of ink stones. He definitely has a proper one for Judge Pao.” In that evening, the boy asked his grandfather, “Grandpa, do you know that Judge Pao is leaving us? An old man suggested that we should give him the best ink stone in Zhao Qing. Don’t you have a whole collection of them? Do you think you can present him an extraordinary one?” “Of course I can,” replied the boy’s grandfather.

Next day a couple of rich people who thought their ink stones were better came to the boy’s house. “My ink stone is better!” shouted one man; “I am the richest here,” shouted one woman; “No, I have the best one! I’ve made thousands of ink stones”……. After an hour of arguments the little boy shouted, “If all of you merely keen on arguing, how are we going to present Judge Pao anything?” Everyone there was filled with embarrassment. “I suggest my grandpa dedicate Judge Pao his ink stone, since only he’s got the best one.” Very slowly the boy’s grandpa came and took a small bag from his back, opening it carefully, a middle sized Ling Yang Gorge ink stone appearing in front of the villagers. The stone was so pure that no single tiny flaw could be found on it. The background color was dark purple but the surface was shining deep green lights. Witnessing such a perfect ink stone, no one could say anything, so they all agreed that this would be the best farewell gift for Judge Pao.

One month later, Judge Pao had already picked out the servants he wanted to bring. As one of them was walking in the village, the boy’s grandpa saw him. Right away he took out the ink stone wrapped in cloth and said, “You must be the servant of Judge Pao. Please, help me to pass this to him as a small token of our appreciation.” The servant was shocked when the grandpa unwrapped the cloth, “Wow! This is the best ink stone from the Ling Yang Gorge,” Knowing the priceless value of the ink stone and Judge Pao never accept any present from local people, the servant’s eyes stared at the ink stone with greediness. “Sure,” He answered as he took the ink stone, while he said to himself in his mind, “I could make millions if I sell this!” The grandpa was so proud of his ink stone, so he asked the servant, “The whole village agreed this is the best gift for Judge Pao. Don’t you think so?” “Yes, I do… He always writes… He will love it!” the servant murmured while planning, “Since everyone here is aware of it, I could just sell it after Judge Pao and I leave Zhao Qing.”

The day when Judge Pao and his servants were leaving, they waved the villagers goodbye and set sail.

When they were sailing on the Xi Jiang river through Ling Yang Gorge, suddenly a terrible storm attacked their boat! Everyone was in a panic, Judge Pao however, was not worrying about his own life. He was thinking about something for a while, all of a sudden he said, “I did nothing wrong, then why is heaven angry with us? Has anyone on this boat done anything wrong?” No one answered him. As the situation became worse and worse, the servant stood up reluctantly, “I did. I took a precious ink stone from the villager! It was made from a stone of this Ling Yang Gorge! It was a farewell gift for you but I knew you don’t accept any gifts, so I took it for myself! I am terribly sorry!” He returned the ink stone to Judge Pao immediately. Judge Pao looked at it for a while and said, “This gift is so precious that we don’t deserve it at all. It is very kind of the villagers but I can’t accept this. The stone belongs to this village, this gorge.” No sooner than his sound disappeared in the storm Judge Pao threw the ink stone into the gorge. Right after that, the sky turned blue and the entire gorge calmed down.

Little did Judge Pao and his servants know that the ink stone thrown into the gorge became the Ink Stone Island nowadays, while the wrapping cloth turned into the Yellow Cloth Beach. Years later Zhao Qing villagers found the beautiful island and beach, then they decided to build a temple there in memory of Judge Pao—The Judge Pao Temple.

## *The Famous Arrest from Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Tan, Jun Xiao Sean – 10*

“My wife’s valuable jewellery was stolen by Black Fox again!”

“Our gold and silver, all gone! All because of the Black Fox!”

“Judge Pao, all of my daughter’s jade bracelets had been stolen and nothing has been done for a whole year!”

“Where’s our justice, Judge Pao?” the impatient Hefei citizens in Song dynasty complained. They were rich and wealthy and hated that Black Fox had targeted them. But what could judge Pao do? Sighing, Judge Pao promised that he would catch the criminal.

According to eye-witness accounts, Black Fox was tall and strong and always wore an animal face mask especially like a fox, that’s why he was called the Black Fox. He was a cunning criminal. His slim and strong limbs helped him escape quickly from the scene so that the guards could not catch him.

Judge Pao thought hard as he wanted to think of an ingenious plan to catch the Black Fox but not to kill him. Suddenly, an idea flashed through Judge Pao’s head. He could drug the criminal, cause him to sleep, and bring him for questioning. He was excited by the idea.

Swiftly, he called all his servants, and asked, “I have thought of a perfect plan to catch the Black Fox. Who wants to help me to catch him?”

The servants murmured, “Is it safe? I am scared that I will die.”

Then, the servant named Lu, who was most trusted by Judge Pao, answered him, “I am willing to serve Sir Pao in any way I can, even if I need to risk my life.”

Judge Pao smiled with relief, and whispered to Lu, “First, you need to memorize his face and how he looks like from this sketch of him. Then, you will go to the forest to look for him and ask to join him as a robber. Next, you must use the poison wine to drug him to be unconscious. Finally, when he’s fast asleep, carry him on a horse and come back here.” After listening to the plan, Lu was stunned by Judge Pao’s intelligence, so he praised Judge Pao.

Lu packed all the things that he needed and set off for this long journey. Everyone’s hope was on Lu. Lu arrived at the forest within only one day. He waited and waited for a long time. Finally, after weeks of waiting, Lu saw a man who was walking slowly in the forest. He shouted, “Wait!”

The Black Fox stopped and walked around him and asked with an evil smile, “Who are you?”

Lu lied, “I am a robber from my town in Sichuan, and I want to join you.”

However, the Black Fox didn’t know that Lu was lying to him, so he agreed. Then, Lu took out the poisoned wine with two cups and cleared his throat, “Um, this is a little gift for you, I have “borrowed” it from a rich family.”

“Oh, you are too welcome, let’s have some together!” replied the Black Fox, sitting down.

Lu nodded and filled two cups with the poisoned wine and handed one to the Black Fox. Lu drank the poisoned wine once but the Black Fox didn’t know that Lu had eaten the antidote so he would not be poisoned. After ten minutes of waiting, the Black Fox believed that the wine was not poisoned so he drank it like Lu. Soon, the poison began to spread through Black Fox’s body and he began to feel faint before falling asleep. Lu took out a long rope to tie the Black Fox tightly. Lu was relieved as he had finally finished this important task that Judge Pao gave him. Lu put Black Fox on his horse and rode it back to the palace as fast as he could since he knew that the poison would not last long. As Lu has predicted, the Black Fox woke up halfway in the journey back to Judge Pao. He said powerlessly, “How dare you kidnap me?” However, he was so weak that he had fainted again quickly. When Lu was back, everyone was surprised as they believed that Lu had died; Judge Pao was so happy to see his honest servant was back again.

In the court, all the citizens were rushing into the entrance as they wanted to see how Judge Pao deal with the most cunning criminal in the world. The Black Fox was dishevelled and was tied with a rough rope around a high stone pillar. With a loud sound from slamming his wooden gavel on the judging table, the judge started the court case. Judge Pao used his loudest and clearest voice to ask Black Fox, "What's your last name?"

"Zhang," replied Black Fox nervously.

Judge Pao continued judging, "You have stolen two diamond rings, ten bottles of wine, gold ingots that are valued over ten thousand dollars each, jewelleries, rice, jades, and valuable paintings. The things you have stolen are worth over a million in total, this is a capital offense. Do you admit to the crime?"

Zhang said, "Yes, but all the valuable things that I have stolen, I could have kept them, but I did not. I gave them all to the poor people in the city I live."

In a second, the entire crowd shouted unanimously, "Liar! Liar! All criminals will say that!"

When Judge Pao was silencing everyone, the poor families in the city rushed into the court and swore, "Zhang gave us money to let us to buy food and clothes for daily life. He is a good person, not a criminal. Please free him!"

When the wealthy people heard this, they were touched and begged judge Pao to free Zhang.

So Judge Pao did.

# *The Story About Judge Pao and Me*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Wong, Nag Yau – 9*

Have you ever heard about Judge Pao, the famous justice fighter in China? Now let me tell you my own story about how I meet Judge Pao!

A few days ago, I was reading a book which was about Judge Pao in my room at home, suddenly there came strong wind and began to rain heavily, and I hurried up to close the window, at the meanwhile the book dropped on the floor, then a beam of light appeared from the book, I was curious and went to have a look, caught me off guard, I was sucked into that beam of light.....

A few whiles later, I was going through a colourful time tunnel! Through the tunnel, I arrived a big Yamen, which was one of the government offices. In Yamen, I heard three people talking, I hid behind a thick pillar to listen what they are saying, “Bodyguards, how many criminal cases need me to deal with today?” A middle-aged man with black skin said. “Sir, there is one criminal case needs your attention today.” Said one of the two bodyguards. “Ready to hold court trial and take the criminal to come in.” Said the middle-aged man with black skin. “Yes, sir.” Said the bodyguards. After twenty minutes, the trial finally finished. After the trial, the middle-aged man with black skin said, “Who is hiding behind the pillar? Please come out.” I felt nervous and confused about how he found me. I moved slowly and tremblingly. The middle-aged man with black skin saw me and asked, “Who are you and why are you here?” I bow my head and gazed at him, then whispered, “I’m Tiffany, sorry for that I even don’t know why I am here.” The middle-aged man with black skin sized me up and said, “Your dress looks so exotic, are you from foreign country?” I rolled my eyes and thought for a while, then said, “Maybe.....And could you please tell me where’s here and who are you?” The middle-aged man with black skin answered gently, “I am Pao Cheng, I am a public servant, here is my office.” After hearing the words, I stared in amazement and my jaw dropped, I thought, “Oh my God! He’s Pao Cheng! The Judge Pao——Pao Ching Tin!” Judge Pao approached me to ask, “Could you tell me what had happened to you?” “Well, I was reading a book about you in the morning, suddenly a beam of light appeared from the book, then I was sucked into the book, after a few minutes, I arrived here and saw you.....” I answered. “That sounds strange, which year are you come from?” Asked Judge Pao. “Year 2022, I wish I could go home now.” I almost cried. Judge Pao looked unbelievable, but he had a brainwave and said, “I think I can help you, but you need to drink a low dose of potion.” After that, he gave me the potion, then I held the calice and chewed on it. Judge Pao read my thought, “I have something to add that the potion which is gave to me by a man who claimed himself to be ‘Doctor Strange’, he said he was from the century which you are from, the potion is all-powerful and non-toxic, he said he knew well about me, then he gave me the magic potion as a first-meeting gift.” I was goggle-eyed and thought, “Oh my God again! Doctor Strange came here before! What an miraculous day today!” After that, I accepted the potion with thanks and drank it up.....

I didn’t know how long had passed, when I had consciousness, I found myself lying on the bed and holding the calice, at the meanwhile my mom came in and asked, “I looked for you for very long time, where have you been?” I didn’t explain too much as she wouldn’t believe the story what happened between Judge Pao and me.

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Wong, Tsz Kiu – 11*

Judge Pao looked at James Chan's dead body. The knife was jutting straight out of James's heart. It was 7:15 in the morning. Judge Pao was called to investigate the murder of James. He touched James's hand and it was still a bit warm. To Judge Pao's understanding, the murder was done not long ago and the murderer couldn't be far. Just then, Sandra got home from work. When she saw the police standing out of her house, she was extremely worried and asked the policeman what had happened. She explained that she was James's wife and the police told her that James had been murdered. She covered her mouth in disbelief and her hands started to tremble. She didn't understand why it happened so sudden. Judge Pao looked everywhere for evidence but none was found. After some thinking, Judge Pao decided to ask people who knew James so he asked James's mom, Mrs. Chan.

Judge Pao arrived at Mrs. Chan's house and knocked on the door. A few seconds later, there were footsteps coming from the house and Mrs. Chan answered the door. "Hello dear... who are you here for?" Judge Pao knew that Mrs. Chan doesn't know about the death of her son yet considering her mood. "Are you Mrs. Chan, James's mother?" She nodded slowly in response. "Well, I am Judge Pao. You may need to sit down. I have some not so good news for you and I need your help." Said Judge Pao. Hearing that, Mrs. Chan invited Judge Pao into her house for tea while she was confused at what Judge Pao needed to tell her. Once they sat down, Judge Pao broke the news to her. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Chan, but your son James passed away recently because of a murder. I want your help so I can find the murderer and avenge your son." Mrs. Chan was silent for a few minutes. She excused herself to the bathroom and came out after some time. "Ok, I'm ready. I will tell you everything...whatever it takes to avenge my lovely son." Mrs. Chan said shakily. Judge Pao asked her to tell him everything he knew about James and after a long talk, Judge Pao got all the information he needed from Mrs. Chan. He thanked her and left.

From their conversation, Judge Pao learnt that the only people James knew was Sandra and his best friend Miles as he was very shy. James had the same dream as Miles – to become a successful writer, and always wrote stories together with Miles. Mrs. Chan remembered that their latest book was called "Best Poems" but it had not been published yet as James wasn't ready. Judge Pao found it weird as "Best Poems" was a famous book written by Miles nowadays. There was something fishy going on with Miles so Judge Pao's next stop was to find Miles.

When Judge Pao arrived at Miles' house, he was surprised as Miles was James's neighbor. He knocked and Miles appeared. "I suppose you want my autograph. I can even sign my name on your back if you would like. I'm happy to do anything for my fans of my book." said Miles arrogantly before Judge Pao had even said anything. Judge Pao awkwardly said "Um, actually no. I'm here to investigate the murder of James Chan. Miles' expression immediately changed from proud to worried. He stared at Judge Pao. It took him a few minutes before he could answer. "Y...yes, of course. What would you like to ask?" Judge Pao instantly knew that he had something to do with the murder.. Judge Pao started to ask him "So, tell me about your book. About how you wrote it." Miles stuttered "Um...m I wrote it with Ja... I mean by myself. Yes... and um..." Miles couldn't think of what to say next. Judge Pao stopped asking eventually as Miles could barely answer his questions and his answers didn't make sense. Judge Pao noticed how Miles almost said "I wrote it with James so he decided to look something up. He asked Sandra for the books that James wrote individually and compared it to "Best Poems".

After a few days of careful comparing, he found that James's writing patterns appeared in "Best Poems". Although he found something new, he was stuck in a dead end. One day when he was thinking about the case, somebody knocked on his door. He got up and answered the door. Surprisingly, it was Sandra. "Hi, I'm Sandra. I suppose you remember me. You borrowed some books of James from me before." Judge Pao asked, "Yes, you are James's wife. Do you have anything for me?" Sandra nodded. "Last night while I was in bed, I remembered that a few days before James was murdered. I remember I heard James and Miles arguing. I briefly remember that James yelled something like 'how could you' and 'I can't believe you stole all my hard work'. And Miles was silent the whole time until I heard sounds of breaking glass. Miles probably smashed it. Just like that, a few days later James was dead. I hope this helps." After that, Sandra left before Judge Pao could ask any questions. Just then, everything clicked into place. Judge Pao figured out who was responsible for the murder. A week later, Miles was called onto court.

“MILES LEE.” Judge Pao bellowed on court. “You have been sentenced death as your punishment for murdering James Chan and taking credit for his work.” Miles said, “NO!!! IT CAN’T BE! YOU DON’T HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE!” Judge Pao calmly responded. “I am the judge here. And I have seen enough evidence with my own eyes. Sandra is also one of them. Give up, Miles. This is the end.” Miles couldn’t think of anything to cover up his crime. “Take the knife out!” yelled Judge Pao. Miles already confessed it. He confessed that he was the murderer of James.

“CHOP!” That was the end for Miles Lee.

# Judge Pao

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Xiao, Jiachen – 10

Once a upon time, Judge Pao was very bored because he hadn't had any cases to solve for days. As the most famous and the smartest Judge in China, he really needed some challenging cases as soon as possible. That afternoon, he went out for a walk and hoped that he could find a new exciting case to solve. Suddenly, Judge Pao heard two people were arguing in a restaurant called "Smile". This restaurant had been there for many years and Judge Pao was never reported any cases happened in the restaurant. Judge Pao was both excited and confused, so he decided to find out what happened in the restaurant.

He went in and he saw a handsome young man with fine silk clothes was shouting, "Originally, I have 40 silver coins and 200 copper coins in my money bag, why are there only a few left after I finish my meal?" The restaurant owner said, "When I saw the bag, that's all the money in it. I am a law-abiding citizen so I would not stole anything from you!" The teenager grabbed the restaurant owner and said, "No! You are a liar! You must have stolen most of my coins! You must return them to me now! Those money are very important to me, I will need them to pay the doctor to save my mom's life!" The crowd were confused and they didn't know who they could trust.

Judge Pao asked them about the reasons why they were arguing, then he asked the restaurant owner to put the money bag on the table as it was, and the top of the bag hung down. Judge Pao asked the young man, "Did you put your bag like this just now?" The young man said, "That's right." Then Judge Pao was angry and he seriously asked the restaurant owner "This young man left 40 silver coins and 200 copper coins in your restaurant, why there are only a few left? You must have taken it! And he will need these money to save her mom's life. I cannot believe you even take such an important money from him!" The restaurant owner was frightened and cried "Judge Pao, I didn't take anything from the bag! I have run this restaurant for more than 20 years. I am really innocent."

The audiences have different opinions about Judge Pao's judgement. One diner said "I have had lunch in this restaurant for more than 20 years and I have never lost anything! Judge Pao, you are so subjective and arbitrary! I don't trust you anymore!" Another customer said "The restaurant owner is a very kind person. I am very disappointed with Judge Pao. He is not a good judge at all!" However, some other diners supported Judge Pao. One of them said "I fully trust Judge Pao, he has been a competent judge for many years, let's also support his judgement this time." Another one said "Look, that young man is so handsome and he wears such a nice clothes, he must be very rich so I don't believe he is a bad man." Neither side could convince the other, so they two sides started to argue with the other. The situation turned into a mess unfortunately.

Judge Pao kept calm despite the booing from the crowd and he said "Okay, I happened to have some money with me, I'll return it to the young man for now since we cannot decide who is telling truth." Saying that, he took out 38 pieces of silver and 188 copper coins from his own money bag, and put them into the bag left by the young man. The young man smiled imperceptibly. He stepped forward and grabbed the bag to leave the restaurant immediately. Judge Pao yelled and stopped him, "Hold on, young man! Please put your bag on the table, let everyone see it before leaving!" So, under the gaze of everyone, the young man had to put his bag on the table, and this time the top of the bag did not hang down since it's almost full and some coins even fell out from the bag!!!

Judge Pao stroked his beard and laughed loudly and proudly! The crowd were confused by Judge Pao's behaviour but they understood normally Judge Pao would do that only if he had solved the case. Judge Pao said to everyone, "Look, can you put so many coins into this bag?" "No!" Everyone replied. The young man muttered and could not speak one word. Judge Pao said to the young man, "Young man, If you have so many silver and copper coins in your bag, then it must be a much bigger bag like mine. And this bag is too small, just now you saw that so many coins were about to fall out. It is impossible to put it on the table with the top hanging down, so the bag is not yours, maybe you have lost it in somewhere else, so please return this bag to the restaurant owner first." After taking out the money he put in the bag, he returned the bag to the restaurant owner.

Everyone now understood Judge Pao's strategy to solve the case and they all applauded Judge Pao's judgement and laughed at the young man. The young man's face was flushed and he quickly fled the restaurant with his bag which only has several coins in it. The restaurant owner said to Judge Pao "Thank you so much for proving my innocence or other people will think I am a thief." Judge Pao was happy and he said, "We all should learn a lesson from this young man that we should not gain money by fraud." Everyone applauded his speech again!

Judge Pao is such a great, smart and full of justice person! He could easily solve a very difficult case that other people cannot. I really hope I can be a good judge like him in the future!!!

# New Tales of Judge Pao

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yick, Yi Ching – 11

Speaking of detective , who would you think of ? Sherlock Holmes ? Pikachu? They are all fiction! There is a real detective who is a real legend though , and his name is Judge Pao.

You may have heard of him before , Judge Pao , or also known as Pao Zheng. He had a very identical moon on his forehead . There is a very famous story of him , and he solved a crime like lightning.

One day , when Pao Zheng was walking around in the streets, he suddenly heard a scream! The voice shouted , “ Thief ! Someone just stole my money!” Judge Pao got to the scene of the crime quickly and told his servants to block the pedestrians in the area of the scene to leave. Why? Everyone in the area is suspicious! He asked the victim what had exactly happened. The victim answered , “ I just bought some oil–stick bread , and got some change. I grabbed the change coins and the oily–breadsticks. I put them in a bag . I took out the coins to count them so I could make sure the number was right when suddenly a person ran up and snatched it from my hand!” Judge Pao thought for a second, and quickly answered. “ No problem , I think I found a way to find who the culprit is!” He told one of his servants to put clear water in a tub , and told him to bring it to him. It was quickly arranged , and the tub was in front of him. He told the suspects to put their hands into the tub. Nothing strange happened at first, but in the end , the water became all oily! Judge Pao caught the person who made the water oily. Pao told the person to give the money back , and he did! People were very impressed , how did he find the culprit that fast? They didn’t understand. Judge Pao told them the coins touch the “ skin” of the oily breadsticks, so they became oily! The person who got the coins had to touch the coins right? So his hands had to be oily too!

This story really inspired me , and I learnt that we should both lend a helping hand to others, and also there is always a solution to everything . We should never give up! We may not be as famous or intelligent as Judge Pao, but we could always help people our way.



# New Tales of Judge Pao

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yin, Chin Nang – 12

Judge Pao, a justice and intelligent detective. Many people like him. One day, he received an anonymous letter. The letter was written that the writer suffered injustice, he (or she) hoped Judge Pao can help him (or her) to clear the charge. More information will be told when you go to Mountain Inn. He was confused but he also started going to the inn. A detective journey has started.

The carriage was being driven like a wind. When Judge Pao was thinking about the strangeness of the letter, suddenly, a man rushed in front of the carriage. The coachman used all his strength to stop the carriage. 'Hey! What are you doing?' The coachman shouted angrily. At this time, Judge Pao got out of the carriage. The man asked, 'Master Pao, I want to go to the inn nearby. May I take a ride?' Then, he seemed remembered something he forgot, 'Oh, I called Li Chao, is an artist.' 'Ok, you can get on my carriage.' Judge Pao agreed but he also had doubt about him.

While the carriage was passing by a river, Li Chao asked the coachman, 'Can you stop here? I want to go to the river for a moment.' When the carriage stopped, Li Chao got off and went to the river and Judge Pao followed him. 'Liu Xiao, why are you here?' Li Chao asked, 'I came to "visit" him.' That man answered. Li Chao introduced him to Judge Pao, 'He called Liu Ming, is my apprentice who is studying at art school.' Judge Pao saw a pile of stone. 'Years ago, a child came to swim, but... it suddenly rained heavily and he was flushed away.....' Liu Ming said, 'And this pile of stone is the grave that made by his classmates..... ah!' Liu Ming slipped over. Fortunately, the water was not deep so that no one was hurt. 'Oh, my bag became wet.' Li Chao complained, 'But fortunately, the things inside are fine.' Liu Ming said, 'My bag was made by special material so that it doesn't become wet.'

Li Chao and Liu Ming took out a few flowers and put them on the grave. 'Don't stay there! Go away!' They heard a very loud voice. A strong man stood there furiously like a dragon that wanted to eat them. He was the died child's dad-----Lin Sheng. 'I don't want to see these things!' He kicked the stone grave heavily and the grave was broken again. 'How can you do this...' 'I have told you many times, get away!' When they were leaving, Judge Pao observed that Li Chao's eyes revealed anger.

At the Mountain Inn, everyone included Judge Pao was sitting around the table and talking about 'Kappa' in the evening. 'It will appear at night!' 'Very scary!' 'Don't talk about this topic! He will drive you out!' The man who is speaking called Qin You Wei, is a poet, 'go back to your room and sleep. Discuss tomorrow.' In the room, Judge Pao thought today was unusual. Gradually, he slept.

In the morning, everybody was woken up by a scream. When they rushed to the attic, they were shocked.

Lin Sheng was dead.

Judge Pao told one of his bodyguard to report to the emperor. He started inspecting the attic. 'There are a bucket of water and a window. This window can see that river. There is about one liter of water..... but why does this water is smelly? There's many questions in this case, I need more clues.'

Judge Pao opened everyone's luggage. First is the artist's luggage. There are thirty small pigment bottles that full of pigment, one water bottle, a painting book and some brushes. Then is the artist's student's luggage. There are some clothes and a water bottle. At last is the poet's luggage. There are a writing book and a few poem.

Judge Pao asked the artist, 'What are you doing before Lin Sheng died?' The artist answered, 'I was sleeping at that time.' Judge Pao asked the artist's student, he answered, 'Me too.' Judge Pao asked the poet, he answered, 'I was thinking about my poem at that time.'

'Li Chao's pigment bottles and the water bottles could be used to hold a liter of water; Liu Ming's bag could also be used to hold a liter of water. Who is the murderer?' Suddenly, he had a plan.....

In the evening, Judge Pao pretended to be anxious, rushed back to the Mountain Inn and found the artist. 'I...I saw "Kappa"! The artist was amazed and he said, 'Can you tell me its appearance? I can draw it on the paper!' 'It was short, and.....'

'Is it?' the artist asked, 'Yes! I will call other to see it!' Judge Pao said.

'Wow!' Everyone was amazed. 'Wait, everybody. It also told me one thing, that is.....you, Li Chao, the artist, is the murderer!' 'Ah!' All the people were shocked. 'You said I was the murderer, but...but...where's your evidence?' 'Your drawing. Before drawing, you didn't drop a little water into the pigment bottles. You used the dropper on each bottle to store the pigment there, and you used thirty bottles and your water bottle to store one litre of smelly downstream water in the river. When you came back to the inn, you poured the water to the bucket, and suffocated Lin Sheng!'

'Everything is because of him!' Li Chao sobbed, 'He's son was my student. One day, he borrowed me a box of paintings, but a few days later, his dad gave that paintings back, and I noticed that the green colour painting was changed. When his son died, there was a little green painting in his shoes, so I thought that his father ordered him to dressed like "Kappa" to attract people. I want to help him to revenge, kill his father-----Lin Sheng!'

'Not like this!' Liu Ming shouted, 'At that day, he painted himself to green colour to pretend "Kappa". It was raining at that time, I told him not to go, but he also went to the river. His father is a good person! Since his son has died, he looked out of the window every day-----he don't want this tragedy happen on others. He is a good person!'

Li Chao knelt down, crying sadly, 'I'm sorry. I'm sorry.....'

It was about evening, the setting sun added a touch of sadness to this scene.

# New Tales of Judge Pao

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yung, Wui Yan – 10

Have you ever heard of a detective named Pao Zheng? Do you know why he had a scar that shaped like a crescent moon on his forehead? If you don't, let me tell you an interesting story about his childhood.

Long time ago, when Pao Zheng was just a child, he lived in a small city. His father was a businessman so he could afford him to learn at school. Although Pao Zheng was intelligent, he was self-centered and overbearing. He gathered his friends to bully other classmates because he thought that he was the best. Also, he looked down on the poor students too! He always believed that the poor were greedy. As a result of his nasty behaviour, everyone at school hated him. They even started a nickname for him – “The Big Bully Pao”.

Some terrible things happened one day. When Pao Zheng was on his way home, the sky suddenly turned dark and clouds were moving towards to him. It was going to rain heavily soon. Fortunately, Pao Zheng had an umbrella, but it was too cold outside and the biting wind was definitely making him shiver. Therefore, he decided to stay in an inn nearby until the rain stops. He felt much better after a while. As the rain did not stop, Pao Zheng started to walk around and suddenly he noticed a well-dressed gentleman looking for something in the restaurant. The gentleman also spotted Pao Zheng and asked him for help, “Hey kid, would you help me to find my wallet? I think I have lost it somewhere here.” Pao nodded, “Sure!” The gentleman described the size and appearance of his wallet and they both set off to find it. A farmer walked passed while they are looking for the wallet. Pao recognized the farmer's wallet matched the description by the gentleman and he went straight to the farmer. “You are the thief!” Pao shouted. The farmer was shocked and did not understand what Pao was talking about. “You must be the thief.” The gentleman claimed and Pao immediately caught the farmer to prevent him from escaping. The farmer pleaded and explained to us that he was not the thief, but they did not listen.

The farmer was brought to the yamen and the judge came. The judge looked at the dejected and dispirited farmer and said, “Where do you get this fine and delicate wallet? Any evidence?” The farmer explained it was a gift by a businessman after he saved his life, but the judge did not believe what he said and told him, “How can a poor farmer own such delicate wallet? You must be lying and you are the thief! Return the wallet to this gentleman and you will receive punishment.” The judge ordered the officials to give back the wallet to the gentleman and sentenced the farmer to birching as punishment. The farmer alleged he was innocent, but turned into tears while receiving birching. Suddenly, a woman came to yamen and shouted, “My dear, you left your wallet on the desk!” The woman was the wife of the gentlemen. There was a deathly hush over the yamen. “You all wronged my father. My father was unfairly treated!” shouted by the son of the farmer who is standing in the crowd. The little boy stared at Pao Zheng, “You, the Big Bully Pao, always bully me at school. It's time for me to revenge!”. He grabbed a stone and threw it to Pao. The stone hit Pao's forehead and he fainted.

When Pao wake up, he felt painful on his forehead and found a wound on it covered by bandage. He just remembered what he did to the farmer and his son. Pao felt very sorry and guilty because he framed the farmer for stealing wallet without any evidence.

He unwrapped the bandage few days later and was surprised to see a crescent moon-shape scar on his forehead. He knew he learnt an important lesson: Never make impulsive decisions if you haven't investigated thoroughly as it will bring injustice to people who are innocent. After the incident, Pao Zheng established his impartial and incorruptible image that was an inspiring role-model for people.

# *A New Tale of Judge Pao*

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Zheng, Jacky Kang Cheng – 11*

In the year 1058 during the Northern Song Dynasty, there was a famous judge named Pao. In the previous year 1057, he was made the prefect of the Capital of the Northern Song, Kaifeng. He was extremely good at judging different crimes and had a sharp eye for justice. On Tuesday night after a hard day at work, he came home and went straight to the bathroom for a relaxing bath.

His bathroom was as big as a house, and it had all the newest models and technologies to make it the most comfortable toilet in China. It was well-lit and allowed him to relax easily. He took off his clothes slowly and got into the bathtub, intending to take a long bath after a hard day at work.

As he got down onto the tub, a huge bag enveloped his entire body. He was being kidnapped, and by a despicable person. That much was obvious. Something hit him on the head, and as he slowly consciousness wondered if it was for him.

As he stirred a while later, he saw nothing. It was pitch black, but he knew that he was in some sort of house. All he could do now was wait.

Nothing Good Happened. Judge Pao was known to be the enforcer of justice, and without him, the streets revolted. Lots of crimes occurred; From petty robbery, to assault, to tax evasion, to even murder. Emperor Ren Zong ordered another official to help judge all these cases. But the new officer — Chou Yi was incompetent. He was

not good at his job. He found innocent people guilty and guilty, people innocent. All the people in the city were angry with Chou Yi, so they started a campaign to try and locate the missing judge Pao.

Yes, they were going to find Judge Pao but had no idea where to start! As they wandered around aimlessly, it started to rain cats and dogs, but still, everyone continued walking around, finding hints. Someone suddenly stepped on something in the wet mud. They stepped on one of Pao's favorite model houses. The roof of the model house pointed to a dark and abandoned house. They walked to the house, tip-toeing like a mouse and heard Pao shouting. 'Help! Help! I have been kidnapped by someone...'

As they stepped into the house, they were greeted by complete darkness. Only by following Pao's weak voice did they locate him! They immediately opened the bag on the floor that had his voice coming out of and saw... Pao not wearing any clothes! They were stupefied!

'W...what are you doing here Pao? The whole city is in chaos because of that stupid new officer! And where are your clothes?' The leader of the search expedition said.

'Don't ask, I have no time to explain... We have to get out of here! And I need to get some clothes on!' Pao didn't have time to explain. He immediately went back home naked, and then wore his clothes. He then started to explain everything clearly.

'A big bag captured my entire body as I sat down in the bathtub. I was being kidnapped by some despicable person. Something then hit me on the head and I don't remember anything else. When I woke up later, it was pitch black, but I knew that he was in some sort of house. And all I could do then was to yell for help, and that's when you found me.'

The people were really angry after hearing about what happened. But when Pao went back into the toilet, he noticed that one of his favorite model houses were missing! It had to be the people who kidnapped him who had stolen it!

Pao wanted to know the culprit behind his kidnapping, so he started to think. He suspected that whoever kidnapped him must have had some reason behind it. 'The King must have promoted another official to be the Prefect of the city while I was gone.' He asked around the officials and their families about who had any interest in models.

He then pretended to be a sick person and waited in the hospital. He knew that if he pretended to be a sick peasant, the officials wouldn't be afraid to cover anything up in terms of what they say. He was thorough and wore a hat and shaved his beard. He even used black paper to cover the crescent moon on his forehead. No one knew who he really was. He then slept on the hospital bed, as he knew that the royal family and the officials would visit the hospital and see the sick every month at a certain time. When the royals came up to his bed, Pao asked the officials who he knew liked to collect models, 'Do you guys have models at home?'

'Yes,' Choi Yi replied. He was an unfamiliar face, so Pao knew that it had to be his replacement. 'What kinds of models do you guys have?' Pao questioned. 'Model cars, model houses, and model trains!' Pao jumped out of his bed and shouted at Choi Yi 'You kidnapped me!' He used his hand and firmly grabbed the collar of his shirt and brought him to the king. He took off his disguise, revealing his distinctive Crescent Moon. Choi Yi Was Shocked. The king knew that in the whole City, only Pao had model houses given to him personally! At last, the king used a knife and killed Choi Yi, who died in front of him.

# Bowing to the Future

*Kownloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chow, Chi Wai Samantha – 9*

1006 AD, Kaifeng, China.

Pao Hiren tiptoed through home, holding a hideous black cockroach. He slipped it into his dad's robe, at the nape of the neck, and giggled. Mr. Pao felt a tickle; he shook left and right; he jumped, he wiggled, until the bug flopped right into his cup of green tea.

"HIREN!" Mr. Pao roared, gripping his son's robe hard.

This was not the end of the story.

As Hiren was dragged through the village, townspeople giggled behind their sleeves. As fishermen sang coming into town, their catch glinted in the sunlight.

Finally, Mr. Pao dumped Hiren into a dry, dirty, square stone well. Hiren's head hit the bottom. His father turned away without a second look. Hiren slumped. His eyelids felt heavy. He let the light slip out from his eyelids...

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Hiren sat up and rubbed his eyes. He squinted at the sky. It was light-blue, covered in sunlight, instead of the cloudless and grayness in the sky in his village. *Is this paradise?* He wondered, curiously.

He rose. Blue sky gave way to a row of pink buildings – the tallest and squarest he'd ever seen.

Their sweet colours clashed surreally. Before him a Chinese crowd scurried about. But they kept babbling into little black boxes. And behind him were roaring metal chariots. The air was dusty, but it was an alien, metallic fug, not an earthy dust; he felt no red dust under his feet.

There was a sign in front of him, by a tunnel releasing a stream of faces – "Sung Wong Toi". He peered closer. Chinese characters: "Fragrant Harbour." Hong Kong. Hiren looked down. He was dressed in tattered robes, as if homeless. In a way, he now was. But he'd learn his heart was here.

A man dressed in shiny black came towards him, muttering. "Hey, kid! You look down on your luck. Wanna make some money?"

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Hiren hid behind crates in a school's back alley, which smelled vaguely like old butter, and his eyes caught onto a girl older than him walking into it. She was chewing something, but didn't swallow it. Hiren quickly ran over to her and handed over his packet to her. "Hey, this is for you," he said.

Here he was, a homeless person forced to sell stolen goods to survive. The girl shrugged, and suddenly grabbed it from him, even though Hiren was gripping it tightly. "Well, thanks anyway." She grinned behind her mask, then pulled it down for just a moment, to take out a sticky, gluey thing and threw it. Hiren's jaw dropped. She looked like family. "Wait—"

But she then turned her back and put something in the box. "I've changed my mind; take the stash to him – Smith! Under the tree!" She pointed out of the alleyway, towards another truant in the schoolyard. Hiren blinked, startled.

He walked towards a boy under the tree, and said uneasily, "Hello, this is a package for you." The boy took it and opened the lid. Then came a bloodcurdling scream. Inside laid a dead slug. Hiren's heart skipped a beat, and his face went white as a sheet.

"How dare you do this to me?" The boy screamed, terrified. His friendly smile now became a cold glare. "I paid for what I want, and you think you can—" Smith clenched his fists, and punched the boy in the stomach.

Suddenly, a hand grabbed Hiren. "What were you doing, Smith?" It was the girl. She took Hiren's hand and they ran for their lives, passing street lamps and houses as tall as the sky. Hiren felt the breeze blow past his cheeks. A sea of faces swirled around them. They cut through them like a blade.

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There was an aroma of jasmine, as the girl pulled him into a café and sat down. Newly invisible, they ordered a plate of what looked to Hiren like spongy flatbreads, topped with strange berries and cream. They proved perfect fortification for the coming chat.

“I’m sorry, but I didn’t mean to endanger you. Can you forgive me?”

“It is not good to play pranks on others. You should know that.” Hiren shuffled on the chair, and recalled what he did to his father.

“Let me introduce myself again. I’m Pao Hui Qing, the great–great–great–granddaughter of Pao Qing Tian?”

“R... really? What do you think about me...I mean him?” Hiren blinked, startled.

“The greatest judge of all time. A Song Dynasty Solomon. A detective too. He feared nothing and nobody. When justice demanded it, he sentenced the guilty... my parents said he was our role model, to learn from.” Her face fell a little.

“I see...” Hiren was speechless, he dared not tell the truth; *I am Pao Qing Tian.*

“But my dad told me: Pao Qing Tian was naughty too when he was small. So alright, I’m just like him. Look where our shenanigans took both of us.”

“That’s not an excuse for you to be like that!” But Hiren wondered how – or if – he should influence his own descendants.

Hiren decided to make a change if he could. He scrambled to his feet and asked Hui Qing the way to Sung Wong Toi station. “C’mon! I have a lot of explaining to do ...”

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They stood by the square well. It was lined with centuries of dust, but its meaning shone brightly.

Hui Qing was still puzzled by how magic worked. But she promised to rethink her life. The well felt like the law, or a black hole of shame, threatening to swallow her up, like Hiren.

They hugged and crossed their fingers.

He took a very deep breath, and dived, head down, into the well. “Bye...” he thought he heard Hui Qing’s once–defiant contralto behind him. He sighed, relieved his descendant wouldn’t be bad anymore. *Is being a judge really my destiny?* But before Hiren could think, there was a “THUMP!”, and all was blackness...

## Meeting Judge Pao

*Kownloon Tong School (Primary Section), Guo, Bing Xian Abraham – 11*

When Henry woke up, he found himself lying in a dark, gloomy prison. The prison cell was full of gross hay. It was as silent as the grave. Feeling puzzled, Henry saw a man, whose face was as white as a sheet, sitting next to him, shaking mournfully. He murmured to the man, “Where are we? Where is this horrible and smelly place?” The man remained silent. Henry tried to break the silence. “What’s your name? Why are you here? What crime have you committed?” Henry asked him. Henry stared at the man, waiting for his reply, but the man didn’t give him any response.

Soon, some prison guards came and broke the silence. “Mr Wang, it’s your turn to see Judge Pao! Follow us!” one of the guards shouted at the man. Henry overheard them and remembered Judge Pao — the honest and upright judge with a black face and a crescent moon on his forehead! He learned about Judge Pao in his History class! Mr Chen, Henry’s History teacher, told them the stories about Judge Pao! Henry now realized that he was at the time of Song Dynasty. The guards were taking Wang to see Judge Pao.

After Wang left with the guards, Henry started considering himself, “Why am I in prison? What happened to me? Will I be the next one to see Judge Pao?” Although Henry jumped out of his skin and shook like a leaf, he kept telling himself, “Judge Pao is the most significant and legendary figure of justice and righteous. I am sure he can tell me what’s going on.”

Few hours later, the prison guards came again. “Mr Han, you are accused of a theft. Please follow us. You will be taken to Judge Pao for interrogation.” Henry was tied tightly that he could not move or run away but to follow the prison guards to walk slowly to the tribunal court where he met Mr Pao finally. He could not recognize Mr Pao at first as his face was not black at all! Mr Pao, who was about 50 years old then, had a crescent moon on his forehead! When Mr Pao saw Henry, he asked, “Why did you steal a kid’s coins?” Feeling puzzled, Henry questioned, “Your Honour, please may I know why am I the one who stole the coins?” Mr Pao replied, “Huh, that was because someone found you asleep on a rock next to the boy’s oil tank.” Henry remembered he heard this story before. He tried to recall his memory

When Henry tried to figure out what was happening, Mr Pao asked him, “You have to tell me why you slept on a rock next to the boy’s oil tank.” Fortunately, Henry came up with a brilliant idea. “Your Honour, I was exhausted when I was trying to help the boy find his coins, so I felt asleep next to his oil tank. Believe me please, Your Honour! I can help you search for the thief! .....”

The next morning, Mr Pao told the villagers that he was going to interrogate the rock, which laid right next to the boy’s oil tank. The villagers were curious, so they gathered at the tribunal hall as they all wanted to know how Mr Pao interrogate the rock. Mr Pao asked the rock angrily, but the rock was still and made no responds. Mr Pao kept scolding the rock, “If you stay silent, I will beat you! Why don’t you just tell me the truth honestly?”

All the villagers were stunned and went gobsmacked. “Was Judge Pao mentally sick?” “Why was he talking to a rock?” “Did he expect the rock to speak to him?” “Oh my god! Poor Judge Pao!” Some villagers even burst into laughter which provoked Mr Pao, hence, he took a revenge and told the villagers, “How dare you laugh at me? You are not respecting me. I will punish you!” As a result, he ordered each villager to pay a fine of one dollar. The villagers were obedient and put a one-dollar coin into a water tank one by one. Suddenly, when a man put his one-dollar coin into the water, Mr Pao said, “You are the one we are looking for!” and asked his guards to arrest the man.

Mr Pao explained, “After you put in your coin, there was oil floating on top of the water surface. The little boy sells oil, so all his coins are always oily. That’s why I am waiting for an oily coin to find out who the thief is!” Mr Pao thanked Henry for giving him such a great idea to help him catch the thief easily. Henry was on cloud nine and felt Mr Pao’s taps on this shoulder...

Tap. Tap. Tap. Henry felt Mr Pao tapping on his shoulder happily. He woke up and said, “You are welcome, Your Honour...” and suddenly found his History teacher, Mr Chen, staring at him furiously. “I’m definitely NOT Your Honour, Mr Henry!” “I’m sorry, Mr Chen. I thought you were Mr Pao...” All his classmates cheered at this laugh-out-loud moment.



# *The Recycle Factory Danger*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Chow, Charisma Kate – 9*

Once upon a time, there was a village called 'Happy Village'. People living there were very happy until the old landlord passed away. The son of the old landlord, who was a selfish, greedy landlord took charge of the village. He was about to launch a construction project on land, which had been occupied by a recycling factory called 'Wills' for many years.

A master of fengshui, who was very famous in the country, introduced this land to the landlord as the land would bring a zillion dollars to the landlord according to his prophecy. The landlord immediately agreed with this idea and sent a representative to the factory and announced, "We are the new owner of the land now. Please move out of here! I will give you one month to shut down your factory." The owner of the recycling factory heard this news and was shocked. He could hardly give him a response.

The other day, he went to the landlord's gate and complained, holding some documents in his hand, "Your father had signed a renewal agreement with us five years ago. We can use this land for 100 years. Why do you order us to leave without abiding by the terms of this agreement?" The landlord said, "I am the owner of this land now, I have the rights for using the land to do anything!" The owner of Wills sighed. He had no idea what to do. He knew that he couldn't give up this factory as it was good for the environment in Happy Village. Suddenly, he saw a poster with some words on it, 'If you have been bullied by someone, and your decent rights are offended, ask Judge Pao for help!' "Who is Judge Pao?" he thought, "Maybe he can save my recycling factory."

He decided to meet Judge Pao. He came to Judge Pao's yamen and met a servant there. "Hello sir, may I have an appointment with Judge Pao please?" He asked. The servant nodded his head and led the owner of Wills into a room where Judge Pao was. Judge Pao had a dark brown face, a scar of new moon shape in the middle of his forehead, and a long grim mustache. "Hello sir, what brings you here?" asked Judge Pao. "I saw..." Before the owner of Wills could answer, someone hit the door hard. The servant ran to the door. What he saw was a group of angry villagers holding their fists. They were coming for supporting the owner of Wills and protesting against the landlord's decision. They wanted to protect the recycling factory which benefited the whole village and the environment. The owner of Wills was very touching and it brought tears to his eyes.

Judge Pao invited the villagers to be seated in his meeting room as well and began to listen to their story. He ended up with a conclusion: The landlord broke the terms of the agreement and he would be prosecuted. A court was going to be scheduled in two days. Everyone cheered at Judge Pao's decision.

Two days later, the landlord was sent to the court. He also hired a famous lawyer for himself. He looked so confident as he had bribed the village head. The village head was the witness of the agreement and he lied to Judge Pao that he didn't witness for the agreement. The signature on it was fake. All the villagers were angry and disappointed with him. They threw rotten eggs and tomatoes at him.

Judge Pao calmed down the villagers and he asked his servants to bring him a tiny machine called "tell me the truth" he had invented before to record the village head's answers. The village head was scared that his face turned pale. Judge Pao continued to ask the village head some questions and the machine recorded. The village head tried to tell lies and pretended to be sincere. He insisted that he didn't sign as a witness on the agreement. Finally, Judge Pao printed a summary from the machine and asked the village head to sign with confirmation. The village head deliberately signed differently from the signature on the agreement and passed the summary to Judge Pao's servant. The servant replied to Judge Pao, "The signature is the same as the one on the agreement." "Impossible!", yelled the village head, "My real signature doesn't have an underline with it." Judge Pao laughed, he said "You are lying on all of us. If you haven't seen or signed on the agreement before, how do you know the signature on the agreement with an underline?" The village head was shocked, the lawyer was shocked and the landlord was even more shocked. The owner of Wills and the villagers were amazed, "How wise is Judge Pao!", they said. Judge Pao announced the closing statement that the agreement was valid and the recycling factory didn't have to be shut down. The landlord should keep his father's promise and allow Wills to use the land for 100 years. As the landlord and the village head violated the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, they were sent into jail immediately. The Happy Village resumed to peaceful again.

From then on, people in everywhere obeyed the rules and respected the laws. Besides a recycling factory, Wills became a famous attraction that provided educational tour for the visitors. A Judge Pao statue was also placed in front of the factory for the memorial of his justice and wisdom.

## *Judge Pao: In the "Nick" of Time*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Chui, Arissa Jade – 10*

This is a story that no one from the town of Kai Feng had not heard of. Though it happened long ago, as a descendant of this well-known town of justice and pride, this was how I remembered it was told to me:

Kai Feng had never seen snow in June until that day, when the whole town was saddened with the news that their well-loved Sorcerer Supreme, Yi-Chen, had just lost his daughter, Kei-Kei, who was only 8 years old and had died a horrible death. The investigators confirmed with present evidence that Kei-Kei was murdered!

The grieving Yi-Chen was desperate to seek out the murderer. A badge made of a material that the Sorcerer had never seen before was found near Kei-Kei's exploded remains, written on which was a date of the year 2022. The wise sorcerer immediately recognised that this badge was from at least a thousand years later. This also meant that the murderer was from the future.

As ludicrous as he may have sounded to everyone, the Sorcerer pleaded his case with Judge Pao Qing Tian, who was already famous then at the time. Despite his reputation to help even the most hopeless cases, Judge Pao sent Yi-Chen away because the court simply couldn't accept a case involving a plastic name-badge and a murderer from the future.

Months later, Yi-Chen visited Judge Pao. Yi-Chen hid his frustration about the unresolved case, and acted as if he was just bringing New Year goodies to Kai Feng's investigation team, known locally by the name "Kai Feng Sevens". The Sorcerer swiftly shoved a few strands of Pao's hairs from his desk into the small pouch hidden under his draping sleeve. The following year, Yi-Chen invented a Chariot of Time, which allowed him to travel forward into the future to find and bring back the murderer.

When he arrived in the year 2022, Yi-Chen found himself at the private laboratory of a scientist named Nick, who was working under the country's Secret Intelligence Unit on the latest technology: Cloning. The Sorcerer revealed everything to Nick and demanded that Nick clone him into Pao Qing Tian so that he could return to his time with the murderer he caught here in the future, and rule Kei-Kei's case himself as Judge Pao.

Realising what this could do for his invention, Nick agreed to do as the Sorcerer said. But Nick was missing something: an ancient component of a specialised capacitance that they couldn't manage to find in the modern society.

Yi-Chen knew he had what Nick was missing. It was an ancient stone passed down by a line of imperial sorcerers that the villagers called "Ruyi". The Ruyi that Yi-Chen was carrying with him was split into identical halves that were shaped like two phoenixes soaring from opposite sides in the sky, one for Yi-Chen and the other was passed down to Kei-Kei by her late-mother at birth. But Nick didn't know that the entire stone was split into halves, and thought that the Ruyi appearing in front of him was what he needed. The Sorcerer hammered off a piece of his stone, gave one to Nick; kept a piece for himself, and Nick got his invention.

The cloned Judge Pao went back in time and gave the real Pao a shot on his neck with Nick's syringe-gun. The real Judge Pao fell into deep sleep within seconds, and was locked up in the sorcerer's secret vault 20 feet under his house.

The cloned Judge Pao does not know the proper way to be a judge. Day by day, he gave biased case rulings and raged over the loss of his daughter. He directed his team's focus only toward his daughter's murder, and before long, Kai Feng became an unpeaceful village clouded with injustice and snowfall in June.

Meanwhile, the real judge found a time machine in the underground vault and went forward in time by accident. He arrived in the future at Nick's laboratory, but it was not the same year that Yi-Chen had previously travelled. It was the year 2042!

Being the experienced judge that he was, Judge Pao instantly figured out the Sorcerer's plan when he met Nick, who had lost half of his body and only his upper body remaining was placed on his wheelchair. Nick told Judge Pao what terrible things that his cloning technology had brought, and that there were so few of the human race remaining.

Nick cut straight to the chase and explained that cloning had led the world into madness and despair. He urged that the stone Yi-Chen still had in his hands be destroyed again. Then the Judge stopped Nick, "Wait! Why did you

say "destroy again?" With his instincts, Judge Pao pressed on and asked if Nick had ordered his secret-agent staff to travel back in time and murdered Kei-Kei because she carried the Ruyi in her pocket.

At the Judge's clever interrogation, Nick could only affirm with two stream of tears that rushed down his sullen face, that yes, he was the one who ordered the murder and the destruction of the Ruyi which started all this mess!

Quick to his wit, Judge Pao knew that Yi-Chen would not easily give up such a precious stone passed down by heirloom, so he pieced up a plan and persuaded Yi-Chen that they would go back further into the past, and destroy the two stones altogether, so that Kei-Kei's murder would never have happened. It was the destruction of the heirloom in exchange for his daughter's life. Only this way, could the two men be sure that Yi-Chen would never have met Nick who discovered the Cloning Technology.

As soon as the stones were destroyed, the cloned judge automatically reverted into Yi-Chen, and Kei-Kei returned to life.

For many years thereafter, this murder mystery along with the almost-discovery of time travel and cloning technologies remained buried in Judge Pao's recollection, kept safe away for generations to come.

# *Revenge of the Unknown Empire*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Kong, Pui Ching Chloe – 10*

In her bedroom, Enila was jolted awake from a bad dream while beads of sweat poured down her face. She dreamt of ill-treated turtles which were not cared for. Their owners treated them as toys for their children. She saw turtles pleading for mercy. Sweating heavily, Enila jumped off her bed and headed towards the Kaifeng Court, knowing her sole mission.

Wang Chao, Ma Han, Zhang Long, Zhao Hu, the four constables of the Kaifeng Court, were watching a news report about the continued disappearances of the citizens in Hong Kong.

“Hold your horses! It seems everyone who surrendered their pet turtles has vanished! Boom! They are gone!” Wang Chao analysed. Others nodded and rolled their eyes. Wang Chao became such a drama king after they moved to Hong Kong.

Briiiiiing! The emergency bell shattered the constables’ eardrums. They ran out of the door, ready for a meeting with Judge Pao.

Judge Pao sat on an armchair. Next to him was an attractive young girl perching on a stool, who was named Enila. Judge Pao greeted his fellows and introduced Enila as the new member of the Kaifeng Court. She had briefed him on her strange dream, which coincidentally matched the news report. Pao quickly assigned the constables to investigate the matter. Zhan Zhao, a knight errant who assisted Judge Pao, offered to go with them. Judge Pao agreed.

Suddenly, a clear voice raised from the corner of the Court.

“I would like to go too.” It was Enila. “I will show them the place.”

They set off to the Kowloon Park, where everyone vanished after abandoning their turtles. They arrived at a big misty pond.

“Is it just me, or has everything gone blurry?” Enila whispered. She was right.

They saw several scales on the grass near the pond.

“Look! Where do these scales come from? They look like the scales of some abandoned turtles!” Zhao Hu bellowed, shoving them into a plastic bag. He was half right.

Later, the constables met Judge Pao at the Court. They were clearly energized for another adventure. Judge Pao didn’t want them to lose their momentum, so he sent them out to investigate further.

It was midnight when they returned to the park. Suddenly, Ma Han saw a dark figure lurking in the shadows. He alerted the others and they all crept slowly across the grass and peeked at the pond. As the water sloshed and swirled in the breeze, Wang Chao saw something peculiar moving deep down the pond. Alarmed, he quickly pointed it out to his fellows.

Little did they know that there was a huge turtle colony in the pond, which was the Red-eared Slider Empire. A group of turtle guards were pacing in the palace, and on the throne sat the great Empress Adna. They were all discussing.

“Your Majesty, how shall we deal with the captured humans?” one asked cautiously.

“We shall only question them. No force.” Adna replied majestically.

“May I know why?”

“Long ago,” Adna smiled, “My sister and I lived a happy childhood in this palace. Our aunt brought us up. She was sweet to me, but cruel to my sister. When my sister turned two, she disappeared. Turtles possess special power: they can transform into humans on land and back to turtles in water. This magic power allows species like us to live in both worlds. I adore my sister and always hope for a family reunion, although my aunt prohibited me from searching for her. Perhaps I may never see my sister again, but I never lose hope. That’s why I command you to question those humans if they know her,” she paused.

Meanwhile, the Kaifeng fellows decided to use baits in the pond. Enila shot an arrow, and it pierced the vortex between the two worlds. It startled the guardians. Woosh! Water formed a small whirlpool and swiped the bait into the pond.

They were flabbergasted. Zhan Zhao assigned Enila to stay on guard and waited for help. Other constables dived headfirst into the pond and landed with sickening bumps. When they got back to their senses, they saw the guards of the empire and Adna staring blankly at them. Wang Chao pulled his fellows up and readied his weapons.

The guards roared. A soldier leaped in the air and struck her cutlass at Wang Chao’s shoulder. Wang Chao clung on a banister and swung out of the way.

The palace soon turned into a battlefield. At the most critical juncture, Judge Pao’s army arrived, overpowered the guards, and rescued everyone. Adna and her guards were brought back to the Kaifeng Court for the trial.

Adna calmly explained her rationale.

“Releasing home turtles back into the wild is cruel. We want to stop it.” Adna said.

Before Pao could comment, a defendant cried, “We did nothing wrong! We abandoned the turtles because of constraints.”

Judge Pao was furious. "Domestic pets can't look after themselves in the wild. Setting them free means killing them!" Pao thundered. He was ready to hand down his impartial judgement.

"I hereby order all defendants and turtle guards to switch their roles for one month with immediate effect: All defendants shall live like turtles, whereas the turtle guards shall live like humans so the parties can see from the opposite side's perspective." Pao solemnly declared.

Then, the doors opened. Enila stood in the doorway. Her eyes fell upon Adna, who was staring at her. The two froze. In a split second, Adna rushed to Enila, embracing her tightly.

"Oh, Enila! Have you had any idea how worried I was?" Adna choked through tears of joy. Enila sobbed.

"I wanted to start a new life like you too!" Enila admitted.

Judge Pao smiled warmly. His voice softened. "You may return to your homes and wait for the switcheroo."

Enila and Adna were the only ones left in the room. They watched as Judge Pao departed. They smiled at each other, knowing they would be forever grateful to Pao.

## *The Wife that 'Betrayed'*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Ma, Ho Suet Sophia – 9*

“You have made a mistake! I am not guilty! This is not fair!” said Pu Fei Guang as he was dragged across the floor. He was about to be executed for he had committed the serious crime of murder, of course, that was what only Judge Yong Fung believed.

Pu Fei Guang had repeatedly said that he was not guilty in all the interrogations, but it was no use. It was decided that his execution date would be on the third of December, a month later. “Enjoy your last moments in this world! I hope you like your new home—behind the bars!” sneered Judge Yong Fung.

“Welcome to the glorious city of Chang An! It is the New Year and everybody is celebrating! Hope you enjoy your day in Chang An!” a salesman yelled out.

Kai Zhi, a moderately wealthy man, was spending his New Year in Chang An. He was wandering around, then he realised that he was going to a lonely place and a person with a big sack was stalking him. He immediately knew that things were not right. He turned back to the way he came from.

The person that was stalking pulled out a dagger and attempted to stab him in the back but missed. Kai Zhi was scared out of his wits. He immediately started running for his life. The person chased after him, Kai Zhi cried for help, but nobody could hear him. He ran into a dead end. The person pulled Kai Zhi by his clothes, Kai Zhi tried to struggle free, but the person had already stabbed him in the back and took the dagger away .

The person undid his sack and placed Kai Zhi into it and carried the big sack into an alley. The ally was also lonely, the person entered a nearby hut and dumped Kai Zhi on the floor. The person came out of the hut and saw an axe and a lucky talisman on the tree stump near the hut. The person took it and used it to cut Kai Zhi’s body, then left it in the tree stump.

“I saw a man inside the hut, with loads of injuries! He was dead! You must help him find who murdered him, judge! The only people nearby were Chan Yee Shi, a butcher who was nearby, Pu Fei Guang, a lumberjack who was nearby and Chan Bu Shi, a nit wit and a beggar who was homeless and jobless.” said Pei Lu Zhang.

“Is that the truth?” asked Judge Yong Fung.

“Yes, I told you all I know about the dead person in the hut,” said Pei Lu Zhang.

“I’ll go see it for myself!” said the judge.

He went to the hut with Pei Lu Zhang and saw a man that had many injuries. “Isn’t that Kai Zhi? Why is he here?” one of Judge Yong Fung’s bodyguards suddenly said in surprise.

“Who is this Kai Zhi person?” asked Judge Yong Fung.

“He is a moderately wealthy man who is bad-tempered and has many enemies in his life.” said the bodyguard. Judge Yong Fung yawned, it was obvious that he was not interested in the case at all. “Tell Pu Fei Guang, Pei Lu Zhang, Chan Bu Shi and Chan Yee Shi to come outside my court and wait for me,” said the judge.

And soon they were outside Judge Yong Fung’s court, waiting for the judge. Judge Yong Fung ordered them to come inside the court.

“Pu Fei Guang, as reported, when the murder happened, the axe and the lucky talisman was by a tree stump near the hut were yours? Is that true?” asked Judge Yong Fung.

“Yes, that is true.” replied Pu Fei Guang.

“IT IS DECIDED! YOU ARE GUILTY OF KAI ZHI’S DEATH! WHEN I INSPECTED KAI ZHI’S BODY, I SAW THAT HIS CUTS WERE FROM AN AXE! AND YOUR AXE WAS FULL OF BLOOD!!AND THAT HUT WAS YOURS, I BELIEVE!!! IT IS DECIDED! “ screamed Judge Yong Fung.

His guards dragged Pu Fei Guang into the prison and shut the door.

“NO!!! LET ME OUT OF HERE!!!”screamed Pu Fei Guang.

Judge Pao stared at the crime file presented in front of him. “And you believe this man is innocent?” “Of Course!” exclaimed Pu Fei Chuang. “His trial was incredibly short and the judge had a verdict based on a so-called witness!” “I will look at this matter personally!”

Pei Lu Zhang came to his court and greeted Judge Pao politely.

“Go on, go on with your testimony.” said Judge Pao fiercely.

“Yes, judge. I was wandering around and I smelled a rotten smell. I was quite curious, so I entered the hut and saw Kai Zhi on the floor, dead!” said Pei Lu Zhang.

“You seem quite nervous Pei Lu Zhang! Why would you enter the hut when it wasn’t yours? That is trespassing! And the wounds were quite fresh, according to Judge Yong Fung! There are many flaws in your testimony! Pei Lu Zhang!!!” said Judge Pao.

Pei Lu Zhang’s face turned pale, “I....I....I....I did not lie!! You are wrong!!”

“Guards, spank him!!” said Judge Pao.

Pei Lu Zhang thought,” If I don’t admit it, they can’t prove that I killed Kai Zhi.”

Judge Pao’s guards spanked Pei Lu Zhang, but nothing worked, he wasn’t going to admit it. Judge Pao locked him up and thought of an idea.The next day, he called Pei Lu Zhang again.

“Pei Lu Zhang, you were quite smart, indeed. Unfortunately, your wife gave you away by confessing to me !!” said Judge Pao.

“Fine,fine! I admit it! I killed Kai Zhi because he threatened to kill my family! You never know what the man might do!” said Pei Lu Zhang, his face turning green.

In the end, Pu Fei Guang was released and Pei Lu Zhang was in prison, and about to be executed, and Judge Yong Fung was no longer a judge anymore.

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## *A Special Mission from Judge Pao*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Poon, Sum Kiu Serene – 11*

“Let’s turn back in time.” Lau said. Judge Lau, a famous judge nowadays, was named ‘Best Judge’. He was giving a speech on stage explaining how he became the judge he was now. He, at that moment, hadn’t a trace of knowledge he had been chosen for a special mission.

A scene consisting of two eight-year-old boys emerged. Lau, one of the boys, was at school. Zheng owned the latest model of a toy robot, which was extremely popular amongst them, Lau had longed for it for ages. At recess, when he saw Zheng waving it about excitedly, his eyes sparkled at the sight of his dream toy, so he rushed towards Zheng and grabbed it. “It’s mine! Mine!” Both boys screamed angrily. “No! Give it back!” They pushed and pulled; they argued and shouted, until the teacher, who had heard the deafening noise, came to see what the matter was. What he saw were two furious boys, red in the face and glaring at each other. Once he found out how the fight started, he patiently explained to Lau, “Now, Lau, imagine your favourite toy being taken from you. How would you feel?”

“I’d hate that horrible thief, and I’d be mad, because it’s mine,” Lau replied truthfully, looking down at the ground.

“Exactly! And that was how Zheng felt. If you fight, it’s unfair to the others as they didn’t do anything to you!”

“Remember this, Lau, fairness can always help you.”

Lau nodded and glanced up at the teacher. Weird, he thought, what was a moon doing on his forehead? I must’ve imagined it.

Little did Lau know, that short conversation planted a seed in him, and it was due to grow impressively.

Then, another picture appeared. It was a warm, sunny day, Lau was strolling on the streets, when he saw a little shop. He approached it, and noticed a basket of candies sitting just by the door. Stepping closer, he saw that there were various flavours and the candies’ wrappers sparkled in the sunlight. Lau had a sweet tooth and he loved treats, most especially—candies. He looked around and there wasn’t anyone. I’m sure no one would mind if a few were missing, he thought. Just a few... So, he took a couple of sweets and stuffed them in his pocket.

“What exactly are you doing?” a stern voice asked. Lau looked up, heart hammering rapidly, and saw a large shopkeeper with a little moon on the top of his forehead. “Stealing candies. Well, I caught you red handed!” he said.

“I’m really sorry. I’m... I’m only twelve. Please don’t put me in prison,” pleaded Lau. The shopkeeper made him work two hours straight, Lau was too afraid to disobey. He tidied the shelves, scrubbed the toilets, picked up the rubbish, and moved heavy boxes.

When the job was done, Lau asked in a small voice, “May I leave now? I won’t do it again.”

“Leave? I don’t think so,” the shopkeeper said. He ordered Lau to put his hand out. Lau was terrified, unsure of what would happen. Then, the shopkeeper dropped five golden coins into his hand. Lau watched, open-mouthed.

“Your payment, boy. You earned it, fair and square, and you wanted some candies, so I’ll take one coin away,” the shopkeeper said, leaving four coins there. “You see, when you put real effort into something, the result you get back is worth it. That, is justice. The time when you deserve things you want, like candies.

“Remember, you should always be just because it will make you feel good and get you through.”

Lau gazed at the coins, thankful. This incident made Lau understand more — the seedling was growing.

Then, the place switched to a big room. “You may start writing.” The examiner, who had a crescent moon up on his forehead, announced. Lau, fifteen years old, was having a public exam. Lau knew perfectly well he didn’t study well since he was busy playing video games. When he saw the examiner looking away, Lau decided to peek at the paper on his left. The examiner noticed the strange actions of Lau leaning continuously to his left, and found out his cheating scheme. Lau was immediately disqualified, sending him into misery.



The examiner told him, “What you did was unacceptable. You did not study, and therefore you should not get good grades. Assuming you did get a higher mark, would you truly be satisfied? No, you would not, because you simply didn’t deserve it. Consider being disqualified as a lesson.

“Listen and remember, you get what you give, and only then will your results be true.”

Lau nodded in shame, this time thoroughly comprehending what was said to him— the plant had grown really tall. This was what gave Lau the final push, which made him decide to be a judge, and a great one he was, too.

“So, as you see, I became the person I am from these people who taught me what’s right and what’s not, and why a man should work with justice. I now, on behalf of them, encourage you all to do the same.” concluded the adult Judge Lau to the thousands of people listening to his speech, earning immense applause.

Back at home, Judge Lau saw something interesting in the mirror. Sentences appeared :

Fairness and justice can always help you,

It will make you feel happy and get you through.

You get what you give, what you deserve,

And only then will the results be true.

Then, three pictures of the teacher, the shopkeeper, and the examiner appeared. They moulded into one face, a face with a little crescent moon on his forehead. He said, “You have succeeded in your mission to bring more justice to this world. The seed I planted in you when you were young has, indeed, grown into a full tree. I am proud of you, Lau.”

“Remember, I am Judge Pao.”

## *Ivan's Writing Experience*

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Wu, Ho Ching Candence – 10*

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Ivan. At a very young age, Ivan grew an interest in books and was determined to become an author when he grew up.

One day, while Ivan was walking around his school hallway, he heard chattering noises coming from a crowd near the school notice board. Out of curiosity, Ivan stepped into the crowd and immediately saw a notice about a writing competition. It was about a detective called “Judge Pao” in China long ago, and contestants had to retell a story about the famous “Judge Pao”.

Ivan took a sample of the notice and read it all the way until he reached his classroom. Ivan desperately wanted to join but something held him back. He was clueless of Judge Pao. So, he decided to go to the library to study more about Judge Pao.

While Ivan was scrolling through the bookshelves in the library, he noticed a book sparkling under the radiant sunlight. Ivan picked it up and found that it was a book about Judge Pao. Delighted, Ivan started flipping through pages of the book, reading every letter and sentence carefully.

Suddenly, a dazzling gleam of light shone upon the book and a hole appeared on the backpage, with a faint voice repeating “Put your hand here, put your hand here...”. Ivan was terrified but curious, so he raised a finger and touched the hole. Slowly later, Ivan cautiously placed his whole hand inside the hole and immediately, his eyesight was blurred by a flash of light.

When Ivan’s eyesight recovered, he heard a voice saying “Hey kid, are you alright?”. Ivan slowly raised his head and he saw a man with a long beard and a curved moon shaped pattern on his head. The man looked at Ivan fiercely, as if he was about to punish Ivan. Scared, Ivan immediately gave a deep bow and asked the man for forgiveness to insure himself out of danger. The man laughed, saying “Haha, why are you apologising? Is it because of my menacing-looking face? Don’t worry kid, I’m not as fierce as you think...”

Suddenly, out of thin air, two men came up to the man and Ivan, one saying “My great Judge Pao, please help me, this man next to me has stolen five of my precious steel woks!” Just then, the other man, who only had one arm and one leg, said “My great judge, just look at me. I can’t possibly carry one heavy, steel wok, how could’ve I stolen five?” Ivan then suddenly remembered before he came here, he was reading the case about ‘the five missing woks’ in the book “Judge Pao”.

Ivan then realised that he was inside the book of “Judge Pao”, he was excited and decided to follow Judge Pao and the two men to discover the case.

Judge Pao said, “Alright, I’ve heard enough, I shall now plead you, the man who claims that the disabled man has stolen the five missing woks, guilty!” Ivan was shocked, so was the man that was pleaded guilty. Ivan felt a devilish smirk on the disabled man’s face. Ivan wanted to convince Judge Pao that it couldn’t be the man that was pleaded guilty, but he had no evidence so he decided to keep his mouth shut and continue to see what was coming afterwards. Judge Pao said to the guilty man “Now, for your punishment, you shall give one of your woks to the disabled man.” The guilty man was speechless about what had happened, he gave out a grumpy face. Ivan could tell he wanted to resist, but he decided to be persistent.

He gave the wok to the disabled man and as soon as the disabled man got it, he used his hand to lift the wok up and placed it gently on his head with no hesitation. But what he didn’t know was that it was all part of Judge Pao’s plan.

“Aha! I caught you red-handed now, haven't I?” Judge Pao said ecstatically.

Ivan and the guilty man’s jaws were left wide-opened. Ivan took a glance at the disabled man’s face, seeing his white, pale and frightened face. This made Ivan give out a pleasant sigh, seeing justice being served fair and square.

Judge Pao gave out a menacing and serious face towards the disabled man, Ivan was hoping to see a harangue . But instead, he gave the disabled man a lesson of discipline. And, of course, the six woks were given back to the original owner.

Then, a familiar gleam of light tore through the sky, opening a portal on a wall. Ivan quickly ran towards it, but before leaving, he looked at the disabled man again. Ivan gave out a huge, wide smile at him for his change of heart.

When Ivan returned back to the library, he jolted towards his desk and started writing everything he saw and felt. He felt victory coming closer every second as he wrote.

Ivan told himself, “Even if he didn’t win, he wouldn’t feel upset at all.” After all, he had the best experience anyone could ever have, and that was the most important thing in writing.

## *Justice Pao's First Trial Meeting*

*Marymount Primary School, Luo, Liang Emma – 11*

Justice Pao, a great judicator who cares about justice more than anyone does. We all know his name on the things he did, but do you know his first ever trial meeting? Here's a tale of it.

Pao Zheng was only 9 years old. His parents were dustman, but Pao Zheng was into judicial powers. Everyone in town thought that he was a weirdo because everywhere he walks, he shouts about how great the judicators were. His mom and dad don't know what happened to him and worried a lot.

By the day he was 11 years old, his parents gave up on him and kicked him out of the house. Pao Zheng has nowhere to go. After a while, he heard two men speaking in distance, he followed them and came to a giant workshop, he looked at the sign on a wooden board and it says "Danger". He then saw a man carrying a giant wooden box filled with powder in different colours. "They are making drugs! It is illegal to make drugs now!" Pao Zheng gasped at the enormous field of giant boxes. Suddenly, a group men appeared behind him and took him, "Let's take this boy to Commander Fax!" said a man.

They took him to "Commander Fax", Fax questioned him how did him get here and flung him out for nothing. Pao Zheng ran as fast as he could, he went straight to the police office.

The polices weren't as nice as he thought. They thought that he was just a swindler who wants to trick them going to a place and steal money afterwards. Pao Zheng explained several times that he wasn't lying but the police officers wouldn't listen to him. "I need evidence." Thought Pao Zheng while he was walking out of the police office. He stopped, an idea popped out. He went back in, and said "Hey police officer, let's make a deal, I will bring you to the place I talked about and if it is not true you can arrest me right away. So, what do you say? Deal?" The police officer looked at him for a while, "Even if he runs away, he can't outrun me!" he thought, so he agreed. Pao Zheng led him to the field, the police officer couldn't believe it, the kid didn't lie. He immediately called all the polices using his walkie-talkie. They came with ropes and hand cuffs. With one call by the head of the police officer, all of them ran out at once, the workers at the factory shouted "RUN!". It is too late. The police officers caught them before all of them could react. Pao Zheng told the head of the police officer Zac that the commander of this factory is

still inside.

The polices caught the commander and all the workers. Zac tried to ask them why they would do this but none of them answered. Pao Zheng suggested to put them into a trial meeting.

At beginning, the judge didn't trust Pao Zheng, but after Zac's descriptions of the whole thing, the judge finally trusted Pao Zheng and authorized Pao Zheng to be the judicator of this trial meeting. In the meeting, Fax claimed that they may not violate the law because they didn't mean to do it, they were forced!" "Maybe you didn't but you could tell the police, how can you explain about that?" contradicted by Pao Zheng. "Silence!" said the judge, "Fax, if you are telling the truth, then can you please address me who has been forcing you to do such a thing that violates the law?" the

judge asked. "Yes, I am telling the truth, you have to trust me! The person who has been forcing me didn't tell me his name, I should ask but I didn't." replied by Fax immediately. "So well, I hereby announce that Fax and his workers are truly innocent. They are released!" the judge announced. "But...judge, you know that they aren't innocent. They create things that can possibly harm people! They are creating drugs!" Pao Zheng argued. "My decision is made." Said the judge calmly.

Pao Zheng was so angry after the trial meeting, "How can they just release them like that! I have to do something! I can't just let them continue doing this." he thought. He decided to go to their factory again to find their secret. So, at that night, he snuck into their main room and found something unbelievable.

Pao Zheng went to the police office the second day and told them about what he just heard. Zac told him to be a good kid and stop worrying about this. "But Fax is planning to use the drug he made to control the city! I heard him telling the workers about their plan and they decided to take over this city tomorrow night, when everybody is out for Mid-Autumn Festival! You must help me save all our citizens." Said Pao Zheng. Zac had nothing to say but to move out. He chose to trust Pao Zheng. Meantime, Pao Zheng went to the judge and told him to grant Fax capital crime. The judge asked Zac to bring Fax to the trial meeting again right away. In the second trial meeting, Fax told the judge that Pao Zheng was just lying, but Pao Zheng burst out, "What Fax makes in his workshop is

drug, lots of drugs. I know because I once read it in a book, and I've seen it. It is extremely dangerous! We cannot risk any one's life on it. Judge, if you disagree with me, I shall say that you don't stand for justice and that you defile the profession of judging." There was a sudden silence. The judge said, "Very well, kid, it is justice. I announce that Fax has committed a capital crime!"

In that day, Pao Zheng saved every one's life. The people in town honor him.

## ***A New Tale For Judge Pao – New Warrior Awaken***

*Marymount Primary School, Yung, Pui Yan Bella – 10*

In the underworld , a deity strode towards a lady encased in ice. She exerted all her energy to unthaw the ice. The ice cracked in half. As silent as she appeared, she disappeared into the dark, leaving white feathers in her wake.

The lady, who gasped in outrage, was actually Judge Pao. Pao looked down at her feminine body. She gasped again , but in disbelief. Pao spotted six bodies lying on the ground next to her, wondering who these women were. she knelt down beside them and nudged one of them. In a quick motion , that woman sat up with eyes still closed and looked around frantically. “Who are you?”, she snarled threateningly. “I am Pao” , she said simply.

The woman who was snarling at Pao earlier whipped her head back to stare at Pao again before asking ,”Are you by any chance our lord Pao?” Pao frowned at her and replied , “Yes , I am.” They all gasped and immediately dropped to their knees. Apparently, they were Pao’s advisor and the five guards.

Gongsun worried about the reason they got there. “We need to concentrate on what we will do now.” , reasoned Pao. Gongsun suddenly came up with an idea and suggested to travel up the rest levels of Hell and ask the substitute Yama for advice. He was always the wise one. With a new journey comes new identities. Judge Pao – Lunar Paojin, Gongsun Ce to Gangie Ciu , Zhang Zhao to Zou.... New female warriors rose up from the ashes and gathered up the courage to emerge into the home of sinful souls.

The fires of hell were fierce and strong but the warriors of ash were stronger. They battled through with bravery of a lion and strength of a dragon. The immortals were sifting around and their eyes darting in every direction because women fighting with that much skills were unheard of.

After they defeated the Hell of Mountain of Ice and passed through all the stages one by one. The glimpse of all the despair, regret, agonizing groans from the souls, pierced into Paojin and her fellows’ hearts even they knew in their hearts that the sinners deserved.

Until they nearly reached to the toppest level – the Realm of Karma. Suddenly, a silver glare beamed on Paojin’s forehead lunar mark. Paojin fell to the ground, shaking and convulsing. They all panicked and Gangie fell down to her knees to check her master’s pulse. Just minutes later, Paojin woke up, sobbing. She stared at Gangie sadly. It seems Paojin saw something from her coma but she did not reveal.

As they walked on, they immediately noticed something different. While they were inspecting the changes of the Realm of Karma , an angelic voice was giggling behind them, “Well , isn’t the one and only Judge Pao with his group of minions.” They all whipped around to see the demoness Daji sitting on the throne. Daji was a malevolent fox spirit who killed and impersonated the real Daji in three thousand years ago. The substitute Yama was already sabotaged and replaced. Zou, the fiercest warrior, immediately prepared for a fight.

Daji charged at Zao with her fox tails ripping through her clothing. Daji turned into a hideous creature. She snarled at Paojin and threw sharp needles at her. Paojin dodged until Daji summoned all the energy she had and threw the most powerful weapon. Before the axe could kill Paojin, Gangie jumped in front of her. The axe pierced through Gangie’s body and she slumped to the ground.

The act of true friendship and sacrifice made the demon turned into dust, leaving only Daji’s wail. Paojin dropped to her knees, sobbing. Tears dripping down Gangie’s face. This scene was Paojin saw in her coma. As the group kept on sobbing and mourning, the tears mixed in with the blood and suddenly...”Why are you all crying?” , croaked a voice. Gangie awoken from her death-like slumber. The group was shell-shocked. Paojin embraced her tightly burst out tears of joy. White feathers whirling in a flash of glow so bright that the group headed to shield their eyes. “Pao! My dear child!” The voice reminded Paojin that she was her mother. The deity was always her mother.

“Daji defeated by the act of friendship. Pao, I am your guardian angel. When all seems lost, I'm always here for you. I sensed you were in danger when you were deceived by the apprentice of Daji and were trapped in the ice. Remember, bonding with family and friends is always the most powerful thing in the universe” , she concluded.

Everyone started kneeling before Paojin , believing that she will rule over the throne of justice again. However, Paojin declined. Silence filled the court , until a nervous chuckle broke it. “Gangie will rule the throne. She showed a true act of friendship and love. It's time for me to retire!” Her mother smiled proudly and gestured to follow her , opening a doorway to reincarnation. “Farewell and may your new life be blessed”, whispered Gangie. Paojin smiled softly at all of them and left with her mother together into the mortal world.

Paojin opened her eyes and saw two mortal adults hovering over her , bright light shining directly in her eyes. “Luna! Oh , my dear!” , the woman cried , picking Paojin up and cradling her in her arms. Paojin cooed and knew it was her new body and her new parents. Luna got a moon symbol was behind her ear. A new wondrous adventure awaits her in this world.

## *The Beasts of the New World*

*Nord Anglia International School Hong Kong, Shim, Irene – 8*

After a long day of fighting dragons and other beasts determined to disturb the peace of his town, a weary Judge Pao trudged to his garden. He saw the familiar sight of the sweet smelling roses and trees that seemed to reach the sky.

But then he felt a strong gust of wind blowing against his face. The birds had stopped chirping. Judge Pao whipped around him and spotted a silvery blue swirling cloud spinning as fast as a typhoon between the bushes. He silently crept up to examine it, wondering if it was a lost soul from the underworld seeking his advice. Suddenly, a magnetic force pulled the Judge closer into the whirlpool. Instantly he felt himself plummeting down the silver endless hole. Judge Pao closed his eyes fearing the crash that never came.

When he opened his eyes he saw a towering house that looked like millions of blue shiny blocks stacked neatly together. He squinted then pinched his arm to see if this was real. Next to the houses there were flashing, silver creatures that looked like humans but were much taller and harder. Their movements were jerky like they were being controlled. Judge Pao sensed danger straight away. He knew that these monsters were up to no good.

Furious and disappointed that all the work he had done was no use. He had always wanted a world with no monsters, but these shiny, silver beasts were here destroying homes high up in the sky. Seeing the destruction, Judge Pao decided to help. He couldn't use the laws here to punish the monsters, so the only thing he could do was crawl up to the smooth, looming creatures. Hoping to distract them from devastating the lives of the unlucky people inside, he had just started climbing when he heard people shouting and screaming at him to come down.

This had been to help them. Why were they yelling at him to stop and throwing rocks and other things at him? One hit his leg and he nearly lost his footing. He felt fearful that he might fall from this enormous structure. The Judge was now surprised and annoyed that they didn't appreciate his help, as he reluctantly walked away.

Then in the distance he saw the blurry outline of a tall, wide house. He walked closer to realize at once that it was an old temple. Relieved that he had found something familiar, he stumbled inside. From the minute he stepped through the doors, he noticed that people, mostly children were staring at him curiously. They were evidently transfixed. Judge Pao ignored them as he appeared in his bizarre clothes and long, flowing beard to the head priest. He asked him furiously about the metal monsters outside. The priest could not speak for a moment. He simply stood there gaping at him, his mouth slightly open.

Then he answered, "Those are robots, they help us build things. The world is better now because of them."

The priest went on to explain that, over the last few centuries the technology has become more advanced so people could now make things like robots and drones. Life is much more convenient now. The Judge finally realized his mistake as he walked back to the robot workers to apologize. He approached them and even saw a few workers that had yelled at him.

"I disturbed your robots. My apologies." began Judge Pao, "I didn't know that they were helping you."

Then one of the workers called out, "Why would you think they were harmful?"

Judge Pao replied, "Well, just before I came here I met a giant silver dragon that was ruining fields and homes, so I thought all beasts were harmful."

The biggest worker who seemed to be the leader chuckled, "Of course they're not"



He now understood different creatures were sometimes useful. He thought as he walked down the street that life is so much more complicated here, everything is so tall and shiny. They destroy old homes to make new things and even the scariest looking monster can be helpful. As he was wondering about this world, he absent mindedly walked into a field similar to the one he came out of.

He attempted to bolt towards the endless grassy space, but after the day's adventure his legs felt like jelly, so he headed in other direction. Then he spotted the glittering, sapphire cloud waiting to take him home.

Judge Pao felt thankful that he had a way of returning to his world and he leaped inside. In less than a second, Judge Pao was back in his garden surrounded by multicolored flowers.

Now he felt proud of what he was doing for his people. After learning what the future was like, he felt more capable of ensuring justice around him.

The monsters he saw in the other world were helping humans, so maybe monsters in his world could also bring good to the world.

# A New Tale of Judge Pao

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Cheng, Mandy – 12*

I was dead. The emperor said so.

I sneaked into my funeral to see my son *Shou* for the last time. I felt guilty, as a kid at his age would need his father most. But I had no choice.

In *Song*, you could have as many wives as you wanted to, and having an affair with a maid or having an illegitimate child was not uncommon or unacceptable, particularly for the rich and people holding a high position in the Empire like me.

But I am *Pao*. *Pao* was an exception. People in *Kaifeng* and perhaps the whole *Song* regarded *Pao* as a saint. A saint should never do anything wrong. It was not allowed, and such an act, if known to the public, would bring the Empire's reputation into disrepute.

The emperor told me not to worry about this; he would take care of my family, including *Shou* when I was not around.

I was chosen for this secret mission for a reason. But it appeared to me more like a joke. I had spent my whole life fighting corruption, but the emperor asked me to bribe!

Back to the reason. The Northern side of *Song* had all along been a headache since the Shang Dynasty. It remained so even after *Ying Zheng* of *Qin Dynasty* built the *Great Wall*. Most of the troops were deployed to the North and more would be needed. It was quite a burden to the Empire.

But now the emperor was troubled by another reason, namely, the expansion of the *Da Qin Kingdom* and the *Persian World* from the West, which posed a new and imminent threat to *Song*. In recent years, the conflict had intensified, from fistfights between civilians to direct confrontation between the militaries, and *Song* was losing.

The emperor wanted to put a halt to it. He vowed to reassert control and reclaim the land lost in the *Tang Dynasty*, and more by his predecessors. He also wished to rejuvenate the *Silk Road* and the trade between the East and the West. But clearly the *Da Qin Kingdom* and the *Persian World* were a hurdle that he needed to jump over.

The emperor had an idea, which was easy to understand but difficult to implement. He wanted the *Da Qin Kingdom* to fight with the *Persian World*. But the question was – HOW? The emperor came up with an idea.

*Zhan Zhao*, my bodyguard, who was tall and muscular in built, had an important role to play. He would lead an army to the West without anyone noticing. The army would attack small villages of the *Persian World* and kill a few villagers if required. They would put the blame on *Da Qin Kingdom*. They would also smear *Arabia*, the God

of *Persian World*, in order to provoke the *Persians*.

I also had a role to play, which was more important. I had a crescent scar on the forehead. It closely resembled the symbol that every *Persian* worshiped. With tanned skin, the emperor believed that I would blend into the *Persians* and gain their trust easily. I could also try to convince or bribe the *Persians* to invade *Da Qin Kingdom*. It would be ideal if they could wipe each other out from the Earth. If not, the Song could also take advantage if any of them lost an eye or a limb in the war. The plan sounded perfect and workable.

After a few months of preparation, we left *Kaifeng* for the West. We crossed the *Hexi Corridor*, *Dunhuang* and *Tibetans* and finally reached the land of the *Persians*. We bid each other farewell and joked to see each other in the battlefield. But we knew it was not necessarily a joke. If we were successful, he would fight for *Da Qin Kingdom* and I for the *Persians*.

But we never saw each other again. Many years later, I learnt from sources that *Zhan Zhao* did a great job in accomplishing the mission assigned to him by the emperor. With the benefit of my teaching back in *Song*, he became a renowned philosopher who taught people the principle of equality, the rule of law, presumption of innocence, etc. Most important of all, he successfully convinced the King of *Da Qin Kingdom* to invade the *Persian World* and liberate the *Holy Land*.

Believe it or not, I blended into the *Persians* without difficulty. People accepted me at once and worshiped me as a prophet when they saw me for the first time. I gained the trust of all tribal leaders and was well received by their members. I soon became the spiritual leader of the *Persian World*.

Like *Zhan Zhao*, I gave lectures to the *Persians*, not only on legal principles but also issues happening on the other side of the Earth. They found it very enlightening. When time passed by, some of them called me “*the Messiah*” or “*the Messenger*” from the above.

One day, I told my assistant that I might need “*a small piece of land*” for *Arabia* in my own dialect which was pronounced “*xiao-di*”. The tribal leaders overheard our conversation and assigned a piece of land, which was later known as “*Saudi-Arabia*”, to me without any hesitation. I did not know at that time that it was so big and there was oil underneath. But that is another story.

Was my mission accomplished? Of course! I was a man of honour and thus kept my own promise. As the spiritual leader for the *Persians*, I sent my troops to fight the invaders and they protected the *Holy Land* fearlessly. The holy war lasted for more than two centuries and people in *Song* were free from any trouble during that period.

I also told the *Persians* that people from the East were friends, and we should respect and be nice to them forever. That was how the *Sino-Persian* relationship was established.

# Travelling into the Future

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Kong, Yat Hei – 11*

Loud clangs of metal against hard stone could be heard from miles away. An incident had happened at a nearby well. Fortunately, no one was severely injured in the incident. As everyone else left the scene, Judge Pao and his assistant stayed behind. During the rescue mission he found out that the well had an interesting detail that heavily piqued his interest: There was a faint glow coming from the bottom of the well. It was so faint that no one else noticed during the rescue.

“My dear assistant, you have to come look at this,” Judge Pao said. His mind filled with wonder. “What is it sir?” his assistant asked. But as he inspected the well, he too noticed the glow. The assistant asked Judge Pao whether he had any idea about it, but Judge Pao denied it as he hoisted himself up and climbed down into the well. Filled with curiosity, his assistant followed suit.

As Judge Pao landed at the bottom of the well, he was surprised it wasn’t filled with water. But as he looked around, he realized the glow was coming from a mist. But what could’ve created this mist? As he was thinking of an explanation, he felt a sudden lurch from his stomach. The feeling was sickening. While he tried to find an explanation on what was happening, his assistant had also finished climbing and was now at the bottom of the well right next to him. His assistant was very confused as to why his boss was looking like he was having a stroke.

Suddenly, he felt the same sick feeling as his boss. It felt like he was being lurched forward by an imaginary force. As he groaned in pain, he suddenly felt like he was floating in mid-air. Suddenly the pain stopped, and he fell unconscious.

Judge Pao woke up with a throbbing pain in his head. As he squinted to inspect wherever he was, he concluded it stank. His assistant was also sitting next to him. Judge Pao asked his assistant if he was okay. Thankfully he was alright. As Judge Pao looked around, he found a sign saying ‘sewers’. He was very confused as to how he got there. But at least he had an explanation for the smell. His assistant found a ladder and the duo were out faster than you could say ‘It stinks’.

With a heavy push, the manhole cover above them was pushed out. But instead of the fresh air back home, Judge Pao was hit with a wave of suffocating, polluted air. Instead of robes, everyone around them was wearing weird clothing with short sleeves. They also had weird rectangular shaped objects covering their mouths. As the duo looked around some more, they found a sign saying ‘Central Station’ with a weird symbol next to it. People were walking inside and stepping on giant things that moved on their own! Judge Pao was so surprised as he had never seen this before in China. Where were they anyway?

They found a random person and asked them where this was. This person was wearing a blue outfit with a yellow glowing thing on his chest. He also had a weird looking hat. The person looked at the duo with a judging glare. He seemed angry.

“What? What do you mean you don’t know what a mask is? Are you from the age of dinosaurs? This is 2022!” the person sarcastically asked. Judge Pao shook his head. “Well, you’re charged HKD 5000 each for not wearing your masks in public. I would also like to check your ID,” the person said. Judge Pao and his assistant were confused. They had so many questions. The assistant questioned this person’s authority. The person then reacted with a stern glare. The person then replied strictly that he most certainly has the authority. The person then required Judge Pao and his assistant to follow him to the ‘police station’. Judge Pao was becoming ever more confused by the second.

Inside the person’s ‘vehicle’, as they called it, they introduced themselves as a policeman, and assumed that Judge Pao was a ‘foreigner’. He didn’t know what the policeman meant by that. But he didn’t ask any questions.

After they arrived at the police station, the policeman then led them to a room. The policeman then indicated the duo to sit and asked the duo for their personal information.

Upon hearing the judge’s name, the policeman had a look of disbelief. He suspected that Judge Pao was lying, but decided against it. Who would pretend to be a dead old man anyway?

“Alright, we’ve recently caught the suspects of a robbery case, If you can help us make them confess. I’ll clear your 5000 dollar fine,” said the policeman. Judge Pao stroked his beard in thought. “The solution to that is very simple. You simply tell the thieves in different rooms the following: If they confess to the crime, they would get a few years off their sentence, while their crime partner would get extra years instead. They will both be tempted and confess. Through the use of a loophole, both of them will be punished,” Judge Pao explained. The policeman understood and told his colleagues to put it in action immediately.

In the end, the thieves were successfully sent to prison, and all the stolen items were returned. The sheriff thanked Judge Pao for his help. While they were talking, Judge Pao suddenly felt the same sick feeling he felt back at the well. He heard a faint voice repeatedly telling him to wake up. When his head felt like it was about to split in half, his eyes shot wide open. His heart was beating at a dangerous rate. When he looked at his surroundings, he realized he was back on the lawn the well was on. He didn't know exactly what happened. But whatever it was, he would miss that crazy place.

# The Other Side of Law

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Wong, Yi Lam Charlotte – 10*

“Shling!”

The sound of the bloody blade being pulled out of the captain’s body was quickly followed by a muffled thump as he fell to the ground and breathed no more. The mysterious old lady remained stony-faced as she slipped into the shadows just as the soldiers spotted her.

“Sentence her to death!” the soldiers yelled, dragging the old lady in front of Judge Pao. “I’m guilty,” the old lady muttered, keeping her head down.

“What was your motive?” Judge Pao interrogated calmly. The lady’s face flushed crimson but she still stayed silent. Mr Gongsun and Guard Zhan watched nearby. “Such a strange case...” Judge Pao remarked as he sipped his tea. “She confessed anyway,” Mr Gongsun shrugged.

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“It’s time to judge the dead, my Lord,” Guard Zhan burst in and stated. Pao sighed, as if working as a judge wasn’t enough, at night, he also had to judge the dead, such hard work!

“Why are there so many today?” Pao was astonished at the sight of thousands upon thousands of ghosts lining up at the Infernal Bureaucracy in front of him. “Song is at war with Liao, my Lord,” Gongsun replied as Zhan tried to keep the dead in line.

“Wang Zhong and Wang Yong...” Judge Pao summoned as he flipped the pages in the death registry. Two ghosts approached.

“You two brave brothers fought loyally protecting our motherland. Any final wishes?” Pao asked.

“Yes my Lord. We wish to see our mother and brother one last time. Her name is Xiao Lan.”

Judge Pao suddenly turned as pale as a ghost (which was ironic in front of a ghost).

“Your sons in the army want to see you, M’am,” Judge Pao announced the next day to the old lady.

“Can I? Really?” the old lady exclaimed, “Where are they?”

“Sadly, in the afterlife,” Pao answered.

“It’s time to tell the truth, Xiao Lan,” he demanded.

The old lady slowly sank into the depth of her memory...

“Please! Spare my youngest son, Wang Yi!” she cried.

“Rules are rules, woman! He needs to join the army!” the captain barked trying to shove the wailing old lady aside.

“He’s only eight!” she begged and begged.

“I don’t care!”

The captain tried to grab Wang Yi, but the kid was much more agile and dodged the captain.

“Run, my son, run!”

The old lady held the captain back as absolute chaos was unleashed. Out of mother’s instinct, adrenaline surged through her body, giving her the strength to grab and turn the sword from the hand of captain, who was caught completely off-guard.

As the soldiers arrived the scene, they could only see their captain tragically murdered, and an old lady utterly speechless and terrified.

“So, that’s the story,” Pao stroked his beard thoughtfully. “You might have breached the letter of the law, but with good cause. After all, love is the fulfillment of law,” he concluded. “I fully agree, my Lord,” Gongsun stated as Zhan nodded in total agreement.

“You may go now,” Judge Pao declared, “this is my verdict.”

“I just want to see my sons again...” the old lady cried. Her tears crashed into everyone’s heart in the court, filling them with pain, sorrow and pity.

“And where is your youngest child now?” Pao suddenly recalled.

Just then, the doors flew open and Wang Yi rushed into his mother’s arms. “I’m sorry I fled, mommy,” the son apologized, “I was too scared to stay, there was smoke and knives and people screaming, scary stuff.” Wang Yi began to cry, with a sound more painful than his mother’s.

“Hmm, I can see and hear the family resemblance,” Judge Pao nodded. But the heat of the fire had not yet passed.

Meanwhile, the soldiers were irked. “Seriously?,” one of them whispered to the soldier next to him, “She killed our captain and got away with it? This is outrageous, unacceptable, and simply unjust!”

His growl rose into an earthshaking bark as he drew his sword. “I cannot accept this! Pay for our captain’s life! An eye for an eye! Woof!” The two soldiers leapt in the air ready to strike.

Out of the blue, the ground shimmered with an explosion of violet light as the air filled with an earthy scent of death and mulch. Two ghosts burst out and blocked the soldiers’ swords, leaving them dazed and stumbling. One of the soldiers tried to strike again but was lifted into the air by the ghosts.

“Reunion at last,” Wang Zhong smiled warmly at his mother. “M..my srtfgn!” the old lady exclaimed and seemed to have forgotten how to talk. “Only the power of the purest spirit and the strongest bond can cross between the two worlds,” Pao remarked.

“I am afraid we have to go now,” the noble brothers spoke in union, “but at least we managed to protect you one last time.” Wang Yong hugged his mother and younger brother. Judge Pao turned to the soldiers and explained, “I’m sorry, but you need to understand revenge is never-ending. Only mutual understanding can break the terrible cycle.”

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Down by the sea, Justice Pao, Mr Gongsun and Guard Zhan were enjoying their scrumptious supper watching the magnificent sunset. The soft lilac grass bowed down to the vermilion ball of fire in the rose red sky.

“We might have saved one today, but tonight there will be thousands more coming in, making it another extremely busy day with business as usual,” Pao sighed, “Only when there is mutual understanding and trust between nations can wider conflicts be resolved.”

“My Lord...” Zhan tried to say but was cut off.

“Shh! Don’t disturb my iconic moment! Let’s go back to work and hope the day will come sooner rather than later,” Pao concluded.

“That’s what I was about to...” Zhan tried again but Gongsun shot him a warning glance that meant “Save it.”

“Very well said, my Lord.” Mr Gongsun grinned as they left for the underworld.

# The First Case of Izzy Pao

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Arrowsmith, Lucia Alice – 11*

People milled around us, all hustle and bustle. Brimming with excitement, I struggled to take it in. My first time in Hong Kong. Well, technically, I'd been here once before but as a toddler, so my memories were hazy.

I was staying with my grandfather, the amazing Judge Pao, for the summer holidays. I had read so much about his incredible adventures. He was my hero and I wanted to be a detective, just like him.

Fumbling for our tram tickets, we inched forward towards the entry gate. We were heading to the Peak to meet my grandmother for lunch. The sun shone brightly but dark, heavy clouds lurked above.

Shortly after boarding, the tram began trundling off up the hillside. I rushed to the front to get a better view and turned to Grandad excitedly, "So what murder mystery are we going to solve today?"

Grandad chuckled and shook his head. He'd heard this question many times in recent days. "Sorry, Izzie, there'll be no murder mysteries today, just lunch with your grandmother, OK?"

"But Graanddaaaaaad..." I exclaimed. His response wasn't a surprise but I wouldn't give up that easily, "I came all the way from England to visit you. I thought we could solve a mystery together..." I gave him my puppy dog eyes.

Grandad smiled. "Sorry to disappoint you Izzie, but you're a bit too young for that. Maybe one day..."

I sighed again but didn't push it further. I decided to focus on the scenery instead. Looking up, I became lost in a sea of lush, green forest, leaves glistening in the morning sunlight. I was lost in thought when the tram jerked to a halt at Kennedy Road. Some passengers boarded the tram.

Shortly after, rain fell heavily. We stopped once more at MacDonnell Road before the storm eased and trees parted to reveal towering buildings below.

Eventually, the tram arrived at its final destination. People flowed out of the tram, jostling impatiently as they searched for the exits. I turned to see Grandad frowning. Following his gaze I saw a man slumped in his seat.

I took a step closer and noticed the man was dressed smartly, in a suit. There was something unnatural about the way he sat, motionless. "Is he ok?" I whispered.

"I'm afraid not, Izzie," Grandad murmured. "Now, stand back, we shouldn't interfere with the crime scene."

"Crime scene?" I exclaimed.

"Well, nothing's certain. It's just that..." Grandfather's voice trailed off. He fell silent, lost in thought. "Please wait there Izzie, I'll be right with you".

Grandad continued to study the man. Scrunching his brow, he muttered to himself. "This man has been poisoned. But how and from what, I'm not sure... Hmmm..."

"Hmmm..." I chimed.

I recalled the scene when everyone left the tram. "Just now, there was one person who hurried away very quickly. They seemed anxious. I wonder..." I looked up at Grandad.

"Did you get a good look at him? Where was he heading?" Grandad asked.

I thought hard, squinting as I recalled the vague details. "They wore a brown coat and green overalls, all soaked through. He ran in that direction," I pointed to a narrow path.



We hurried along the path when something caught my eye. I stopped to pick up a tram ticket.

“Grandad!” I called. “Look what I found!”

Grandad rushed over as I pulled a magnifying glass from my satchel. “Where on earth did you get th...” Grandad started. He smiled and waited as I studied the ticket. The rain had caused the ink to run but I could just make out the date; it was today. But the time wasn’t clear.

“Hmmm...” I murmured. “The person I saw fleeing the tram was wet from the storm. It only started raining after we left Kennedy Road...so they must have boarded at MacDonnell Road. Three people got on at MacDonnell Road; a couple sat near us at the front of the tram and one person at the back.”

Grandad nodded. “OK. So three potential suspects. Let's find the couple first”.

I soon recognised the couple, dining at an outdoor restaurant but the ticket didn’t belong to them.

“It must be the person from the back of the tram,” Grandad observed.

I nodded, thinking the same thing. I had been racking my brains about the brown coat and green overalls. Not typical attire for a tourist. I knew I’d seen that outfit somewhere before. Then it clicked.

“Aha!” I cried. “I knew I’d seen that uniform somewhere! It’s from the animal shelter. I was there just yesterday with Grandma.”

“Excellent, Izzie!” Grandad replied. “Where is this shelter?”

“Just down this path, ” I replied.

Arriving at the shelter, we noticed a soaking wet brown coat hanging on a hook.

Grandad asked the staff, “Whom does this coat belong to?”

“Athena. She looks after exotics in the back garden,” a lady replied, pointing to the rear of the building.

As we stepped outside, a young lady with long black hair looked up anxiously.

“You must be Athena...” Grandad sighed.

“I’m sorry,” she cried. “So very sorry...”

## Epilogue

Later, I learned the victim, Mr Lau, was a real estate developer due to acquire the animal shelter, to replace it with new apartments. Athena cared deeply for the animals and tried in vain to persuade Mr Lau to preserve the shelter. She knew he was heading to the Peak to sign contracts. Desperate, she followed him onto the tram and slipped a deathstalker scorpion into his coat. She only meant to scare him, to paralyse him, momentarily. But he had a reaction and nearly died. Thinking he was dead, Athena fled. Thankfully Mr Lau survived but Athena accepted her fate. She would be in jail for some time. Meanwhile, an anonymous donor had gifted funds to the shelter, preventing it from shutting down.

As for me, I had cracked my very first murder mystery with Grandad. I had a feeling it would be the first of many...

# A True Portrayal of Justice Bao

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Cheah, Zu Zheng Christopher – 11*

“And...cut!”

Displayed on the clapperboard: 'Scene 1. Take 6.'

"Let's try again tomorrow!" French director Patrick Marty shouts to the production crew of 'Crime, Corruption, and Justice'.

Based on Marty's comic novels about Judge Bao, Season 1 was a Netflix sensation. Season 2, produced in Hong Kong, will cover Bao Zheng's earlier days.

“Listen, Chen! Can you give me a *true* portrayal of Justice Bao?” Marty demands.

Chen Zheng, a thirteen-year old actor, with dark makeup and a crescent on his head, feels the pressure. “Yes,” he lies with a fake smile. *But I can't*, he thinks. *I can never be true*.

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Walking through a sea of skyscrapers, Chen sees it again below his housing complex. An unilluminated windowless office with four crimson Chinese characters and the letters 'ICAC'.

His heart beats faster, reminded of a traumatic past. His last memory of his mother was at her funeral. Shortly after, he was watching his father dragged by the ICAC to prison on TV. That dreadful night, he cried at a foster home until the next morning, comforted only by the sun's motherly, nurturing light.

Taking out a crumpled photograph from his wallet, Chen grits his teeth. He throws it, hard. But he picks it up from the ground, and *screams*. He wants to get rid of it forever. But it is his father. Chen cannot throw him away.

Reaching the fourth floor, he opens the apartment door. His father, out of prison a year ago, embraces him. “I've cooked dinner.”

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They eat dumplings together.

“I know that look,” Chen's father says. “What's troubling you?”

“Acting...a true portrayal of Justice Bao, whatever that means.”

“You can do it. After all, we named you Zheng, *justice*.”

Chen scoffs, looking at a wall photo picturing rows of seated men, his grandfather and father front row centre. Above them is a triangle logo: the Chen clan. A triad criminal organization, originally from the Henan province.

“We're the opposite of justice,” Chen laments, seeing himself as one of them.

Chen's father does not respond.

“The ICAC, Justice Bao, I hate them all!”

Silence.

“I hate my name, Zheng!” Chen shouts. “I hate myself.”

His father hesitates. "It's time I tell you more about our family. Follow me."

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Standing on a desk, Chen's father reaches up above the ceiling, bringing down boxes layered with dust.

He opens one box to reveal an old portrait.

"This is Chen Shinei, fictional in Chinese operas. But he was a real person, our ancestor, 1000 years ago. Records of him were erased because he was a convicted senior official. Although favoured and pardoned by Emperor Renzong, he was executed by Bao Zheng."

"What's this got to do with us?"

"Shinei left two young children behind, whom Bao secretly supported. However, our ancestors continued to rely on Bao's money. Requests for money turned into demands and threats on Bao's descendants and businesses, for 29 generations. That's how our Chen clan became the largest triad network, from Kaifeng to Hong Kong, which your late grandfather headed."

Opening a second box, Chen's father pulls out a photograph of two smiling men, seated next to each other inside a Hong Kong ferry.

"This is your grandfather and Y.K. Pao, 29th grandchild of Bao Zheng. They became true friends, eventually."

"How could that be?"

"Your grandfather changed. He and I wanted a new start for our clan. No more crime and corruption. But it was difficult. Other triad clans wanted to take over. I refused. They threatened us. And..."

Chen's father pauses, faltering. "And they got your mother. It wasn't a car accident."

Tears start to well up in Chen's eyes. Then he feels a burst of anger, imagining revenge, *one day*.

"I wanted to fight back, which would have started a triad clan war. But your mother would have disapproved. Instead, I planned something else, the right way. A plan to dismantle the triads from the inside, to keep their suspicions off me, to keep you safe."

"What did you do?" Chen asks.

"I approached the ICAC, and worked undercover for them. Going to prison was staged."

Chen is stunned.

"You were in a guarded foster home, until it was safe. And now, it's safe."

Chen is speechless.

"We're going to be fine now," assures Chen's father, his protective arms wrapping tightly around him.

Chen hugs his father, something he has not done for a long time. He finally cries, all his emotions flooding the room, realising he was never abandoned but protected, and his father was not a criminal but fought for justice.

"Your mother's proud of you," says Chen's father, looking at her portrait.

Both imagine her smiling with them, crying with them.

"She's proud of you too, dad."

Chen feels his built-up bitterness recede, like a wave returning to the sea, and what remains in him is hope.

As Chen's father gazes outside, illuminated by the crescent moon, he recalls a story from his late father. "I still have one more secret for you. A story of Bao's childhood, told by Bao himself to our ancestors..."

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A pale-faced young Bao is held down inside a cave in Hefei, by men in white robes of the Song dynasty. "Declare your allegiance to our clan! Or we'll scar you for life."

Bao refuses.

They push him towards a burning furnace. His face turns dark, his head scorched with a crescent moon. Bao screams as blood flows down, and shouts, "Justice will find you, one day! *One day!*"

"And...cut!"

Displayed on the clapperboard: 'Scene 1 *revised version*. Take 7.'

"Bravo! A true portrayal of Justice Bao!" director Marty salutes Chen. "Whatever your *inspiration* is, keep it with you."

Chen takes out that crumpled photo again, this time gently, this time with a different thought.

*My father's life is a portrayal of a hero, a Bao Zheng.*

*And my life can now be true. I am Zheng, and I stand for Justice.*

# The New Tales of Judge Pao

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Cheng, Stanley – 11*

*November 28, 2042...*

“When we get the gold, we’re going to be rich!” whispered a man to another, the pitch of his voice rising in excitement.

“Yes, filthy rich!” laughed the other with a wicked grin on his face. “We’re going to rule the world!”

“Silence!” ordered the leader of the first two men. “I want absolute silence! No whispering! No giggling! No murmuring! No breathing! Not a single sound!”

“Yes sir!” replied the two men in chorus, as the burglars quietly shifted into the private room of the royal mansion.

What came into view was over 100 pure gold bars gleaming with bright light. When the men put their hands on the gold, suddenly, the room flashed with raging red lights, as the ear-piercing screeches of sirens overpowered their senses.

The owner was awoken by the cacophony. He instantly knew what was going on.

“Bodyguards, catch the thieves!” the owner commanded, shouting at the top of his lungs. “Get them!”

The men stuffed what gold they could into their bags and carried the dense bags out of the room, through the garden, and out into the vast wilderness beyond, as fast as their legs could carry them. The bodyguards could not catch up. It was too late. The burglars were nowhere to be seen.

*Two days later...*

“Aha!” cried Detective Mike, as he finally found the security room after searching for over an hour. He repeatedly looked at the footage, recorded the information, and walked out of the residence.

Over the day, Detective Mike surveyed everyone in the small town, finding a person who was exactly 5’9 tall, had a limp on his left leg, and wore reflective striped shoes. After almost a whole day of examining, he found a man who lived by the corner of the town who met the requirements. He was a perfect match with one of the burglars.

*Three days later...*

Detective Mike brought the man to the judge and explained everything.

The court still did not have enough evidence to prove the man’s guilt, so they appointed Judge Pao to investigate, who rescanned the entire house all over again.

After Detective Mike’s long, irritating explanation, the judge could not take it anymore. “Mr. John Miller,” the judge started, “Of stealing 126 gold bars, you are proven guilty—”

Abruptly, the door banged open, and Judge Pao ran in, bringing a blast of cold air with him. “Stop!” he shouted. “Let the man go! He is innocent!”

The crowd of people was bewildered, completely bowled over by what they had just seen, unable to speak. After one minute, the judge finally broke the silence. “Well, can you prove it?”

“Your Honour, though I cannot ascertain the identities of the culprits, I can verify that this man is innocent!” Judge Pao began. “Firstly, Detective Mike probably has not noticed, but the camera was mirrored over.

This man over here has a limp on his left leg, while the man caught on camera has a limp on his right leg, not his left. In addition, although this suspect is relatively poor, his neighbours claim that he is a man of integrity and has no history of wrongdoing in his entire life. Furthermore, the footprints inside the house are from the same brand of shoes; however, this brand of shoes is extremely popular, and I can swear that there are over a thousand people wearing these shoes at this exact moment in this town alone. Most importantly, there's a lack of physical evidence: there are no gold bars inside this man's house, and therefore, he may be innocent."

The judge was convinced by Judge Pao's clear and persuasive report, "Alright, so how long will you need to find the burglars?"

"Four weeks."

During the four weeks, Judge Pao searched every single market in the town. One buyer told him that three men had sold him gold. He also told Judge Pao that one of the men was 5'9, had a limp on his left leg, and wore reflective striped shoes. Judge Pao totaled up 57 people for being suspicious. He then inspected them all and eliminated 39 people for being rich, having honest personalities, and not being envious. For the remaining 18 suspects, Judge Pao asked them where they were and what they did on the night of the crime. Out of the 18, 15 people had friends, family members, or passers-by confirm that they were not at places they were not supposed to be. There were only three left. Together with Detective Mike, Judge Pao brought the three suspects to court.

"Your Honour," said Judge Pao, bowing to the judge, "I have found one of the thieves."

"Who is that?" questioned the judge, suddenly freed from her boredom, her head perking up and her eyes widening in exhilaration.

Judge Pao took a deep breath and said, "Detective Mike."

The judge was flabbergasted, "Pardon me, can you repeat it again?"

"The criminal," answered Judge Pao, "Is Detective Mike Smith."

He continued, "As you see, Detective Mike perfectly fits the description of the man caught on camera: 5'9, has a limp on his left leg, and wears reflective striped shoes. Moreover, according to the market gold sellers' record, a man with the last name of 'Smith' sold precisely 126 gold bars. What's more, he has no alibi. One of his colleagues told me that he was supposed to be dining with him on the night of the burglary; however, he went somewhere else."

The judge interrogated Detective Mike, "Mr. Smith, Can you prove your innocence?"

"Well...well...um," he stammered, "I—"

"Mr. Mike Smith," interrupted the judge, "Is arrested for stealing 126 gold bars. He will be imprisoned for six months and must pay a \$100,000 fine for burglary, as well as return all stolen property."

Judge Pao patted Detective Mike on the back. He glanced back.

"Nice try."

Afterward, Detective Mike was forced to reveal the identities of the other two burglars. Later, Detective Mike, together with the other two burglars, were put in prison for 6 months. Meanwhile, Judge Pao was rewarded \$45,000 for finding the burglars. Case closed.

# School Adventures of Judge Pao

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Chung, Hei Yan Charisse – 11*

Judge Pao was on a hiatus and wanted to try doing something less intensive, so he signed up to fill in as a form teacher in Crescent Moon Primary School.

It was the end of recess and students flooded back into the classroom. When Pao stepped in, the students greeted him. Pao felt something was amiss. He scanned the classroom and his gaze landed on Amia's empty seat.

"Is Amia absent today?" asked Pao.

"She was here this morning. May I help you find her?" Suddenly, Amia's friend, Carolyn bolted up from her seat.

Pao was silent. His investigative mind instinctively told him that something was wrong.

Minutes later, Carolyn returned. Distress spread over her face as she panted anxiously and exclaimed, "Amia... she has locked herself in the toilet wailing and she doesn't respond to me!"

Pao knitted his eyebrows in deep thought. He gathered from Carolyn that Amia was upset and had been avoiding everyone. It was uncharacteristic for an extroverted girl to act like this. Questions raced through his mind and he had a strong urge to get to the root of the matter.

Later that day, Pao contacted Amia's mother.

"My daughter has been unusually quiet. I have tried to talk to her but all she said was that everything is fine. Please excuse Amia from school tomorrow as she is unwell," requested Amia's mother.

Pao was not going to be a mediocre teacher. He always knew that doing extra could lead him to gather clues to solve cases. So, the next day, Pao visited Amia.

"Amia has been receiving many postcards recently. The strange thing is they are blank except for a red 'X'. Amia doesn't seem to like them," said Amia's mother.

"May I take a look at Amia's room?" asked Pao as Amia was not home.

Pao glanced around and noticed bits of ripped paper in the trash bin. When the pieces were put together, it seemed to resemble... a bird. Carefully, he placed them into a bag and took them away.

Next day, Pao arrived at school early. The morning sun rays shone and reflected against the glass panels of the class noticeboard. Pao was almost blinded by the bright light that bounced into his eye. He went over, and soon a colourful image zoomed in as he walked closer.

It was a piece of artwork by a student, a colourful macaw. The drawing was splendid, and the iridescent bird looked realistic.

"This looks familiar," thought Pao, as he racked his brain to recall where he had seen it before.

Suddenly, it struck him. Pao quickly took out the ripped pieces of the postcard from his backpack. As he compared the two drawings, Pao's face darkened. It was the same bird. The illustrator of this artwork was Adrian Lin.

When the students arrived in class, Pao told Adrian to come forward. Adrian froze, his face turning slightly pale as he walked limply towards Pao's desk.

Pao said, "Your drawing of the macaw is very impressive."

Adrian waited for Pao to continue, his heart thumping fast.

Gingerly, Pao took out the postcard that was now patched together.

Adrian's eyes widened and looked uncomfortable as he eyed around the classroom nervously, as if crying out for help.

"Are these postcards from you?" Pao said sternly.

"No... no. Yes, it's mine," Adrian stuttered in despair, awaiting punishment.

"Our school will not tolerate bullying. Disciplinary action will be taken on those who have broken the rules," said Pao aloud.

Then his head turned around to the back of the class and said, "Thomas, James and Henry, come with me to the disciplinary master's office."

Adrian stared at Pao in bewilderment while the surprised faces of these three boys suddenly turned a shade of deep red.

Pao took the boys aside and said sternly, "I have already found out what you boys have done. If you want a second chance, this is the only time for you to come clean."

Cold sweat dripped down the boys' faces and Henry spoke in a small voice.

"We have a competition for the most popular person. Whoever has the highest vote wins and it has always been Amia. We were jealous and changed the game where everyone votes for the most hated person by sending an anonymous postcard marked with a red "X" to the person. Adrian overheard our plan to prank Amia by sending her many postcards. We did not want Adrian to reveal our secret and threatened him. We decided to send postcards with his drawing to cover our tracks."

Pao solemnly asserted, "You have committed a grave mistake. You have made Amia believe that everyone in class hates her. You have also made Adrian the scapegoat when he is innocent. You have behaved like rotten apples, bullying your classmates and causing them mental distress."

The three boys knew they could not deny the truth anymore.

"Mr Pao, we're wrong. We didn't know this would snowball into an avalanche. Please give us a chance to repent. We will never do that again."

"I can see you are truly remorseful. Go apologise to your classmates and ask for their forgiveness," said Pao.

The boys nodded their heads pensively. Suddenly, James' head perked up and he asked with a perplexed look, "Mr Pao, how did you know it was us?"

Pao replied, "While I was talking to Adrian, I was actually looking at the responses of the class. I knew it wouldn't be him because no culprit would want to leave behind his footprints. So when I saw the group of you trying to hide your faces behind your books while others were looking on with empathy, your body gestures told me something." With Pao's many years of experience of being a judge, he knew by instinct that that was a sign of guilt.

Thus, Judge Pao brought the power of justice and righteousness wherever he went, and continued the legacy of the Pao family.



# The Case of the Triple Murder and Corruption

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Fan, Yi Heng – 10*

It was a spring day in ancient China, a land full of culture and joy. High up in the mountains lush with grass and trees, there nestled a small wooden house. Dozens of willows shook in the merciless wind, under the periwinkle-blue sky.

The door of the house creaked open, and out came an old man. He wore traditional Chinese clothes lined with fine silk, a hat that officials used, and had a long snow-white beard that dropped until his waist. He strode out into path along the limitless ocean of trees, as numerous leaves flew gently down from the branches of the willows.

Suddenly, footsteps rang out. A messenger rushed up to the old man and puffed before he reported, “Justice Pao! Justice Pao! There’s a new case!” In fact, the old man was actually Justice Pao, a renowned detective of Ancient China. Of all the cases he was involved in, all of them were solved by him! In Ancient China, he was now a legend, and whenever there was an unsolvable case, the police would always request assistance from him.

Justice Pao replied, “Please do tell me the details!”

The messenger explained, “Last week, there was a devastating earthquake in Hangzhou, a city in Eastern China. There were uncountable casualties and injuries. Therefore, our king kindly sent relief provisions to the survivors. Three officials were in charge of distributing the provisions, and they are Kang Lu, Dong Sa, and Xu Bo. The strange thing is that after the provisions were sent to these officials to distribute, Kang Lu and Dong Sa were murdered, and the provisions that they were in charge of vanished into thin air. What’s more is that Xu Bo’s provisions that he was in charge of did not arrive at Hangzhou. The police thinks that Xu Bo is the culprit, but then Xu Bo was murdered too. Therefore, the police conclude that the culprit is an official, as the citizens don’t know who the officials in charge of it are.”

“But the culprit may be a friend of one of the officials, as friends tell each other about secrets,” argued Justice Pao.

“Ah! Now, the police says that the culprit is definitely not an official, as the police have raided all of the officials’ houses and returned empty-handed,” agreed the messenger, “and, Justice Pao, come and follow me to the three officials’ houses one by one!”

The messenger led Justice Pao down the winding path, and eventually, they reached a police horse-drawn carriage. The horses galloped down the street, pulling the carriage along with it. After a while, the carriage turned round a corner, and halted to a stop in front of a gargantuan mansion. The messenger announced, “We are now at Kang Lu’s house!” The house dominated the normal houses around, as if it was a mountain rising over rolling hills.

They went in and met Kang Lu’s wife. She said, “Five days ago, my husband was sleeping at ten o’clock while a black figure crept in and stabbed him with a dagger. After that, the murderer fled by jumping through the window and climbing over the wall in the garden.” Justice Pao closed his eyes to think in his own quiet world.

He questioned, “Does your husband have really close friends?”

“Yes, his name is Yu Rui who died of disease several years ago.” she replied.

“Okay, but I have another urgent appointment, so I need to leave,” he explained before he pulled the door open and stepped out. The pair boarded the carriage and it set off with a whoosh. After a while, the carriage left urban area and drove along an erratic path located on treacherous mountain ridges. Eventually, they arrived at Dong Sa’s house. Even though Dong Sa’s house wasn’t big, but he owned an unbelievable amount of land, and most of the land was full of paths to enjoy the panoramic view. The pair stepped in and Dong Sa’s wife, who said sorrowfully, “Five days ago, my husband was killed by a fatal stab, which a black figure who crept in had delivered at midnight. He bled for hours and died at dawn.”

Justice Pao asked, “Does your husband have any intimate friends?”

“My husband has one intimate friend called Feng Tao Wan who has relocated to Tianjin,” she answered.

“Hmmm...Okay, then,” he said, “but I have to leave as I have something else to do.” So, the pair retreated out of the house and clambered onto the carriage. The carriage sped off, leaving a cloud of dust behind. After some ten minutes, they re-entered the urban area and stopped outside a miniature house.

Concerned, Justice Pao asked, “Is this really Xu Bo’s house?”

The messenger answered, “This is Xu Bo’s house, even though it is tiny on the outside, it is infinite on the inside. There is a system of underground rooms, right under our feet, which is part of Xu Bo’s house. They went in and met Xu Bo’s wife, who said, “My husband was stabbed by a black figure at night.”

Justice Pao asked, “Does your husband have intimate friends?”

“Well, yes, he has one friend named Li Fuo Yan, he isn’t travelling, and he will visit today.” she replied.

He questioned, “What does Li Fuo Yan look like?”

She answered, “He has a white beard and many scars.”

“The police says they spotted a person matching this description in Xu Bo’s, Dong Sa’s, and Kang Lu’s houses.” whispered the messenger to Justice Pao.

Suddenly, the door opened and in stepped Li Fuo Yan. Out of the blue, Justice Pao leaped out, pinned him onto the floor, and shouted, “You are arrested for the murders of Xu Bo, Kang Lu, Dong Sa, and corruption!” He was taken by surprise and looked furious. He was tied and brought onto the carriage, which transported him to the king’s palace. The king ordered him to be imprisoned for life, and that’s all in a day’s work for Justice Pao!

# The Fall Of The Criminal King

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Fu, Ying Xi – 11*

The year 1996, Zhang Zi Qiang, the most wanted criminal in China, plotted a case involving Hong Kong's wealthiest man, Li.

Plink, Plink! Rainwater seeped from a hole in Zhang's tiny ramshackle shack and fell with a soft pitter-patter. Zhang shuddered as the freezing wind whistled past his ear. Zhang opened his soggy box to reveal gigantic cockroaches crawling around, looking for food.

"How come I, the great criminal king, deserve this?" Zhang wondered aloud.

He picked up a newspaper about Hong Kong's most prosperous man, Li Ka-Shing.

"Victor Li, the successor of Li Ka-Shing, is the perfect target," Zhang rubbed his hands thoughtfully.

On some scraps, he planned the kidnapping carefully. An hour later, with rain lashing angrily on his face, Zhang carried off Li's son. He dragged the boy up muddy hills and finally arrived back at the shack. By the time a bomb was attached to the boy's wrist, the boy had woken up pale and unnerved.

Ring! The black phone on Li's desk screamed as loud as a hyena. Li Ka-Shing picked it up wearily and an eerie voice replied.

"I am the well-known criminal mastermind, Zhang Zi Qiang, and I have kidnapped your son. Either you pay the ransom without notifying the police, or your son dies," Zhang cackled maliciously, before hanging the phone.

Li Ka-Shing sat down shakily, pondering what to do next. His trustworthy friend and distinguished detective, Judge Pao, was the first person he thought of. Pao, also known as Justice Pao, had a fierce belief in the truth, leading him to become the number one judge in China. Pao had the habit of collecting information about criminals to help him solve cases. He was well-known for solving complicated cases like "The Black Basin", bringing justice to the world. Pao is the perfect person to ask for help! Ignoring the drizzling rain, Li Ka-Shing set out in a dark hood.

Soon, he was at Judge Pao's house, blurting everything out. Pao was incredibly calm. He wisely knew that worrying would not get you anywhere. He listened with interest and asked every single detail there was to tell. "Based on my experience with criminals, we need to know our opponent first," Pao says.

Taking out a large binder of Zhang's previous crimes, Pao compared them, noting their similarities. Li watched as Pao worked, fascinated by how Pao collected and combined pieces of information in only five minutes. Pao was reliable and took his work seriously.

From his study, Pao learned how Zhang preyed on his targets. A criminal mastermind collects enough information about his target before committing the crime. Li Ka-Shing is rich. Not even a billion dollars can make up for his son's life. There is the Chinese idiom, "Where there is life, there is hope" – 留得青山在，不怕沒柴燒. Knowing Li understood, Zhang dared to target such a high-profile person in HK.

To solve the problem faster, Pao connected previous crimes to the present. Realising that to catch Zhang, he has to think from Zhang's point of view and predict Zhang's actions; studying reports is not enough. He has to observe Zhang in person. Pao took out a piece of parchment and began planning a strategy to learn more about Zhang. He suggested Li pay the ransom but only under one condition that Zhang has to come to Li's house in person to negotiate the price, so Pao can observe Zhang at a close distance.

"He would ask for a high ransom. No matter how much he asked for, say that you can only provide half of it as the bank doesn't have that much money. Stall him as long as possible. I will be observing from behind the bookshelf," Pao advised Li.

At this, Li admired how Pao had always been brave. He was always willing to be on the front line to find out the truth, no matter how risky it was. This attitude helped him solve many cases.

Meanwhile, in the filthy shack, Zhang reviewed his detailed plans when the telephone rang and broke his thoughts. Li accepted to pay the ransom but only if he met Zhang in person. Zhang agreed.

“Are you sure there are no police there, boss?” his operative asked cautiously.

“How dare you question me! I am the invincible criminal king who is always right. I am a billion times smarter than you,” Zhang snapped coldly.

The operative cowered in the corner. Zhang strode out confidently.

Zhang pranced into Li’s mansion, “Just as I thought! I have you figured out. All affluent people are timid. You are willing to pay billions of dollars than call for help.”

Bao observed Zhang’s weakness of having down-right arrogance. Li and Zhang negotiated, finally agreeing on a billion dollars.

Three days later, a black car pulled up by Li’s lawn. Li joyfully embraced his son. Even better, Pao had an idea of Zhang’s whereabouts.

“Zhang is tricky but his team has flaws. Operatives are great sources of information for us. Based on the Black Basin case, the operatives may not always be as evil or smart as their boss. This makes them the key to capturing Zhang,” Pao replied wisely.

Victor Li recalled a nine-fingered bald person nicknamed “Goldfingers”.

“Albert Bell,” Pao identified immediately.

They found Albert hiding in Zhang’s shack, near where he was last seen. A half-burnt map of China was also uncovered. Knowing that Zhang’s arrogance may not put Albert in the same boat, Pao estranged Albert, convincing him to blurt out everything he knew. Regrettably, he did not know the exact location of Zhang.

“Criminals like Zhang are big spenders. They cannot resist the urge to spend money on drinking, gambling, and other bad habits, so we can just keep our eye out for all possible big spender locations,” Pao remarked.

Days later, Zhang got captured burning cash to light cigarettes in a public pub. He failed an appeal and was executed, screaming louder than a whale.

The legendary Pao had ended the Criminal King.

# The Nail in the Coffin

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Kam, Hei Yin Cadence – 11*

*1016 A.D.*

The wind blew through the branches of the nearby trees, rustling leaves concealed in shadow. The village down to the right was hidden in darkness, overcast by a cloud. High above it all, an erubescant pearl drifted in the dark waters of the night, casting a reddish glow on the earth.

All was silent and calm. Even the birds were asleep. But a flicker of movement could be seen down below.

A small crooked shadow, illuminated by the moonlight, crept across the ground and through the window, nimbly unlocking it and locking it behind her. A half-muffled scream erupted, but all was still moments after.

There were no neighbours. There was no one awake. Nobody to witness the deed but the moon, which shone just as it had, as if nothing had happened at all.

★★★

*1018 A.D.*

"Husband? Your breakfast is ready!" a woman moved through the house with a tray, pausing at the door of a room. She called, "I'm coming in now!" When no response was given, she entered, seeing a young man lying on his bed. She touched him softly to wake him up—and jerked back, shuddering.

He was stone dead.

★★★

The coroner moved carefully around the body, poking and prodding. Finally, he looked up. "No signs of injury. He died a natural death."

"That cannot be right. He's so young. No illnesses, too. It seems suspicious to me. You're very sure?" Judge Pao asked.

"I've now conducted an autopsy. There's no injury to the entire body at all."

"Well, it still seems strange to me. If reports come that he died an unnatural death, you'll be fired." Judge Pao strode out of the room. The coroner stared after him, but after a few seconds, turned around and began to pack up his tools, all the while muttering under his breath.

★★★

"And he said that I would be fired if it was discovered that he died an unnatural death," the coroner finished. He was sitting in his living room with his wife next to him, recounting the day's events.

The only sound that could be heard for a long while was the birds chirping outside.

"I hate to say this, but... couldn't someone force long metal nails into the brain without injuring the body? Maybe through the nose?" the wife whispered.

★★★

"Do you know why you have been arrested?" Judge Pao's harsh voice echoed through the courtroom.

The widow gulped before speaking, "Yes. I know you have the evidence"—her eyes shot to the long nail still rusty with blood, sitting on a cushion in front of Judge Pao—"but hear my reasons. They may not help, but I want them to be known.

"My husband and I were never happy from the very start. My parents wanted me to marry into a rich household, even if it meant my being unhappy. He would go out drinking, taking drugs and gambling. At those times, he beat me with whatever was lying around the house and I was helpless.

"That night, we argued. I told him to stop drinking and he wouldn't. I went to bed covered in bruises. It was the final nail in the coffin. The abuse, the beatings, and finally that argument..." she broke down into tears. "I couldn't bear it any longer. Before I knew it, that very night, I had snuck into the bedroom with a long nail and he was dead."

The harsh voice sounded again, "That cannot excuse you."

The guillotine came down. Blood splattered everywhere.

★★★

After the trial, Judge Pao took the coroner's wife aside. "What's your name?"

"Chen Ding Dai Ti," she replied.

"You must be a highly intelligent and creative woman. I would like to know whether this man—" he gestured to the coroner "—has hurt you in any way."

"No, never. He always treats me well and never belittles me," the words poured out of her easily and naturally, but Judge Pao noticed that there was a tiny hint of wariness about her.

"Have you ever had another name other than the one you have given me?"

"Yes, Li Ding Dai Ti. Li was the surname of my first husband," she paused for a while, then continued. "Li Bi Lei died a natural death two years ago."

"How old was he when he died?"

"He was eighty."

Judge Pao frowned, but let her go.

After the coroner's wife had left, Judge Pao turned to his servant, "Did the widow have any siblings?"

"She did. The coroner's wife, Ding Dai Ti."

"Well, then that's the root of this mystery. Perhaps her first husband didn't die naturally. I just need one more piece of evidence..." He called over two men and whispered to them. They nodded, then disappeared into the night.

★★★

The wind blew through the branches of the nearby trees, rustling leaves concealed in shadow. The village down to the right was hidden in darkness, overcast by a cloud not unlike the one two years before. But this time, there was no blood moon. Just plain moonlight.

And there was a grave in front of the little house atop a hill, now long abandoned.

They reached the top of the hill and looked down at the grave in front of them. The moonlight illuminated the characters written on the gravestone: "LI BI LEI".

They dug. Down and down and down, until they struck it.

A coffin.

They opened the lid and the body of a young man lay resting inside. His features were cruel and twisted—during his life, he had enjoyed causing harm to everyone around him, and it showed in his face. But the two men had only one goal tonight. One reached into the coffin, delving into this man's brain, until he found it.

The hand retracted, holding... a nail.

The nail in the coffin that was never expected.

# The King, War, and the Rule of Law

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Larard, Charles – 10*

*Who am I?*

*Where am I?*

Answers come quickly. I am a judge. Having solved many cases, I am known to others as Justice Pao.

But where am I? I'm not sure.

My eyes open and I suddenly sense another presence beside me. Am I in somebody else's mind? I can see everything, but I can't control my actions.

"Dad, Mum, morning," the other person says. So disrespectful! But... the parents aren't angry. They're *smiling*.

The person goes to what I think is the bathroom, and I glimpse a reflection. Such clear mirrors... They aren't even a little yellow! Suddenly, I realise that I'm in the future, in much more developed, modern times.

*How did I get here?*

I try remembering the last thing I'd done.

"Are you sure about this?" an unfamiliar voice rang out.

"Yes," that was my voice.

So I must have agreed to this... but with whom? I struggle to remember more, and maybe... just maybe, that person was the Emperor of Heaven.

I recall more... and remember dying.

So, I ended up here because I died, stayed in Heaven, and got sent back to Earth.

That's a lot to take in.

Meanwhile, my host, which I've decided to call him, puts on something he calls a "shirt", black "pants", and a black coat. Then he shouts, "Dad! Mum! I'm going out now!"

"Alright!" I hear a shout. Then my host goes out.

Wow! What are these... "cars"? Wonderful! While I'm marveling at the wonders of the future, my host starts looking through information in his brain... and immediately discovers me there.

*Who are you?* he thinks.

*I am a person from the past reliving inside you,* I tell him.

*No, I'm just imagining you.* He doesn't believe that I'm real.

*I am real!*

*We'll see.*

We are in a building now. Look at those “lights”! Amazing! My host is sitting in a chair, his mood an awful storm. Another person is contradicting whatever he says. What’s going on? I rummage through my host’s memories.

*Cases...*

*Files...*

*Clients...*

*The laws...*

I get it now. This is 2022, my host is called Jake, and he’s a lawyer.

*Hey, psssst! Over here!*

*What?* he asks.

*I can help!*

*You’re just some voice in my head!* he scoffs.

*We’ll see,* I think indignantly.

Later on, we go to a “hospital”. It’s kind of like our medicine rooms, but more advanced. There’s a little girl selling fried dough sticks, too. She has asthma, no parents, but not enough money to get treatment. Knowing her predicament, the hospital lets her sell fried dough sticks for five minutes in each room every day. Jake heads straight to Room 501, buying some fried dough sticks from the girl.

When we exit the hospital, we find the little girl crying at the main lobby. Upon seeing Jake, she stops crying. Jake approaches her and asks if she’s alright.

“Yes,” she says. But her tears betray her, and we immediately know that something’s wrong.

“No, you’re not,” Jake says.

The girl bursts into tears and starts crying loudly. We watch, astonished.

“I was selling fried dough sticks, and I felt so tired, so I came here and slept,” the little girl utters between fits of tears, “and when I woke up, my pouch of money was missing!”

*Uh—oh, how do I help her?* Jake thinks.

*I can help!* I pipe up.

*How? You’re just a voice!*

*Just... Let me take over,* I reply.

*What? How?*

*Close your eyes and relax.*



*Uh... Okay, but this is probably my mind tricking me...* that last thought fades away as I come out and take control of Jake's body.

*Ahh...* I take in my first breath of fresh air in a long, long time. *Okay, time for real business!*

"Little girl, where did you fall asleep?" I ask.

"Over there," the little girl sniffs, pointing at a marble statue.

*Ding!* A—I think it's a lift?—arrives at the main lobby. Many people come out.

"Okay, I'll ask the marble statue who stole your money," I say confidently—more confident than I feel. So many people have stopped to watch—they don't know who I am, will they believe me? My heart beats furiously. I *have* done this before... I hold to that strand of hope.

"Statue, did you see who stole the girl's money?" I bend down and say aloud. Then I lift my head and tell the audience, "It says that each of you need to give it ten cents. You can put it in my water bottle." I take Jake's water bottle, unscrew the top and put it on the floor.

"Just ten cents. Okay," one person mutters and throws a coin in. The others follow.

One by one the coins go in... and one creates a splash of oil.

"Wait—stop!" I yell, lunging forward to catch the person's arm as he tries to run. Some people come and pin the man to the ground. In his hand is a little pouch. I motion for the little girl to come forward.

"Little girl, is this yours?"

"Yes!" she squeals happily. Her face lights up with joy as she takes the pouch and skips away.

Many questions are being asked and I explain, "When the girl sold fried dough sticks, her hands and the coins she touched got oily. The thief stole these oily coins, so I set this trap to catch him. That's why I used a water bottle to collect them—I could easily tell whether the coin was oily or not. The statue never actually talked."

Silence. Then applause, and a voice.

*Wow! Smart! Now please let me out!*

*Oh, yes. Sorry.*

I close my eyes and fade back.

*Hey, who are you?* Jake asks when the exchange is done.

*I am known to you as Judge Pao.*

*Oh... Wow.*

*We'll make a great team together, you and I, Jake,* I say.

And I know we will.

# Judge Pao Interrogates the Rock

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lee, Chun Wei Kyra – 11*

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*Oh, yes. Sorry.*

I close my eyes and fade back.

*Hey, who are you?* Jake asks when the exchange is done.

*I am known to you as Judge Pao.*

*Oh... Wow.*

*We'll make a great team together, you and I, Jake,* I say.

And I know we will.

# The Mystery of the Lost Pearl

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Leung, Quentin – 10*

It was a pleasing morning: birds were chirping; the sun was gleaming – bringing along new hopes and aspirations. *All was well.*

Ho-Tin yanked his shovel down through the loamy earth and felt something clanging against it. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed something through the overlying dirt. A shrill shriek pierced through the air. “Bones?” he cried. “*Human* bones?”

Ho-Tin was a hardworking farmer, constantly ploughing and harvesting throughout the year. He lived in the province of He Nan, with Ai-Tian (wife) and Ho-Ming (son), who always helped him with his tasks.

Ho-Tin called out into the distance, showing them the unexpected occurrence of bones in his field. “Should we report this?”

“B...b...bones?” Ho-Ming queried curiously. Ho-Tin rambled away in a hurry to report the situation.

He spotted an officer called Lung-Kuen through the crowded streets and told him what he had discovered. Lung-Kuen appeared startled and perked up his ears when he heard *bones*.

“Hmmm...,” he then mumbled, with a slight hint of interest. “Mind if I visit?”

Ho-Tin pointed at the bones as they arrived. Lung-Kuen grabbed a shovel and hauled it down the soil, causing the bones to crack into fragments. Ho-Tin *winc*ed.

Apart from the scattered bones, Lung-Kuen glanced intently at a rusty jade seal marking the words ‘*Your Majesty*’. Could the bones be the remains of the *last Emperor*? In a split second, Lung-Kuen’s eyes filled with lust, as desire manifested in him. “Everyone, OUT!” he ordered firmly. “This place is restricted.”

Having no choice, Ho-Tin and his family left the field. Surrounding the shattered bones were glistening jewels, shimmering before Lung-Kuen’s eyes. With one avaricious glance, he stashed the cherished treasures away, hoping Ho-Tin would oversee the teeming pocket.

Lung-Kuen left discreetly, without a *single* word.

The next day, a troop of soldiers from Kaifeng were deployed to arrest Ho-Tin for thievery of the *Emperor’s possessions*. “Stop!” Ho-Tin insisted. “I’m innocent!”

He felt incredulous yet inquisitive. *I had only dug up* bones, Ho-Tin mused, *not* treasures.

The soldiers chained up Ho-Tin. He earned himself stares, teases, and mocks – despite the reassurance of his innocence. His cries were nonetheless audible along the route toward the prison.

Ho-Ming and Ai-Tian mourned the imprisonment of their beloved, whom the brutal and immoral guards thrashed. “P...p...please stop,” Ho-Tin stammered feebly, cowering in the far corner. His scars flickered in the dark cell with blood, as he begged for *mercy*.

DONG! “Judge Pao!” Ai-Tian wailed, striking the drum at Kaifeng, where justice was served. Her face illustrated dismay, as she wept. “My husband has been mistaken! Help me!”

Originally named ‘*Pao Zheng*’, he had a crescent moon scar on his forehead. Known for being upright, fearless, and stern, he combated any form of injustice.

“State your name,” Pao ordained.

“Ai-Tian.”

“Reason for coming?”

“Ho–Tin, my husband, has been accused of stealing the Emperor’s possessions–”

“*What?*”

“He didn’t! Lung–Kuen examined the bones while Ho–Tin and I waited for him. Lung–Kuen then exited hurriedly, as if in a rush!”

“I understand,” Pao nodded as the *first intriguing clue* appeared. “Wait for further summons...”

The next day, Pao paid a visit to the site, hoping to verify clues. “There are boot–prints in the soil...” he mumbled under his breath.

Pao then summoned Lung–Kuen and the accused Ho–Tin to Kaifeng.

Ho–Tin, limping in with his bare feet, knelt in front of Pao; his face full of scratches and stains of blood; his shirt torn and ripped. Lung–Kuen, not bothering to pay *any* respect, sneered.

“Lung–Kuen,” Pao thundered, pacing forward slowly, determination exhibiting in his voice. “Did you *steal* the Emperor’s possessions?”

“Of course not! I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth!” Lung–Kuen proudly bragged, smirking at Pao. “I don’t need to steal; it’s just a night pearl!”

Pao snorted, raising his eyebrows. “*Night pearl?*”

“Well...umm...well...Ho–Tin and his family stole them and claimed there was a night pearl...” Lung–Kuen faltered, his voice trailing off as he glanced sideways.

Ho–Tin whimpered, “Liar; You told my family to leave the site, which was when you took the jewels.” Despite his unstable condition, he still managed to agitate Lung–Kuen.

“There were boot–prints in the soil!” Pao stated, taking Lung–Kuen aback. “Look at *your* boot – it’s covered in soil!”

Pao pointed to the dirt stain on Lung–Kuen’s boot. Lung–Kuen instantly kicked it off – embarrassed, obviously – and turned ghostly pale.

“Are you guilty?” Pao’s deafening voice rumbled through Kaifeng.

“*I didn’t steal!*” Lung–Kuen retorted.

“A likely story,” Pao spat out. “Guards! Take him away!”

Lung–Kuen struggled strongly, though his efforts ceased and turned out futile.

That night, Pao and Zhan Zhao (a supreme swordsman) approached Lung–Kuen’s house, aiming to retrieve discoveries to frame Lung–Kuen. Through the window, they could see shafts of luminous light seeping out. Pao saw four men grasping a cluster of night pearls, mumbling about getting rich.

He and Zhan Zhao entered, catching the four men red–handed. At the sight of Pao, they quickly swept the jewels off the table. The four men wielded swords but did *not* frighten Pao at all. “We are Lung–Kuen’s men!” they recited in unison, menacing eyes glinting in the darkness, aimed toward Pao.

The four men sprinted towards Pao, holding their edged blades. In the nick of time, Zhan Zhao emerged from the mist, slashing at them with *his* sword. Pao looked at the treasures and murmured, “*Now* we have evidence.”

Pao summoned Lung–Kuen to court again, roaring, “The four men in your house claimed they work for you, and that you took the treasures!”

“*Are you guilty?*”

Lung-Kuen *still* didn't admit it.

"I never..." But as his words slithered out, a glowing jewel fell from his pocket. The exquisite night pearl instantly illuminated Kaifeng with its scintillating glow. His mouth was agape, petrified in fear and humiliation – he knew what was coming.

"Guards!" Pao demanded. "Throw him behind bars and release Ho-Tin!"

"Nooo!" Lung-Kuen cried, seething with fury. "You can't do this to me!"

Judge Pao beamed with pride – another case solved.

# The Case of the Widow's Ill Will

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lin, Amanda – 11*

*"I am so sorry,"* the teenager cried in tears. "I didn't mean to!"

"My stepson is still in shock. He is not thinking clearly," the woman defended as the boy continued to weep.

Judge Pao gave the boy a sympathetic look. "Present your testimony, Lady Li."

"It was midnight. I was woken by sounds from the Grand Hall. I got up immediately to see what was going on. I then heard Li Junior screaming for help. By the time I arrived at the Grand Hall's entrance, I saw my husband laying there in Li Junior's arms," she said, sniffing.

"Did you hear their conversation, Lady Li? Do you know why they were fighting?" asked Judge Pao.

"No, Your Honor, I didn't," said Lady Li. "Sir Li is a patient and loving father to Li Junior. Li Junior always respected Sir Li. I just don't understand what happened."

"Were there any other witnesses at the scene?" Judge Pao followed up with a question, narrowing his eyes.

"Yes, Butler Chen was also there," said Lady Li.

Judge Pao gazed sternly at Butler Chen then asked, "Did you hear the conversation of Sir Li and Li Junior?"

Butler Chen timidly said, "No, your honor. I was in the kitchen next to the Grand Hall. When I heard the scream, I ran to the Grand Hall and saw Sir Li and Li Junior on the floor. Lady Li was on the side crying."

Judge Pao seemed unsatisfied but declared, "I have heard all the witnesses today. I will give my final judgement three days from now."

*"I am so sorry. I deserve to be in jail!"* Li Junior howled. Lady Li stared at Judge Pao pleadingly.

That night, Judge Pao visited Li Junior's jail cell.

"Young man, now that you are calm, tell me what happened." Judge Pao said quietly.

Li Junior let out a shaky breath. "I was so angry at my father. He only loved *her*."

"What do you mean by that, Li Junior?"

"*His* will. My stepmother told me that my father was going to leave his estates and fortune to her. She was so kind and willing to support me until I take my scholar exam. I was angry and confronted my father. He lectured me about my wasteful ways. Angrily, I stormed toward the door. Father tried to stop me so I shoved him, hard. He fell and hit his head on the pavement," Li Junior sobbed.

"So Lady Li told you that your father was to leave all his fortune to her and not you?"

Stricken and pained by his guilt, Li Junior could only nod weakly.

Next, Judge Pao walked into a small, dark room, ready to view Li's body. The only objects in the room was an opened coffin and bouquets of flowers given by the mourning villagers to honor him. Judge Pao bent down and picked up a flower.

A scroll next to the flowers read: Lord Li, thank you for your generosity and inspiration. You have led us out of poverty and we are eternally grateful. May you rest in peace in heaven.

"An honorable man," Judge Pao whispered, and set the flower down carefully.



Even in the dim lit room, Judge Pao could see a purple bump on top of Lord Li's forehead. Judge Pao gently prodded open Lord Li's mouth, and grimly confirmed his hypothesis. A black tongue. "Gotcha," he smiled.

Three days passed. The villagers crowded the court room hours before the final hearings begun. They waited anxiously to hear Judge Pao's final ruling that would bring justice to their beloved Sir Li.

"Before I announce the verdict, I'd like to hear the autopsy report from Doctor Su."

A scrawny man, dressed most primly, stepped out of the shadows. "Your Honor. After inspecting the body, the victim did suffer a severe head injury and was knocked unconscious. But the blow should not be fatal. Your Honor, you were right, the victim was poisoned!" he exclaimed.

Surprised, everyone in the court room gasped in unison.

"*You!*" Lady Li said shakily, pointing a finger at Butler Chen. "You poisoned Sir Li!"

"I did not!" Butler Chen retorted. "I am wronged, Your Honor."

"*You* poisoned your own husband, Lady Li!" yelled Judge Pao as he slammed the gavel on the head table.

"*Me?* Oh! I am a wronged woman, Your Honor—

"I had my suspicion given the discrepancies between yours and Butler Chen's testimonies. First, Lady Li, the distance of your bedroom chamber and the Grand Hall did not allow a person to be awoken from deep sleep just by hearing some sounds. You arrived at the scene before Butler Chen, who was only one room away. This meant that you were already near the Grand Hall and not in your bedroom chamber when the incident happened.

He continued, "Finally, Sir Li was a generous man and beloved by all the villagers. I heard that he was going to donate most of his wealth to further build and benefit this village. Your disappointment in your husband's will was the true motive for such a heinous crime. Was it not? Your greed motivated you to poison your husband and frame your stepson. Are you guilty, Lady Li?" Judge Pao rose to his full height, pointing an accusatory finger at Lady Li.

Lady Li wailed, "I deserve his entire wealth! I helped him to build his entire fortune and treated his son as if he was my own. I sacrificed my entire life for him! He was just going to give it away. I couldn't accept that!"

Judge Pao shook his head. "Indeed, you shouldn't, Lady Li. But your actions have consequences. I now sentence you to a lifetime in prison!"

Judge Pao turned from his chair, shaking his head as he prepared to exit the court room.

"Judge Pao, wait!" Li Junior grabbed Judge Pao's arm. "I'd just like to say ... thank you."

"It's what I do, Li Junior. I'm Judge Pao. Remember my name."

# The Case of the Chimney Boy

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lin, Yujia Jessie – 10*

“Booo hooo hooo!” The boy cried miserably as he stood barefoot, and covered in soot on the cracked, heated concrete floor of the streets in a village in Henan. It was a very hot day and people were running about, finishing their businesses, and hurrying towards their homes. His feet were burning and covered with so many blisters that he was limping. This boy was called Kai, he was born from a poor family and at the age of 13 and the oldest in the family of 6 children, he was sent out by his parents to work to earn money. The famine that had spread through the whole China had affected hundreds of thousands of people, his family was in dire need of money to fill the whole family’s mouths. Kai couldn’t find any job at first too, but then a rich man offered to pay him a good wage for him to clean his chimney, Kai was overjoyed! He was paid 10 dollars every day, which was a lot back in the days.

Today, Kai was about to head home and present his money with pride to his parents. He put his hand in his pocket to check if it was there. He found nothing.

An empty pocket.

Money gone.

A hole.

Kai’s money has disappeared! He looked around frantically and saw a man just walking away from him. Thinking that he might be able to help him, Kai cried, “Please help me, I earned 10 dollars today, but it fell out of my pocket! I can’t find it, if you have some money, give me some if you can! Please, I beg you!” He was on the verge of tears. The man just looked him over and proceeded to walk away, but Kai clung on to his arm and refused to let go.

“Let me go now, or I’ll call the police!” the burly man threatened and glared at him. It was already drawing commotion and the people around them were slowly walking over. Suddenly, he saw two girls just emerging from a restaurant nearby, they were laughing amongst themselves and looked like they were wealthy.

Kai hurried over to them and appealed to them for help, the bigger one told him in a voice dripping with disgust, “Get away from us, you filthy pig, why should we help you?” The younger one though, was more compassionate. “Let’s give him our book money, Lin, he’s so young! He shouldn’t be working out here alone!” she said softly to the bigger girl, Lin.

“Fine, Liu, it’s your fault if Mom and Dad scolds us!” Lin sneered at Liu and stomped away.

“I apologise for my sister’s rudeness,” Liu said to Kai. She fished around in her bag and held out 5 dollars to Kai. “That’s all I have, I’m sorry if it’s not enough.”

“Thank you very much, but I need 5 more dollars! My family will go hungry if I don’t bring this back!” Kai said sincerely. Liu gathered some other villagers and tried to convince them to give some of their money, but they were still short of 2 dollars. The sky was darkening and thieves were starting to lurk in the dark alleyways of the streets. Kai had never been out alone this late before, and he couldn’t help being a little scared. *I have to find the money!* Kai thought desperately. He searched high and low in a futile attempt to find his money. He went back to Liu and told her of the mysterious man he met. Liu was instantly suspicious; they found the man drunk at one of the bars. Then, Judge Pao, a famed judge known for his unyielding belief of honesty, walked past. He was just passing this village on his way to another province, so Liu and Kai went to him and explained the situation to him. Unlike other corrupt officers of high ranks, Judge Pao was fair and listened to everyone, even citizens, that was what made him so popular. He also did not hoard money illegally. Judge Pao fingered his chin in thought and finally said, “Bring me the man!”

Liu and Kai brought the wine-hazed man to Judge Pao, and also brought all the other people who witnessed the scene. Judge Pao explained the situation to everyone and also informed them, "Put your hands in your pockets and hold them out before you, and I shall know who stole Kai's money." The villagers were all puzzled but did as they were told as he never made a mistake. Judge Pao walked around and inspected everyone's hand, then shouted, "This man is the thief!" The villagers, although still bewildered, tied the man's hands together with a thick, heavy rope. The villagers searched him and found 10 dollars, they asked Kai, "Is this your money?" Kai gratefully took it and kneeled and kowtowed at the villagers and Judge Pao.

"Your Honor, although we would never doubt you, how did you know that this man was the thief?" one of the villagers, an old man asked, gesturing to the man with a contemptuous flick of his finger.

"Because Kai was sweeping the chimney, so his money, touched by his hand, would be full of soot! The soot would then be in the thief's pocket. Therefore, I asked everyone to put their hands in their pockets and put them in front of you, so that I can see whose hands have soot on them, which means they stole the money!" Judge Pao explained patiently to the old man. The old man's puzzlement evaporated and he saw sense and intelligence in Judge Pao's explanation. The villagers thanked him for his kindness and fairness and Judge Pao went on his way, taking the man with him to face the Emperor and await judgement in the court. Kai bid Liu farewell and thanked her profusely, and he happily skipped back home with his money.

# New Tales of Judge Pao

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lo, Ka Wai Jaymee – 11*

Ravaging flames tore through the charred night sky. The blazing fire streaked throughout the museum, its smouldering heat burning everything in sight. Plumes of grey smoke unleashed their acrid smell, suffocating the palace grounds. It was crude and unwavering in its nefarious purpose.

On that day in 1040, the museum had been razed. Priceless artefacts were strewn across the floor, melted and cracked. All that remained hanging on the grand walls was, oddly, an undamaged painting of a young girl standing in a bounteous flower garden, a man kneeling beside her. His face was smudged out, but the girl's dark brown eyes shone with unadulterated innocence, her angelic features outlined clearly with every smooth stroke of the brush.

That painting was the sole survivor of the conflagration, the lone reminder of what had happened.

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Eighteen years later, it was spring of 1058. Judge Pao furrowed his brow as he packed up the remaining items in his office, preparing for his upcoming retirement. Sifting through his dusty drawers, he found documents about his former cases.

Out of curiosity, Judge Pao flicked through them before his eyes rested on one of the headlines. It was of an arson case from 1040 which had eventually been deemed a natural disaster. He still remembered watching the investigators close the case. A nagging feeling in his core which told him they were wrong.

Judge Pao scrutinised the rows of tiny letters scrawled on the page, analysing the report carefully.

Only one artefact was recovered from the museum after the fire. It was of a young girl and a man, painted by artist Zhang Huang in the late 1020s. Everyone was aware of the oddity of a single unscathed painting, which was later moved to Emperor Renzong's coveted painting collection in the palace's west wing.

Judge Pao read the words over and over. If it had been arson, then why was this painting left undamaged? It would have been impossible to survive the ravenous flames.

*"Unless someone made sure it wouldn't burn..."*

Those words echoed in his mind as he slowly realised that someone had chosen to save this one special painting. But who and why?

Bemused and engrossed, Judge Pao dove deeper into the files on the painter, Zhang Huang. Upon learning that the painter lived nearby, he headed there immediately that afternoon, eager to collect new information.

"Mr. Zhang?" Judge Pao called out, knocking on the artist's door.

The door was opened by a weary old man with light grey hair and jaded eyes which crinkled at the corners. "Sir, to what may I owe your unexpected visit?"

Judge Pao smiled wryly, "I assume you are Zhang Huang? I am Judge Pao, prefect of Kaifeng. I'd like to ask you about a certain painting of yours."

"Of course," Zhang said quietly. Begrudgingly, the octogenarian let Judge Pao into his house.

"Your painting with the girl and the man in the flower garden... Who are they?"

Recognition flickered across the man's shrivelled face.

"The man was a palace official," Zhang Huang uttered slowly, "He was Emperor Renzong's favourite nephew, Zhao Ming. The girl was Zhao's very own daughter."

"Where can I find them?" Judge Pao questioned.

"You can find Zhao Ming," Zhang Huang replied nonchalantly, "in the cemetery down the road. They found him in bed, smothered by a pillow."

"And the girl?"

"Gone. She moved away with her mother shortly afterwards."

The frail elderly man gestured through the window, "That's their old house. No one lives there anymore."  
"Thank you, kind sir," Judge Pao said as Zhang ushered him out.

Judge Pao found himself gazing up at the palatial house across the street, analysing its dilapidated exterior. He frowned, wondering if he could secure a key to the abandoned residence. Gingerly, he made his way up the walk and tried twisting the doorknob. To his surprise, it creaked open. He slunk into the house undetected, shutting the door softly behind him. Silently, he crept down the dark cobwebbed hallway. When he rounded the corner, he stopped short.

He was standing in front of an open bedroom, door ajar, supposedly belonging to a child. Toy dolls in frilly dresses lined the shelves, but what startled him most was that the room was clean, dust-free. Someone had been here recently.

"What are you doing here?" A harsh voice called out from behind him.

Judge Pao spun around, only to find himself facing a young woman clad in black, a tightly bound scarf obscuring her face from view.

In one swift movement, the woman leapt at Judge Pao, attempting to tackle him to the ground. The detective barely swerved in time, making use of the opportunity to tear off her scarf. He inhaled sharply when he saw a deep burn slashed across her cheek.

"You have no right here," the girl snarled, trying in vain to cover her face.

Judge Pao circled her, gazing into her eyes. "Was it you who started the palace fire all those years ago?"

The woman's anger thrummed through her veins, "So what if it was? He deserved it."

"Emperor Renzong?" Judge Pao inquired, puzzled.

"No, my dastardly uncle, Zhao Qin. He was an investor who owned most of the works in the museum. Our family knew he was terribly jealous of my father, who was favoured by the Emperor. I'm glad to say that he went bankrupt after the fire," the girl murmured.

"I assume it was he who killed your father?" Pao asked.

"Yes, indeed. Through my open door, I spied him creeping out of my father's room just an hour before his body was discovered," she smiled mirthlessly. "By the way, it was my wet blanket that saved the painting. However, I pulled it off as I ran out, leaving the damp painting behind, safe and sound."

Judge Pao smiled, admiring the bravery of such a young child.

'Two final mysteries solved', he thought, stepping out of the derelict house, and into a much-deserved, rewarding life of retirement.

# Civet Cat Exchanged for Crown Prince

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lu, Xing – 10*

Long ago, Emperor Song Zheng Zong told his two wives that whoever gave birth to the prince shall be entitled to become Empress. Soon, Consort Li became pregnant with a child. Jealous that she will rise up higher than herself, Consort Liu and her sinful eunuch Guo Huai plotted to exchange her son with a civet cat, and throw him into the river. Fortunately, she assigned a palace maid, Kou Zhu, to do the job and did not know that she was actually a very kind-hearted person and wouldn't throw a child into the river. Instead, with the help of another eunuch, Chen Lin, she gave it to the Eighth Prince, where he grew up. Consort Liu gave birth to a child instead. But when Consort Liu stepped up onto the throne, her child died before long. Saddened by the prince's death, the Emperor saw Consort Li's son at the Eighth Prince's palace. Impressed by his intelligence, he brought him back to be a prince. Little did he know that that child was his very own. Of course, the Empress noticed that the prince looked very alike to Consort Li. She developed a suspicion that the prince had not died. So, she forced Chen Lin to beat and torture Kou Zhu until she killed herself by running into a wall. The terrified Chen Lin then told Consort Li to escape, where she travelled to one of the streets in the country. Now, the Emperor has died and her son has become ruler.

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The clouds parted and golden rays showered down, the white creamy clouds waltzed across the sky and the crisp and clean scent of dawn was dotted with hints of sweet nectar singing in the air. The day had just barely advanced and the famous detective of the Song Dynasty Judge Pao strode down the streets for his morning walk. Just as he was about to come home after his relaxing wander, he caught sight of a ragged old woman in the corner of his eye.

She sat on a patched bamboo mat, clearly worn out by the long years the woman must have been using it. Her hair tangled and frayed out in broken pieces, silver taking over. Her skin rippled like waves, freckled and spotted. However, her wrinkled complexion still told the story of her once-beautiful appearance. Her eyes looked glassy, and it tugged at Judge Pao's heartstrings.

There was something about her eyes that the depths of them carried.

It was sorrow.

Deep sorrow.

The woman rasped out to Judge Pao desperately, as if she recognised him. "I am misunderstood...I am the mother... of the present Emperor ... Emperor Song Ren Zong," she growled.

Hearing her ridiculous words, Judge Pao chuckled gently to himself and said out loud, "This poor old woman must be crazy due to her poverty!" He gave a sympathetic blink and when he was about to head off again, he heard a call from the woman once more.

"I am not crazy," she croaked, holding out a medallion of glistening gold in her frail hands, slightly quivering. The medallion glittered with sparkles of light, and on it, carved the name of Consort Li.

Taken aback by shock, Judge Pao muttered aloud, "This indeed is an object valuable enough only the wives of Emperors can afford!" He rushed back to the Palace and reported to Emperor Song Ren Zong.

The Emperor was driven by a mixture of grief and disbelief, he replied, trying to sound calm, "I believe you, but the Empress is a person with very high status and wouldn't be easy to interrogate with."

Meanwhile, Guo Huai was being interrogated for days behind bars, however, he never gave a single hint about admitting that he and the empress were the culprits.

Stumped by the problem, Judge Pao didn't seem to have the appetite for anything. At last, he thought of a solution. That night, he secretly carried a tray of expensive wine and fine, rich meat to Guo Huai in the cell. Soon Guo Huai's vision became blurred and fuzzy, pulling him to the depths of dreams. Making sure he was drunk and asleep, Judge Pao took his time to decorate the jail cell. Before long, the place had smoke billowing from corners, fog clouding the ceiling and colorful carpets, walls and a tiger head above a table where Judge Pao was supposed to sit. He chuckled, this was going out perfectly!

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Suddenly, a hard knock on Guo Huai's head awoke him from his drowsy sleep. Eyelids fluttering open, goodness sake! He had come to hell, ambushed by people with heads of bulls and faces of stallions. Smoke was billowing, and horrifying paintings glared at him on the walls. He heard a bellow and saw the burly King of Hell standing under an enormous tiger's head.

Sweat streamed down his forehead.

Chills ran through his bones.

His knees knocked, hands stretched out tense.

He dared not to blink, or let out a single relaxed breath.

"I have collected your soul to hell," the king bellowed. "You will pay for what you have done in the past! Write about your crimes on a roll of parchment, for the proof of your sinful actions!"

Not having the wits to disobey the King of Hell, Guo Huai hurriedly scribbled down what the King had asked for. His words were spilling like droplets on leaves out of the sheet as if even his fingers had been too scared to write properly.

By this time, the king boomed with laughter, taking off his makeup. Looking more closely, he realized it was actually Judge Pao. The other monsters in the room were also actors. But now, it was already too late for Guo Huai to regret.

Judge Pao brought the sheet Guo Huai had written to the Emperor, who sent guards to kill him. The news reached the Empress, and she let out a blood-curdling screech and died on the spot.

# The Tales of Judge Pao: Teleportation Case

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Luo, Qicheng Harvey – 10*

It was in the middle of the night. Inside the Imperial Garden, the precious dragon pearl was gleaming in the gloomy darkness. The pearl was kept in a glass box within the Elder's House which was considered the most secure house with thousands of guards stationed outside. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning struck the Elder's House. A black figure appeared, snatched the pearl, and disappeared into thin air leaving behind scattered debris and the empty box.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The door groaned in protest as it was knocked by a fist. Outside the door was a sweating soldier panting hysterically.

"Hello! Are you a soldier guarding the Imperial Garden?" Judge Pao asked. The soldier raised his eyebrows and his jaw dropped. He could not contain his surprise.

"How did you find out, amazing Judge Pao?" Judge Pao chuckled, and then shared.

"On your armour is a Ginkgo leaf and the Ginkgo trees can only be found in the Imperial Garden."

"Wow! Amazing! Nothing can escape your eyes, Judge Pao! You are right, I am General Lee and in charge of the security of the Imperial Garden. The Emperor's dragon pearl was stolen last night, and he is on pins and needles. We are in urgent need of your help!"

Judge Pao furrowed his brow.

"This is such an important matter! I shall meet the Emperor at once!"

Judge Pao exited the garishly coloured carriage and saw himself face to face with the Emperor. The pearl is one of the Emperor's most prized possessions and he was in a hurry to find it. The Emperor's eyes lit up like diamonds when he saw Judge Pao.

"Judge Pao, I order you to start investigating at once! This dragon pearl symbolises our family's tradition and we would be doomed without it!" Judge Pao nodded his head.

"Your majesty, I promise to do everything I can to help you. Can you share with me any information or clues to help me with this investigation?"

The Emperor shook his head, looking like a sad puppy.

"I am afraid that there was not much information or any clues. All I can only tell you is that the pearl was stolen from The Elder's House. The guards reported that they saw a bolt of lightning inside the Elder's House. Not long after that, they found the pearl was missing. The thief did not leave any evidence behind and he seemed to disappear into thin air!"

"This is such an interesting yet important case! I will go to check the Elder's House immediately!"

Once reaching the Qingtian mansion, Judge Pao gathered all his finest men and went to the Imperial Garden. The Elder's House was a glistening building at the heart of the Imperial Garden with the glazed tiles on the roof shining in the sun. It towered over the group of investigators while embracing them in its shadow. Judge Pao opened the door and immediately saw the shattered glass box in the middle. He examined everything attentively. What he found strange was that the windows and walls didn't have any fingerprints on them. The thief could not have gone through the door since it was guarded by soldiers for the entire night. Judge Pao noticed that there was dust on the floor and there were faint footsteps only in the front of the shattered box. There weren't any footsteps near the doors or the windows. The only possibility was that..... Judge Pao stopped dead in his tracks.

Teleport.

Teleport.

Magically teleport.

It was only possible for someone to teleport into the Elder's House without leaving any fingerprints and footsteps. Judge Pao knew a number of people who could teleport. The suspect would be the one who knows where the pearl was kept. After a while, Judge Pao thought of Supreme Guo, the Emperor's chief secretary. He was a stern old man who knew where the pearl was hidden. Supreme Guo was a man born with a unique ability. He could transport across the world in a blink of an eye.

Judge Pao shook his head. Even though Supreme Guo was the suspect, there wasn't any evidence! He needed to think of a plan for Supreme Guo to confess his crimes to the Emperor. Judge Pao knew that Supreme Guo has a weakness. He is superstitious and especially afraid of the God of Death. Then, something clicked in Judge Pao's head. A plan formed in his mind.



The moon was hidden by a black carpet. It was pitch black in the Guo Mansion and the crickets were chirping a chorus. Judge Pao had disguised himself as the Death God. He wore a black robe styled with skeleton patterns while painting some skull patterns on his hat. Judge Pao crept into Supreme Guo's bedroom, turned on the red lamp and smoke emitter, then shouted at the top of his lungs,

"Yan Luo Wang is here! I know you are guilty! I give you two choices. Confess to the Emperor that you stole the dragon pearl or suffer for eternity!"

Supreme Guo was so scared that he almost fell off his bed,

"Of course, oh mighty Yan Luo Wang! I will confess and give the dragon pearl back to its rightful owner!"

"Good," Judge Pao boomed, "but if you don't confess or teleport right away, there will be consequences!" Judge Pao demanded.

The next day, Supreme Guo went to the Jade Palace and returned the pearl. The Emperor was pleased with Supreme Guo's honesty and gave him a shorter time in prison! Justice was served and another case of Judge Pao was made!

# Convictions of Barrister Chan

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Lye, Yuxin – 11*

1964, Hong Kong.

Barrister Chan was facing the toughest case of his career. The press had given it much coverage as it involved the Kong family, the richest in the city. Lau Ping-Wai, Kongs' right-hand man, had been murdered. Tabloids speculated that Lau knew too much about the dealings of the Kongs, who were extremely influential and connected, such that Lau must be silenced. Mere speculation, of course, until proven. For now, Barrister Chan must defend his client – a fishmonger at the wet market, someone with absolutely no interaction with the Kongs, and as Chan believed, just happened to be at the wrong place, at the wrong time.

Chan always aspired to be a champion for the weak. He grew up in the Kowloon Walled City and was no stranger to the rampant vices and local triads. It was the novel, "Three Heroes and Five Gallants" – stories about the legendary Judge Pao and martial arts heroes who helped Judge Pao fight crimes and oppression – that inspired Chan to become who he was.

To Chan, Judge Pao was the embodiment of justice – unwavering and incorruptible. Regardless of the stature or connections of the culprit, crime must be punished, and innocents protected.

The courtroom was filled to the brim. The accused glanced at an old lady at the public gallery and lowered his head.

"Li Shang, you are on trial for the murder of Mr. Lau Ping-Wai," the judge announced, "Do you plead guilty or not?"

The room froze. The answer came forcefully but helplessly, "No, I am not guilty!"

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April 1056, Kaifeng Prefecture.

"Kaifeng has no authority over this," the arrogant Chancellor Pang exclaimed, staying seated, without even facing Judge Pao.

Chancellor Pang was the tutor of the Song Emperor and held immense power.

"As you wish, Chancellor, you are welcomed to sit in, but I do have a case to preside over."

The guards shouted "Wai-Wu!", knocking their wooden sticks on the ground.

Qin Lan, a commoner, had sounded the court drums of Kaifeng. It was the last resort, but the only way to bypass the local magistrates who tended to side with the powerful.

"Announce your name and why you have come."

"Your honor, I am Qin Lan, from Taiyuan," Qin Lan sobbed, "Pang Long, son of the Imperial Tutor, killed my sister, Qin Shuang. The local magistrate refused to handle my case."

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Monday 8th June, 1964.

The prosecution called upon their witness.

"Sergeant Shek, how did you find the body of the deceased?"

"I was patrolling the Wanchai wet market at night and saw a body, and dagger on the ground. There was someone beside the victim whom I gave chase."

Shek pointed to Li Shang, who was seated by a court guard.

“Were there fingerprints on the dagger?”

“No, probably wiped clean.”

“Do you mean the accused tried to remove his fingerprints?”

“Objection, your honour! The prosecution is leading the witness.”

“Objection sustained.”

“Sergeant, would you say the murder of the deceased was pre-planned?”

“It seemed meticulously planned and definitely the most brutal murder I’ve ever come across!”

“Objection!” Barrister Chan stood up.

“I have no further questions.”

The Prosecutor returned to his seat triumphantly.

The old lady at the corner remained still throughout, yet her eyes never left Li.

Chan was deep in thoughts – he had received an anonymous letter the day before, threatening to kill his family if he did not “do the right thing”.

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Chancellor Pang had grown nervous and quickly sent a note to Concubine Pang for help. The guards dragged out a well-dressed man in his twenties and forced him to kneel before Judge Pao.

“How dare you!” Chancellor Pang was about to step forward.

“I suggest you stay put,” Judge Pao knocked on the table loudly with the Shangfang Sword bestowed by the late Emperor. The Chancellor was taken aback.

“Pang Long, do you know this lady, Qin Lan, or her sister Qin Shuang?”

“I do not recall.”

“Very poor memory indeed, though you frequent their family teahouse and are widely known to have a liking for Qin Shuang, as Constable Zhan found out.”

“Your honour, Long tried to kidnap my sister and when she refused, pushed her down the stairs and killed her. Many witnessed that but he paid them all to keep quiet!” Lady Qin kneeled, anguished.

“Show me the proof, Pao, I didn’t know you trial cases without evidence,” Pang Long laughed sadistically.

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“Will the defense please present the case?”

Sergeant Shek strutted to the stand.

“Sergeant, how did the accused behave when you first arrived at the scene?”

“I would say he was rather calm.”

“You reported that he had his back towards you and started running right away, Sergeant, you must have sixth sense to feel his calmness.”

The courtroom burst out in laughter. “Silence!” the judge called out.

“Maybe he was facing me, I don’t quite remember.”

“What is the truth then?”

Shek did not respond and glanced around with unease.

“So there was no concrete evidence that Li committed the crime.”

“He stood by the body, that is proof!”

“Pack of lies. Your honour, I have a new piece of evidence to present.

“Objection!”

“The evidence was just discovered but it is absolutely crucial!”

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“What have you got to say, Pang Long? Your bribes, your family’s gold bestowed by the Emperor were found at Magistrate Zhao’s residence – he has confessed!” Judge Pao proclaimed.

Long screamed, “I am the Imperial Tutor’s son, I can do whatever I want! You have no right to sentence me....”

“Bring the Dragon–Head Guillotine!”

Chancellor Pang leapt forward and fainted.

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A suffocating silence filled the courtroom.

The judge would soon come to a verdict. Li stood trembling and the old lady finally broke down crying, unable to contain herself. Chan reached into his briefcase for the “Three Heroes and Five Gallants”. He held the book to his heart and closed his eyes, as he had always done before a verdict.

# Civet Cat Exchanged for Crown Prince

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Man, Hau Sum Sam – 10*

Lightning crashed, and thunder rumbled over the city of Kaifeng, the capital of the Song Empire. Inside the Emperor's palace, servants rushed into the Emperor's room.

"Your majesty, Consort Li has given birth to a son already!" the servants reported.

"Oh! I'll check it later," the Emperor replied.

Consort Li was now exhausted from giving birth and lay down on her bed. Before she slept, she ensured her newborn baby was beside her, inside a basket on a table. "Everything's going to be alright," she said, relieved, and fell asleep.

As Consort Li was sleeping, two shadowy figures appeared.

"There's the baby! See there? Let's take it!"

They were Consort Liu and eunuch Guo Huai.

A month ago, the Emperor announced that whoever gives birth to a son first, that consort can be the Empress. Since Consort Li was pregnant the first, Consort Liu was jealous and plotted a plan to stop Consort Li from becoming the Empress.

Consort Li woke up. Just this moment, the Emperor arrived. He looked inside the basket, but his face quickly changed from a smile to a highly shocked face. "What's this!" he growled. "A monster?"

Confused, Consort Li looked inside the basket. To her surprise, her baby was gone. Instead, there lay a skinned, bloody, dead civet cat! Consort Li screamed in horror and immediately passed out. When she woke up, the Emperor sent her out of the Emperor's palace, and hoped never to see her face again.

Guo Huai and Consort Liu escaped with the infant from the Emperor's room. Consort Liu then found palace maid Kou Zhu and demanded, "Listen. Go and drown this baby of Consort Li at the river near the palace now!"

"Y...yes!" Kou chimed.

After Kou left, she was still reluctant to kill Consort Li's son. "How can I kill the crown prince, the future Emperor?"

She thought but couldn't stand thinking of killing the baby. Luckily, she found eunuch Chen Lin by the river and went to him secretly.

"Sir, please take the baby, Consort Li's son, to safety," Kou asked.

"What? I'm sorry, I can't take this huge responsibility and risk: I'm only a eunuch," Chen rejected immediately.

But no matter how much Kou Zhu begged, Chen Lin wouldn't accept taking the baby away.

"Please, the baby is the Crown Prince. Do you know how important he is? Please save him!" Kou begged. "Just send him to the Eighth Prince, please!"

Chen Lin was finally beginning to become convinced and was soft-hearted.

"Fine, I'll try to take the baby to the Eighth Prince," he agreed.

Chen then delivered the baby to the Eighth Prince's palace in a basket. The Eighth Prince adopted the baby and raised him.

Later, Guo Huai went to the river to see if there was a baby's body in the river. But there was no trace of a body, so Guo went to Kou and questioned if she had killed the baby. Nothing came out of Kou's mouth. Guo then tortured Kou to death.

Whereas soon, Consort Liu was pregnant and gave birth to a son. The Emperor announced that Consort Liu's son would become the Crown Prince, and Consort Liu, the Empress.

However, six years later, Consort Liu's son died of disease. The Emperor became heirless again. He decided to let the Eighth Prince's adopted son (originally Consort Li's swapped son) be the Crown Prince. Not long after, the Emperor passed away. The Crown Prince became the new Emperor, and Consort Liu was the Empress Dowager.

Consort Li had had enough of waiting to be the Empress. She heard of the legendary detective and Justice, Pao Zheng, who was famous all across the country. She set off to Pao's place, hoping he could help her.

"Sir, Madam Li wants to see you!" reported his assistant.

"Let her in," Pao Zheng replied.

Consort Li sighed when she arrived. "I have a never-ending nightmare about my son, who should be the Crowned Prince, but instead was kidnapped! Now, Consort Liu's son got the crowned title, and Consort Liu herself got to be the Empress! Judge, I have suspected Consort Liu to have kidnapped my son. Please help me get back the title of being an Empress."

"Ok, I will help you!" Pao replied. He had a plan to investigate the truth. Since he couldn't interrogate Empress Liu, as her position was higher than Pao's, he decided to question Empress Liu's helper Guo Huai instead. Knowing that Guo was afraid of the supernatural, Pao wore costumes to pretend to be the Lord of Hell in mythology. Pao secretly went into Guo's house with a woman dressing as Kou Zhu's ghost.

Guo Huai was relaxing in his house at night when two dark figures approached him abruptly.

"Who's there?" he shouted.

Nothing but silence came out.

"Tell me who you are!"

There was still no answer.

The black figures keep on coming closer. Then Guo could see them clearly and realised: they were the Lord of Hell and Kou Zhu's ghost! Sweat came raining down Guo's face. "I am the Lord of Hell!" Pao bellowed. Guo shivered.

"What did you do, and did you kill this lady over here?"

Guo thought that the Lord of Hell judged him. Without a doubt, he quickly sputtered out the whole story and confessed to his crimes.

"Good," Pao spoke, "don't let me see you cause trouble again!" Pao then left.

Pao quickly closed this case with the evidence from that night. When the verdict was out, Guo and Consort Liu were severely punished for their crimes. Consort Li finally met her son in the palace. At first, the Emperor was unsure about Consort Li being his mother, but he quickly accepted it. Consort Li finally became the Empress Dowager after a long wait of twenty years.

Finally, peace and order were restored in the country. But it couldn't have happened without Judge Pao.

# Poison

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Ong, Jing Xuan – 12*

Dong! Dong! Dong! Sounded the Tanggu. The guards rushed to open the gates of the Yamen, standing in the entrance was a middle aged man, he looked extremely anxious.

“Master Bao, someone has died in my inn!” the man said hastily, down on his knees.

I sternly asked the man to further explain the situation and share any knowledge that he had on the victim.

While the man was explaining, I ordered, “Zhan Zhao, go and inspect the scene.”

Zhan Zhao’s footsteps faded as he dashed out of the gates.

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Sometime later, Zhan Zhao returned. He handed me a suicide letter and explained, “When I first stepped foot into the room, I saw a body, unresponsive and presumably dead. Beside the body was a bottle of poison and a suicide letter written by the victim, Yang Lan.”

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Dong! Dong! Dong! As soon as the guards opened the gates, a lady hurried in with her hands over her face. She kneeled down and bowed, her voice shaking as she spoke, “Master Bao—please, my husband, Yang Lan, what happened?”

“Your husband, has sadly passed, he committed suicide,” I replied, solemnly, passing her the suicide letter.

Tears of depression and bitterness dripped down her eyes as she stared at her husband’s suicide letter.

“No! He wouldn’t! I know he wouldn’t! He was happy,” she sniffled before continuing, “He just sold his slaughterhouse, to finally come home and stay with me and his family!”

“But...he wrote a suicide letter...”

“It’s impossible! He’s illiterate!” Everyone around was silent, shocked, “My apologies for my disrespectfulness, Master Bao.”

I nodded and looked towards Gongsun Ce, my able assistant, “There is something suspicious about this case.”

“Hmmm...this is definitely a murder,” Gongsun Ce replied.

“He must’ve been poisoned by someone, we need to further investigate,” I muttered to Gongsun Ce. Looking towards the inn owner, I questioned him, “Did Yang Lan eat with anyone yesterday?”

“Oh yes, the Lee twin brothers,” replied the inn owner, respectfully, “the man had invited the brothers for dinner. He ordered a feast to be served in his room.” He paused for a moment before carrying on, “One of the brothers came to me to order a jug of wine but something was weird, he had asked for two wine cups instead of three and he insisted that he would take it back to the room himself. Around midnight, I saw the brothers leave the room with one of them supporting the other. And that was all I saw.”

I walked towards Zhan Zhao, “I need you to summon those brothers to me for questioning and search their house to see if you find anything suspicious.”

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The sky had already been painted pink when the Lee brothers arrived at the Yamen, both shared the same disconcerted look as they bowed down on their knees in front of me, “Greetings Master Bao, I’m Lee Yang and that’s my younger brother Lee Qian.”

Lee Qian looked uneasy and highly embarrassed.

“Tell me about what happened last night?” I questioned

Lee Yang answered respectfully, "He was a close friend of ours and when we were walking home, we saw him. He told us that he just sold his business and was staying in an inn for the night. He invited us to join him for dinner. Yang Lan ordered us food while Lee Qian suggested some wine to celebrate his homecoming."

"All three of us got drunk before parting and returning home." Lee Qian added.

"You two look exhausted, would you like some wine?" I asked.

"It's an honour, but Lee Qian cannot drink," Lee Yang said, looking disappointed.

Zhan Zhao had returned from his search, he sprinted to my side and whispered to me in my ear, "I found lots of gold bars under Lee Qian's bed, I asked around their neighbourhood and everyone said that their family isn't that rich. I brought them in this bag." Zhan Zhao placed the bag on the table, I opened it swiftly and noticed some weird substance on top of the gold bars.

"Guards, bring me a basin of water" I looked back at the two brothers, they looked bewildered. "Where did you get these gold bars?"

"What gold?" Lee Yang asked, shocked.

"I found them in the mines yesterday," Lee Qian added, looking oddly worried.

I nodded as I picked up a few gold bars and dropped them into the basin of water, grease started to form on the surface, "Why is there a layer of grease on top of the water? If it was found in the mines, the water would've turned black." I stamped my gravel angrily, "Lee Qian, you poisoned Yang Lan!"

"No! I am innocent!" Shouted Lee Qian.

"You can drop the act, Lee Qian!" I boomed, "When I questioned the inn owner, he said that one of you went up to him for a jug of wine and insisted that you will take it. You added poison to the rim of the wine cup that you later gave to Yang Lan. You also claimed that all three of you became very drunk afterwards, but if you can't drink, how can you possibly be drunk? You were the only one who was sober enough to lay Yang Lan on his bed and write the suicide letter."

"I didn't write that letter! Yang Lan wrote it!" Lee Qian insisted.

"Yang Lan was illiterate, so he couldn't have. You also knew that he had a large amount of money, after poisoning him, you took his gold bars. However, since he was a butcher, his hands would be stained by grease from the meat that he cut everyday, resulting in oil coated on his gold bars."

Lee Qian shook his head, still denying.

"Guards, execute him!" I ordered.

Screams of begging for mercy could be heard throughout the Yamen while Lee Yang stood there, frozen with fear as he watched his brother being dragged away to be executed.



# The Missing Crown Prince

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Tan, Gen Leng Melody – 10*

I'm Judge Pao. This is an account of the kidnapping of the Empress's and Emperor's son.

I was having tea when I heard the exhilarating news that the Emperor and Empress had had a new son. A week after that, I received a letter from the Emperor and Empress inviting me to meet their newest child.

As the carriage I was riding in drew to a halt, I saw the royal family standing in front of the palace gates with red-faced women behind them who were panting and sweating heavily.

"Judge Pao! It's pleasant to see you!" the Empress greeted sweetly as I drew closer.

"Hello. It's pleasant to see you too. I am here to see your newborn, right?" I said to them.

"Yes Judge. Our son's named Simon," the Empress introduced as Simon began babbling and laughing in his mother's hands.

"Judge Pao, this is our daughter, Arcana," the Empress said as she nudged Arcana to face me.

"Hello," Arcana greeted flatly.

"Also, these are our maids, Esther and Sadie. That one is Esther; and that one is Sadie," the Empress said, pointing to the maids.

"Well, come in Judge Pao! You're probably famished. You are welcome to stay for the night," the Emperor offered.

I agreed.

Later, as I was exploring the colossal palace, I heard the maids gossiping in the kitchen.

"Simon is so needy! He's always hungry and will never go to sleep!" Esther whispered.

"Definitely! It's so unfair that we must do so much work for Simon, and still get such a low income!" Sadie gossiped.

By then, they had seen me. Together, they scurried out of the kitchen. Was there something more sinister happening at the palace?

The next morning, I was jolted awake by the Empress's screams. I rushed to their room and found the Empress sobbing and the Emperor comforting her. I looked around; Simon's cradle was turned on its side, the blanket spilling out.

Simon? Gone.

"Judge, please help us! Simon is our life!" the Empress pleaded.

I heard someone behind me gasp and rush out of the room. I whirled around to see Arcana running out of the room crying.

"Of course, I'll help!" I reassured the Empress. Then a man with a scrunched grumpy face entered the room.

"WHAT IS HAPPENING?" he bellowed.

"Simon has been KIDNAPPED!" the Empress told the man.

"This is my younger brother. He is exceedingly jealous that I inherited the throne," the Emperor said to me. Immediately after, I began my investigation. Firstly, there was a handwritten note. It said this:

*liiteeknSoAa 2dgmtrtainm mnhemhedpm~ca*

“Must be some sort of code” I muttered to myself. I lifted Simon’s blanket and found a piece of cloth. It was torn at the edges and was blue and brown. Suddenly, a theory rang in my mind. That afternoon, I had gathered everyone in the drawing room. The Empress was wiping her tear-stained face, the Emperor was rubbing his head dreadfully, Arcana was looking uninterested, and the Emperor’s brother was pretending that the floor was the most interesting thing in the world.

“I have found a most vital clue that decreases the chance that either Esther or Sadie could have done it. Unless they were working with someone else. So, I cannot entirely rule them out. Now I will reveal the evidence that I have found!” I paused for effect. I held up the piece of cloth I found that morning.

“THIS!”

The family stared at the piece of cloth, scratching their heads and scrunching their faces.  
“But it’s just a piece of cloth,” the Emperor stated.

“Yes,” I told him.

“The reason I accuse one of the royal family of the crime is because only the royal family, apart from the Emperor, can wear this coloured clothing! But this doesn’t mean I can make my denouement yet. I still have suspects to rule out.”

“But it could be a handkerchief, or something like that.” the Empress said.

“Yes, that’s why I’ll try searching for a piece of clothing with a big patch torn out from it.”

First, I searched the Emperor’s brother’s bedroom. As I scoured the room, I uncovered something unsettling. Under his bed, there was a hanfu, its bottom part torn out. I pulled it out and matched the piece of cloth to the hanfu.

As I walked out to make my denouement, I saw Arcana, standing in the living room, arms folded, watching her parents weep over Simon. I suddenly understood. I pulled out the note I found at the crime scene. I knew who the kidnapper was! Or kidnappers.

“EVERYONE! I KNOW WHO KIDNAPPED SIMON!” I shouted.

Arcana whirled to face me. A scowl was set on her face, I swear she was going to pounce on me. But the Empress blocked her way.

“WHO DID IT?” The Empress demanded just as the Emperor’s brother, Esther, and Sadie came rushing into the living room.

“THE EMPEROR’S BROTHER AND,” I paused for effect “ARCANA!”

The Emperor faced his brother, he was clenching his fist and snarling. The Empress was bellowing at Arcana fiercely and demanding for Simon’s whereabouts.

“HE HAS NO PROOF!” shrieked Arcana.

“I do actually,” and I held up the Emperor’s brother’s hanfu and said, “I have also accused you Arcana, because” I thrust the letter in her face, “this says ‘12 midnight meet me there kidnap Simon ~ Arcana’. The code you used is called transposition cipher.”

She was speechless.

“How did you figure it out?” she asked, enraged. I didn’t reply. I only smiled contentedly.

The Emperor’s brother had agreed to show us where Simon was being kept. Though Arcana had been more reluctant. Simon had turned out to be stowed away in a shallow pit Arcana had dug in the palace’s garden. Everyone was happy in the end. Well, except the kidnappers. Even better news was that the Empress was finally recovering from her rollercoaster of emotions and trauma. This will conclude my account. For now.

## New Tales of Judge Pao – Justice in 3D

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Teo, Ren Yi Natalie – 11*

Good Asian kids who listen to their parents and study hard will naturally end up as doctors or lawyers. Judge Pao smiled wryly at the memory as his shiny sized-12 shoes click-clocked along the corridor of the Wolfgang Knoch Hospital. He did not like the smell of bleach around him and was in a hurry to pick up his younger sister, Dr. Pao, for dinner to celebrate her passing of the specialist exams for orthopaedic surgery.

Judge Pao reached the ward ten minutes early as usual and found Dr. Pao and her mentor, Dr. Knoch, chatting with a young girl with her leg in a cast. Dr. Knoch looked up and beamed. “You must be the famous Judge Pao, here to pick Dr. Pao for a well-deserved celebration”, he half sang out, and turning to the young girl, he gently introduced, “And this is Zhong Xi, the bravest little patient we have in here.”

Encouraged by Dr. Knoch, Zhong Xi stretched out her hand to Judge Pao, but Judge Pao merely nodded deferentially and muttered a hello. He hated effusive people – even if they had performed many medical miracles. He hated kids too – they are like parasites sucking up all your time and energy. He had many more important things to do.

Zhong Xi’s outstretched hand dropped at the same time as her smile and her intense gaze returned to the image on her iPad as the adults exchanged polite greetings. Judge Pao noticed that she was drawing what looked like a bone in 3D, perhaps a tibia? How odd, he thought.

The following week, Judge Pao came across Dr. Knoch again, but in a most unfortunate way. One of Dr. Knoch’s patients, Ms. Karen, had sued him for an unsuccessful operation, claiming that her leg broke again within weeks of the operation to fix it and seeking millions of dollars in compensation. Dr. Knoch denied the claim and insisted that Ms. Karen must have done some crazy activity which caused the 3D-printed bone to break so soon after the operation. In his defence, Dr. Knoch called Dr. Pao to act as his witness, to testify as to the many successful operations they had done together and to explain to the judge assigned to the case, Judge Pao, the technique of using 3D-printed bones pioneered by Dr. Knoch.

Dr. Pao argued convincingly for Dr. Knoch and listening to her, Judge Pao wondered if his sister should have become a lawyer too. Nah, he thought, the medical profession was more noble, and was their parents’ top choice for them. Snapping back to the case, Judge Pao looked up and was surprised to see Zhong Xi in the witness box, not as a witness for Dr. Knoch but as a witness for Ms. Karen. What bad things could this kid possibly say about Dr. Knoch, the kindly doctor who had treated her three times this year?

“I am Zhong Xi, and I am eleven-years-old,” came a trembly whisper. “I have brittle bone disease and have been admitted to the Wolfgang Knoch Hospital thrice this year. Each time, I stay for about one to two weeks, and after that I must stay at home for another two to three weeks.”

Judge Pao sighed with impatience. This was hardly relevant. Dr. Pao rolled her eyes and pouted at the ungrateful child.

“I got a 3D printer for Christmas, but I got sick of drawing and printing unicorns, so I started copying my x-ray results when I had nothing to do in hospital. I drew all sorts of bones, the tibia, femur, rib, clavicle, everything I have ever broken.”

Judge Pao mustered all his self-control to keep a straight face and not cut Zhong Xi off. Where was this kid going with her story?

“So, one day, I showed Dr. Knoch my drawings and he told me they were very realistic and asked if he could have all my drawings. I was so flattered that I happily obliged him.” Zhong Xi continued, “I think he stole my drawings and printed them without my permission.”

Judge Pao sucked in his breath. Zhong Xi sounded delusional...

But she was not done yet. “Usually I draw perfect bones, but during my last stay in hospital, I wanted to try something different and I drew a broken one – my own broken tibia. I did not know that Dr Knoch would print it and use it for Ms. Karen’s surgery. I can prove that Dr. Knoch used my drawing because all my drawings have the mark “众” (“Zhong” in Chinese) on them. This is my name and in Dr. Knoch’s 3D bone, he has reproduced them as three upside down letter “Y”s, which does not make sense at all.”

Judge Pao and Dr. Pao both turned to look at Dr. Knoch who had turned as ashen as bone. The verdict was clear. Justice had to be done, even for a renowned doctor.

# Oily Fingers

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Wu, Xin Ru Audrey – 11*

I was strolling around the market to buy fresh radishes for some radish soup. So far, I hadn't had much luck. A group of youths were staring at me with their mouths agape, but I shrugged it off.

Suddenly, I heard a shout.

"Fresh radishes! Fresh radishes! Straight from the farm to the market!" bellowed the seller.

I ran towards him quicker than a cheetah. "Good morning, sir, could I have a fresh batch of those radishes?" I asked amiably.

His eyes widened. "Justice Pao! How lovely to see you! Yes, of course, a batch of radishes coming right up!"

"Thank you, sir!"

These days, I am used to being stared at in the streets. People are shocked to see me buying groceries in the market like a peasant, but I enjoy cooking, and it's good to live life as I always had from the start.

The seller carefully placed the radishes into my basket, and I walked off, ready to go home and prepare a delicious, delectable bowl of radish soup. Just then, I heard the sound of a young boy caterwauling.

"Oh no! Where did all my money go? I need that for my mother's medicine! I never should have fallen asleep on that rock! What will I do?" cried the boy as he collapsed into a heap in the midst of his wails.

I took a look at the large basket he had set on the floor in front of him. It contained a few ceramic containers filled to the brim with oil noodles. From strolling around in the market, I knew that everyone was selling fruits and vegetables except for the young boy.

I rolled up my sleeves and sat down next to him. "Dear boy, please stop crying. I will help you find out who stole your coins, so don't you worry!"

The boy stifled his tears and looked up at me with his solemn, red eyes. "But how? Just because you are Judge Pao doesn't mean you can solve every single case."

"Listen. If we can't find the culprit, I'll give you enough money to help your mom. I understand how it feels, and I respect your initiative to fend for yourself and your mother. Now let's find that culprit!"

Just as I had hoped, the boy's solemn expression had turned determined.

"Judge Pao, tell me what I need to do!"

"Everyone, gather here in a circle!" I bellowed.

I could see everyone's head snapping around to look at me, but thankfully they turned around and formed a circle. Most of them looked confused and annoyed, which was expected, since I just interrupted their job. But I had to help this poor child.

"Could the man in the straw shirt please pass me a coin?" I asked, my voice clear as day.

"What for?" he asked.

"I would like to find the culprit who stole this young boy's coins which he has rightfully earned," I explained.

“Well, alright then,” he begrudgingly agreed.

“Dear boy, could you fill a big bowl with water please?” I asked.

“Yes sir!” he exclaimed.

It was a slow, repeated cycle. Take the coins, drop them in the water and return them to the owner, who would be free to go. The young boy was beginning to lose hope. But I would not give up. Soon, we were down to a handful of people. A man standing behind everyone else was fidgeting and sweating. That’s suspicious, if you asked me.

“Could the man standing at the back pass me a coin?”, the boy timidly asked. It seemed we shared the same idea. That the man could be the culprit. Why else would he be so nervous?

The young boy took the coin and dropped it in the water. Everyone gathered around the bowl. As I had anticipated, an oil bloom appeared in the water.

“Sir, you have stolen from a young child! This is unacceptable!” I yelled.

His eyes darted around, looking for a way to escape, but the remaining few people had formed a circle around us. Seeing he couldn’t escape, he held out his supposed grocery basket and poured the coins into the bowl.

I sighed. Theft did not merit execution, but a few months in jail.

“Sir, you are very lucky not to be facing execution. Guards! Please escort this man to the town jail as he will serve one month in prison and also pay back what he stole,” I cried out.

The town guards nodded and immediately set to work.

I hadn’t expected going to the market to be a scenario to deliver justice, but here I was!

# The Case of the Stolen Spear

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Xu, Jiaqi Jacky – 10*

Around the 2000s, there was a European tourist who came to China and found an extremely important piece of Chinese history. The tale was of Judge Pao, one of the most influential people of the Song Dynasty, and the case of the stolen spear.

Judge Pao was taking a walk around the imperial garden in the morning when he heard a parade of footsteps, as Emperor Renzong walked toward him, holding a piece of paper in his right hand. That piece of paper commanded him to appear in court for an important case, about a stolen spear.

“Mr Pao,” he commanded, “You are to judge an important case, which has to do with the recently stolen spear.”

Seeing that Judge Pao was extremely puzzled by this, the Emperor continued, “The spear is an ancient artifact, covered in gold and jewels, making it worth more than whole cities. It also holds the power of the empire. The suspect has already been caught, so I need you to help with the ruling, because I have some important meetings to take care of.”

Judge Pao deeply bowed and returned to his home, changed into his official uniform, and got to work.

After he reached the gigantic warehouse that had stored the spear, he found some more information about the spear.

According to the guards, the golden spear was a gift from a ruler of a far-away country, said to be covered in gold and jewels, yet invisible to most passers by. There were also other gifts, such as rolls upon rolls of an extremely rare and exotic type of red fabric, and whole chests of pure gold bars. Yet, the spear was by far the most important.

“The suspect was apprehended about 36 hours ago, though the spear is missing.” one of the guards told Judge Pao, distraught, “If we don’t find it soon, all of our heads are as good as gone.”

Judge Pao, having a further understanding the significance of the spear, went to have a look at the gigantic storage chamber the spear was kept at. The door was fine, and so were the windows. There were no footsteps in the whole area, and the other items were left untouched. Furthermore, only high-ranking officials have access to the building.

“So, it’s a case of theft from an adytum with a mole. This should be fun,” the judge sighed.

When heading outside, Judge Pao spotted a pair of large handprints right around the doorway. The current suspect, though, had miniscule handprints. So, the suspect couldn’t be the real thief.

Then, that seemingly insignificant detail sparked a brilliant idea in his mind. The judge quickly went to the imperial palace, requesting a meeting with the emperor.

When Judge Pao finally got to meet Emperor Renzong, he told him the plan, “We should hold a fake public execution, and then proclaim that the spear is made of a special substance, and all things that have touched it have a glowing effect, but only to the royal bloodline. Since the real thief will want to watch the execution, as it will mean their victory, but when I announce the fake news, the thief will most definitely try to hide his hands. That is when the imperial guards around the area will be able to spot the true thief.”

The Emperor slowly nodded, not saying a single word, as if contemplating all the possibilities of such a risky move. “What if the thief doesn’t show up, or doesn’t try to hide his hands? We might not be able to catch the thief, or maybe even catch the wrong person. What would happen then?”

“We have no other option, and if we don’t do it soon, the thief will surely escape. It is the only way that we can catch the thief at this stage,” the judge was solemn, and could only hope that the gamble would pay off.

On the the day of the fake execution, the fake suspect was brought out, surrounded by imperial guards in every direction. There were also hundreds of imperial guards upon the crowd, eager to finally catch the real thief. Even the Emperor was on scene, though secretly.

When it was time, Judge Pao announced, "Attention everyone! This is the public execution of the thief who stole the golden spear, therefore committing imperial theft."

The true thief was having a fantastic time celebrating amongst the crowd.

"The way that I caught this despicable law-breaker was through our great Emperor. He informed me that all people who have touched the spear will have a glowing hue, invisible to most, but very obvious to the royal bloodline. Though the hue will only appear around the area that has touched the spear, it was extremely easy to recognise for the royal family. The reason for this glowing hue is the structure of the spear's material. It apparently replicates a specific pattern of light reflection on human skin that it comes in contact with."

The true thief immediately went pale, as he remembered that he had not worn gloves while stealing the spear. He tried desperately to hide his hands, playing right into the judge's gamble.

"In the name of our Emperor, I command you to stop!" an imperial guard ran towards the crowd, and stopped the thief, having seen him trying desperately to hide his hands.

"Let go of me!" The thief tried to struggle and run, revealing all the stolen possessions on him, but wasn't able to escape all the imperial guards. He was so confident in his perfect victory that he didn't even bring a weapon as a backup, as he was sure that this would never happen.

When Judge Pao noticed the chaos and a concentration of imperial guards in one area, he slowly chuckled, knowing that the gigantic gamble had paid off perfectly. He sat down on a chair right next to him, and mumbled to himself,

"Always standing sure is tiring!"



# Case of the Missing Robe

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Yu, Yat Hong David – 10*

The Emperor's birthday was due in three weeks and the entire kingdom was bustling with excitement. Everyone was running around busy preparing for the important celebration.

Suddenly, a group of serious-looking palace guards marched through the crowded streets and stopped abruptly in front of two tailor shops. "Attention! This is a message from the Emperor!" one of the palace guards shouted, holding up an enormous scroll. Wang Hao and Jiang Lin, owners of the two tailor shops came out and knelt with trembling knees whilst the guard continued the message. "You two are the finest tailors in town and have been selected to make a dragon robe for the Emperor's birthday. Whoever makes the most beautiful robe shall be rewarded with gold and gems and become one of the Emperor's personal tailors!"

Wang Hao was a chubby man who had inherited a fortune from his father. He often bought delicate, expensive silk and weaved them into beautiful clothes which he sold for a great deal of money. The other tailor, Jiang Lin, was a tall, skinny man who grew up poor, but made a name for himself as the clothes he designed were both affordable and stylish. Their shops were right next to each other and the rivalry between them had always been fierce.

Upon receiving the orders, Wang Hao and Jiang Lin both felt nervous yet excited as this would be the biggest opportunity in their lifetime. One of the guards stepped forward, opened a wooden chest, and took out two rolls of exquisite silk fabric. "Wang Hao, you will use the purple silk, and Jiang Lin, you will take the yellow silk." The two tailors touched the silk gingerly, and it was the smoothest material they had ever laid their hands on.

Once the guards had left, both the tailors sprinted back into their shops immediately with the beautiful silk in their arms, cradling it like a baby. They both closed their shops for business and worked tirelessly day and night, using a monumental amount of effort in the making of the robe.

Three days before the big celebration, at the crack of dawn, Judge Pao woke up to some shouting and screaming outside his house. "Judge Pao! Judge Pao! Open the door, open the door! Please help me!"

Judge Pao was well-admired throughout the kingdom as he was known for his utmost belief in honesty and uprightness. As he opened the antique wooden door of his house, he saw a devastated Wang Hao standing outside with tears flooding out of his eyes, "The robe is gone! Someone has stolen it while I was asleep!"

Judge Pao replied calmly, "Tell me what happened."

"I finished the robe last night and fell asleep whilst admiring my own work. This morning when I woke up it was gone! I searched everywhere and could not find it. It must be Jiang Lin who stole my robe. He did not want me to win!"

"Let's not waste time," replied Judge Pao. "Lead me to your shop!"

As they walked to the shop, the city began to wake up. Jiang Lin was just opening the doors looking happy and bright as they arrived.

"Jiang Lin!" Judge Pao bellowed. "Move aside! Let me search your workshop!"

“Wha—what did I do? Why?” stuttered Jiang Lin, his smile gone and now looking confused.

Judge Pao ignored him and stepped into his shop. Right near the doorstep, he spotted a few strands of delicate purple silk lying on the cold stone floor.

“Jiang Lin, how do you explain having such exquisite purple fabric at your shop? Only Wang Hao received purple silk from the Emperor!” questioned Judge Pao. “Where did you hide his robe?”

Jiang Lin cried out, “I did not steal his robe! I was busy working on mine and just completed it last night. My one was so beautiful I did not need to steal his robe to win!”

Wang Hao cried, pointing to his rival, “He has the motive, and we have the evidence! Judge Pao, please arrest him and bring justice to the case!”

Judge Pao comforted Wang Hao, “Don’t worry, there is an easy way to find out where the robe is hidden. The Emperor keeps the finest fabrics in a special warehouse with herbs imported from Persia. The silk would have absorbed the scent and unless it had been washed, the Emperor’s specially-trained dogs would be able to find it. We will have this arranged first thing tomorrow morning.”

“Oh, that’s great, that’s great!” exclaimed Wang Hao.

That midnight, Judge Pao and two guards hid near the well and waited. A shadowy figure emerged from the darkness, took a large bucket of water from the well and started washing something desperately. The guards snuck up to the person and pinned him down. As the figure slowly turned around, his identity was revealed to Judge Pao. It was Wang Hao, grinding his teeth, holding on to his purple robe that was dripping with water.

“So it really was you, Wang Hao!” said Judge Pao.

Wang Hao burst into tears and confessed, “I had no other choice! I saw Jiang Lin’s robe last night and it was so beautiful. I knew I would lose if I did not do something! But... but how did you know it was me?”

“The part about the silk carrying the special scent from the herbs was fake,” replied Judge Pao. “I’ve suspected you all along because the purple silk left at Jiang Lin’s doorstep was too obvious. I’ve also seen the robe he made, and it was magnificent. He did not need to steal your robe to win.”

Wang Hao was arrested, and Jiang Lin eventually won the competition. In fact, the Emperor was so happy with the dragon robe that he made Jiang Lin his head tailor.

And with that, Judge Pao solved yet another mystery, the new case of the missing robe.

# The Missing Pearl

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Zhang, Han Ryan – 10*

## Part 1: The Pearl

A cold gust of wind brought an early winter feeling to the capital—Kaifeng. The leaves finished turning yellow and brown. Under the tree, there is a popular chestnut stall, and it was buzzing with chatter as the people were talking about the groundbreaking news in the capital.

“I heard that the pearl was missing!”

“What pearl?” A tourist asked curiously.

“The Pearl is a gift from the east coast to Emperor Renzong,” the stall owner said, “It is said to be the most precious pearl ever found. It took our ambassador a month to deliver The Pearl to our capital here. Our emperor was kind enough to let us admire the pearl for 7 days. The event is being held at the temple near here, and today is the last day. But it seems like The Pearl went missing just a while ago, the temple is now under heavy surveillance.”

Just then, a tall man got off a horse—pulled carriage, headed towards the temple with long strides. He wore a set of old but neat long robes, magnifying glass in hand. His skin looks dark but healthy, as if he works outdoors a lot. On his forehead there was a crescent-moon shaped scar that made him recognizable instantly.

“Judge Pao!” People shouted, respectfully making way for him to pass.

“I bet he can find the pearl! He is the smartest man in the city!” The stall owner added.

## Part 2: In the temple

“Judge Pao, please find the pearl, my life depends on it! His majesty would send me into exile!” The ambassador wailed as soon as Judge Pao entered the temple.

Judge Pao looked around: The main room where the theft occurred was a giant room with a humongous Buddha statue in it. In front of the statue there was a table with an empty jade box with jewels encrusted on it, it was used to hold the pearl. The table was sealed off by fences.

“We searched everywhere, but still can’t find The Pearl. We arrested two suspects last seen in the main room before the pearl went missing, Li-Xin and Mu-Chen.”

In front of Judge Pao, the two suspects were brought up.

Li-Xin was a poor man working as a cleaner in the temple, he wore a battered up. His legs were trembling and his hands were fidgeting with a cleaning rag. On the other hand, Mu-Chen wore a fine cotton robe. He looked calm and relaxed.

“Li-Xin was caught stealing buns on the street once. He was cleaning the main room when the pearl disappeared. I think he is the thief.” The ambassador whispered in Judge Pao’s ear, “Look at him, he has a disgraced past, and he needs money. But he refuses to tell us where the pearl is, we should interrogate him to make him speak.”

“Don’t judge a book by its cover ambassador, what about Mu-Chen?” Judge Pao asked.

“He inherited a large sum of money from his father. I don’t see any motive for him to steal the pearl.” Ambassador answered.

Judge Pao then went past the fences to inspect. He bent down, used his magnifying glass to inspect every inch of the table. He observed one corner of the wooden table carefully as if he had found some clues. The oddest thing was, after inspecting the jade box with his magnifying glass, Judge Pao then sniffed the box!

“Show me your hands!” He then ordered the two suspects. He checked their hands and nails with intense concentration, and even sniffed their fingers.

When everyone seemed confused, Judge Pao declared they needed to go to Mu-Chen’s house.

## Part 3: Mu-Chen’s house

It was a two-floored big house with a garden. There was fine furniture in the rooms, nice decorations on the walls. Mu-Chen lived with his mother and wife, without kids or pets.

When everyone set off to search the house, Judge Pao was attracted to the rustling sound in the trees of the garden.

“Everyone freeze!” Judge Pao emphatically whispered, putting his finger to his mouth. His eyes were following a small animal darting from branch to branch, it then leaped over the garden wall to the corner of the garden, after a while, it patted the dirt and jumped onto the branch and disappeared. Judge Pao strode to the corner of the garden without hesitation.

“These patches of dirt have been moved”, Judge Pao pointed, “We have to see what is concealed.” He moved the dirt aside. Astoundingly there was a squirrel’s secret food storehouse. On top of some nuts, a sphere, gleaming in the sunlight lay.

“The Pearl!” People exclaimed, unable to believe their eyes.

Mu–Chen’s face turned pale.

#### Part 4: Explanations

“I lost all my money in the last gamble, The debt collectors are after me.” Mu–Chen cried, “But how did you find out?”

“The truth cannot be hidden. I noticed claw marks on the wooden table in the temple, the jade box and your right hand had a sesame smell. I guessed you used a small animal to steal the pearl and hide it.” Judge Pao smiled.

“I noticed a squirrel always hid its food in my garden, so I came up with the idea to catch it and use it to steal the pearl. I hid it in my sleeve, and let go of it near The Pearl.” Mu–Chen admitted. “If you want to know the details, I bribed a security guard to let me touch the pearl in front of him, I left sesame paste on the pearl so that the squirrel would mistake it as food.”

“How did you know it would work?” Judge Pao asked.

Mu–Chen burst into tears, “I didn’t. But it was my last chance.”

#### Part 5: The End

After the pearl was successfully gifted to the emperor. Mu–Chen was put in jail. People now say: whoever the criminal is, man, woman, even animal, Judge Pao will find them.

## New tales of Judge Pao: the case of the black-hooded man

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Zhao, Yanxin – 11*

A shadow lurked across the dimly-lit capital city as dusk approached. It climbed a tree and leaped into the palace garden as agile as a cat. Slowly, the bright moon appeared from behind the clouds. The ghastly moonlight illuminated the mysterious man. He was wearing a black robe with a sword on his belt. On his back were a quiver of arrows and a bow. He slipped behind a few soldiers patrolling near him and towards the emperor's bedroom. He slithered up another tree and crouched there stealthily, eyes glued to the room.

Judge Pao had been invited to the palace by the emperor. The emperor wanted to discuss the news about people from China that went to other warring countries and became their hostages.

"Do you know why those countries would keep hostages?" asked the emperor.

"I don't know. Perhaps those countries need money to buy weapons as they are currently engaged in a battle. I wonder why they must capture people from our country. Do they want to get us involved?" replied Judge Pao. "They asked us to give them one thousand pieces of gold sycee ingots for getting one hostage back. At this rate, we might be the poorest country in the world," he added with a sigh.

"Have we held a grudge against them? If we pay the money for them, the country will experience extreme loss," the emperor sighed. "Whatever we do, we should think before we act."

Outside, the mysterious man carefully took his bow and plucked the tallest arrow in his quiver. It had a different look. He readied himself, preparing to shoot the arrow. Narrowing his eyes, he pulled his hand back and let it go. It flew in through the window, startling the emperor and Judge Pao. The emperor ducked just in time as the arrow whizzed over his head, skimmed past a soldier's neck, and burrowed itself into the wall.

"Assassinator! Catch him!" shouted Judge Pao as he hurried to the window.

The man hopped down the tree and started running away. He was so quick that no one could catch him. Instead, he tripped and got hurt when escaping the shower of arrows soldiers outside the room fired at him. Arrows slashed through his robe. Cloth dangled in the air.

Judge Pao pulled the weapon out of the wall. It was wrapped with a note. "I give you two choices: either give me one thousand gold sycee ingots, or I will kill you. If you choose to give me gold sycee ingots, then put them outside the north gate of the capital city tomorrow at midnight." Judge Pao read aloud the letter. The emperor turned pale at the thought of himself drowning in his blood. It was the first time someone had ever sent such a threatening letter. Judge Pao sank into deep thoughts.

But where could the culprit be? He mustn't have gone far, even when he ran faster than the north wind. A lightbulb clicked in his head. He whispered a few words to his assistants, Zhan, Zhang, Zhao, Wang, Ma, and Gong. They nodded and ran outside. After about two hours, they came back with a man in chains.

The emperor furrowed his eyebrows and asked, "Who is this? Are you sure that it is the culprit? If it isn't, won't it be embarrassing?"

Judge Pao laughed. "I asked them to search houses belonging to doctors that heal broken bones. I reminded them to notice a few things about the man: when he arrived, his clothing, and what he brought along with him. We have a lot of proof now.

"Beside the bed in the doctor's house was a quiver of arrows. They were identical to the one that nearly killed you. There was a ragged black robe stained with blood. Since the culprit was hurt, he must have bled a lot. When we tried to get him, we only managed to rip his clothes," explained Judge Pao.

"But how did you know that he was a patient of that doctor, not another one?"

"In the note, it mentioned the north gate. Plus, the culprit broke a bone. Have you heard of the phrase 'the most dangerous place is the safest place'? He would have stayed in a famous place if he wanted to hide. The place he would be staying at must also be near the north gate. I asked the soldiers to go to some of the most famous houses of doctors for emergency treatment near the north gate. The culprit would choose emergency treatment since he needs to heal his broken bone as fast as possible."

After a few minutes, Judge Pao questioned the man. His name was Jiang. He admitted that he was the culprit.

“Why did you want so many gold sycee ingots?” asked Judge Pao. Even though they had found the man behind the mask, Judge Pao was still curious.

Jiang seemed like he was on the verge of tears. “I’m certain that you know about the hostages in Europe,” he said. “My son is part of them. Since they asked for one thousand gold sycee ingots for one person, I have to get the money to get him back. I have to get my child back safely!”

Judge Pao stood up and walked towards Jiang. He put a hand on the grief-stricken Jiang’s shoulder. “Don’t worry; we will help you,” he comforted Jiang. “But why didn’t you tell us first?”

“Why would you even help me? I didn’t help you with anything.” Jiang let out a long sigh. “My son is the only relative I have left in my family. Surely I can’t let him die!”

Judge Pao nodded his head slowly. “Every citizen in China is important. We will try our best to help you. For now, the mystery is closed.”

# The Case of the Stolen Buddha

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Zheng, Anya – 10*

*The room was as dark as ink. Bits of shattered glass and jewellery lay on the ground like an endless beach, but I had no time for those, I flung Zhou into a diminutive chest, squeezed myself in after him and shut the lid.*

*“Ow! What on earth was that for?” groaned Zhou as he grimaced while rubbing his head.*

*“Shh!” I hushed as I stared in awe at the mesmerising emerald-green buddha with every single detail of it carved into bewildering perfection in my hands, “I’m trying to admire its beauty! It’s the only thing that is more gorgeous than me!”*

*“Well, I think that anything is more gorgeous than your ugly face!” whispered Zhou sarcastically, still rubbing his head.*

*“How dare—” before I could finish my sentence, Zhou rudely covered my mouth with his filthy hands, “Mmm mmmm!” I tried to scold him, but all that came out was a muffled, outraged scream.*

*“Quiet!” Zhou hissed, “Someone’s here!”*

*Suddenly, my heart started to pound vigorously against my chest as I heard footsteps. I had forgotten the very reason we were in this tiny chest! Cold sweat rushed down from my forehead like a gigantic waterfall as I grasped the spectacular masterpiece in my trembling hands. I glanced at Zhou, he was holding his breath, his face full of fear.*

*“There’s an ocean of beautiful jewellery covering the entire floor!” a person exclaimed in amazement.*

*“Everyone can see that, Zhu! Why not say some useful stuff?” said another person, clearly annoyed.*

*“Like what?” asked the person who was supposedly named Zhu.*

*Zhou chuckled as a whiff of unbearable odour crawled up my nose, making my face scrunch up. Oh lord, why did Zhou have to chuckle so loudly and why was his breath so unbearably stinky?*

*“Wait a second,” the other person muttered.*

*For a horrifying second, it was completely silent.*

*No sound.*

*Not even a single breath.*

*Silence.*

*"It was probably nothing, let's get searching," said the person.*

*Zhou and I both breathed a sigh of relief. But it was not over, the people outside searched for hours and hours while we sat inside the chest, anxiously hoping that they would not find us. Oddly enough, the people haven't checked the chest yet.*

*After what seemed like forever, one person finally grunted, "We've searched up and down, left and right and still haven't found the thieves, they are definitely gone."*

*Before I could even relax, someone opened the door with an ear splitting "bang" and rushed in. The third person boomed furiously with an eerily familiar voice, "How could you give up when you haven't searched the most obvious places to hide in yet? The chest, for example."*

*The words "the chest" punched me straight in the stomach. Zhou and I were dead meat.*

*No way out.*

*Awaiting the lid of the chest to open.*

*Awaiting to be found.*

*All of a sudden, the other two people burst into laughter hysterically, "Pao, Pao, Pao. Why would someone who is trying to avoid being found hide in the most obvious place to hide in?"*

*The name Pao hit me like a rock, it could only mean one thing, the most renowned detective in China was here, this is a catastrophe!*

*"If a person panics for whatever reason, he won't have time to think of where to hide and will hide in wherever is the most convenient place. In addition, if the person is smart enough, he would hide in the most obvious place, expecting you to think that he has hid in a difficult-to-find location and waste time searching for those excellent hiding spots," Pao said like a wise professor. I could imagine Pao saying this as he stroked his long beard that was as black as a raven, "Now, if you guys are not going to check the chest, then I will."*

*Thump, thump, thump. I couldn't tell if it was my heart drumming furiously in my chest or the intimidating footsteps of Pao gradually growing louder and louder as he approached the chest in no hurry, as if trying to say, "I'm coming for you!" with an evil grin etched across his face.*

*My heart sank to the bottom of my stomach like a large, heavy rock as the lid of the chest smirked at me and creaked open, revealing me and Zhou who were drenched head to toe in sweat, and the magnificent buddha towards everyone in the room.*

*As Pao's stern eyes looked through me as if I was transparent, a memory from many years ago suddenly floated to the top of my mind.*



*After devouring my scrumptious breakfast, I bolted out of the house towards a tall tree with lush green leaves where my best friend Pao stood under, waiting for me while gripping a shuttlecock and grinning. He jumped up and down enthusiastically when he saw me. The sun smiled down at the earth as I inhaled the fresh, lung-cleansing air outside as I approached Pao.*

*“Hi!” I greeted Pao, “How are you?”*

*“Great! My mum just made a new shuttlecock! Let’s play!” Pao said excitedly as he showed me the homemade shuttlecock. It looked at me invitingly, enticing me to kick it.*

*“Sure!” I agreed without hesitation.*

*Pao stared at me as sternly as a hawk and warned, “Don’t you dare break it.”*

*Those same stern eyes were staring at me now, making me speechless and making my heart skip beats.*

*“Pao! My old friend,” I croaked in desperation while forcing a smile and trying to spread my arms in an inviting way. “Do you remember the good old days we had when we were children, the happiness that we brought to each other?”*

*“Hand over the buddha and follow us,” ordered Pao cold-heartedly, completely unwavering by my touching speech.*

*I glared at the captivating buddha in my hands as it smiled in celebration, overjoyed to be saved.*

*“It was worth a shot,” I muttered under my breath. “What a horrible friend!”*

# The General's Ink

*Singapore International School (Hong Kong), Zhu, Yutong Sophia – 11*

I stared at him, at the unbelievably young general, unable to do anything, can't move, can't speak, can't think. When I turned my head to the Emperor, I realised his expression matched mine. It isn't, it couldn't be, could it?

It was so many years ago, when I was just a new and so-called "rookie" detective. I had been called to the capital Kaifeng to complete a time-consuming investigation. Coincidentally, it was during one of the most stressful times of the year for Chinese students – the final palatial exams, Dian Shi, hosted by the Emperor himself.

It was already dusk, the day before the exams. I was finishing off my investigation and calling it a day when suddenly I heard horses galloping and a loud knock at my door.

It was a message from the Emperor himself, calling me to the scene of the Imperial Study. I threw on some clothes that seemed formal enough and followed the messenger out of my house.

When we arrived at the scene, I immediately dropped to my knees as I recognized the Emperor. He didn't say a word, but he gestured to me to come closer.

"It seems we have a difficult situation here. I have been sent the exam papers for one final check today. And I had also scheduled a meeting with three of the contestants around the same time. The meeting should have been held in the room next to this one. Unfortunately, I was called to an urgent military meeting and therefore missed the meeting scheduled with the three students. By the time I got back it was quite obvious that the papers had been rummaged through. We must figure out whether the papers have been leaked and decide if tomorrow's exam can still be resumed," the Emperor said, with what seemed like a frown on his face. The exams must mean quite a lot to him.

I immediately started looking around the scene. The first of the important papers was on the floor, the second was turned to face the high window overlooking the front gate, and the third was left right where it was.

There was also a peculiar bottle of ink on the table, with a few drops spilled. But the smell of that was enough to tell that it was unique, and of supreme quality. The quill placed next to it was also one-of-a-kind, one I had never seen before.

Without me asking, the Emperor silently handed me a scroll containing information about the three students he was planning to meet. The first one was a quiet and short man from Guangdong, the second a sturdy, confident, and tall man from Sichuan, the third was of athletic build, a tall figure, and from An Hui.

An Hui.

The spilled ink.

The smell of it.

How familiar and uniquely fragrant it smells.

I tried to put the scene into my memory, picked up the quill and the bottle of ink, and turned to the Emperor, "Your majesty, I'm sorry that this might bother you, but I will go home and do my research. Hopefully my return is possible by the next morning."

"I have my utmost faith in you. Please return tomorrow, even if it is with the most unfortunate news," the Emperor said as he agreed to my request, and I left his palace knowing I did not have a lot of time to waste.

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The next morning when I arrived at the emperor's palace, I saw that he was a shambles. Although he agreed to my request, I could tell he had not slept that night.

Having done my research, I turned to the Emperor.

"Your majesty, the ink spilled was of incredible value and quality. There is no other city that has easy access to it other than An Hui. Can I request a meeting with the gentleman from there?"

"Yes, that will be possible," the Emperor replied, and a minute later, the man was brought over.

"Greetings, I am Judge Pao, and I have been asked to complete an investigation for the Emperor. I believe you are somewhat involved, would you like to explain the situation, or should I—" I started.

The man immediately fell to his knees and handed the Emperor a letter.

"Your Majesty, I'm convinced that you already know that I am the culprit. My carelessness of spilling the ink has certainly given me away. Even though I gained a huge advantage from copying the papers, I couldn't sleep last night knowing what I had done. So, I got up early to write this letter. In it, you will find that I'm willing to drop out from the exams and would like a chance as a soldier guarding the border. I'm terribly sorry for what I have done but would be immensely grateful if you could give me another chance." He was in tears as he begged the Emperor.

"Yes, I do believe you should be given a second chance for your courage in coming to admit your mistake," the Emperor generously agreed, "you will be sent to the border as a new soldier this afternoon. I hope that will help you realise your mistake and allow you to reach your full potential."

I, Judge Pao, was convinced this was the end to the case, yet a decade later, the Chinese border was attacked again, and a mysterious young general led an army of a few hundred cavalry into battle. They mounted nearly impossible charges, and finally drove the attacking force away.

The Emperor couldn't believe the courage of the young general. Just as I was about to tell him the results of one of my investigations for him, he called the young general into the palace. When the general's athletic build emerged from between the doors, the emperor's jaw fell to the floor. It was him.

Him.

The culprit.

The man from An Hui.

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Tong, Wai Kin – 10*

One day at the Imperial Palace, a hundred villagers from Guangzhou arrived at the gates, requesting to see the Emperor.

The Emperor was raging. "How dare this ridiculous mob! Tell them to send only one representative!"

A young man entered, "Your Majesty! We are starving due to lack of rice! People are dying. Please help us!" The Emperor felt very puzzled, he had just sent three hundred packs of rice to Guangzhou. So he called for Judge Pao and sent him to investigate.

Judge Pao disguised himself as a scholar and wandered the streets of Guangzhou. He spoke to everyone he encountered. They all complained that the Emperor was too miserly. They said that the Emperor had sent too little rice for the villagers. Pao decided to go to the fort of Xiao Yuen to investigate about the distribution of rice.

At the fort, Pao asked the lord who distributed the rice, "Lord Yi, how much rice did the Emperor send here?" The lord replied, "Three hundred packs. Unfortunately, the warehouse caught fire two days earlier. Two hundred fifty packs of rice were burned. So we could only give the villagers fifty packs." Pao requested to see the warehouse. Lord Yi shook his head, "Sorry, you cannot. It is being rebuilt." Pao thought, "Strange. Why are they rebuilding it so quickly?" So, Pao went back to court and sent his chief guard Zhan Zhao to find more clues.

Zhao took the order and crept into the fort. Inside, he saw lots of guards surrounding the warehouse. When the coast was clear, he sneaked into the warehouse. Strange enough, there were neither signs of ash nor burnt rice inside! Zhao suspected that the rice may have been stolen. He quickly returned to the court to report to Pao.

As soon as Pao heard this, he hurried to the nearby village. He asked the villagers if they had seen anything suspicious. An old man said, "I saw lots of cows crossing by my house last night! It was very unusual. I had never seen so many cows at night." After listening to the old man's story, Pao examined the village's main street. He was astonished to see that there was no cow footprints but tyre tracks! Pao went back to court to discuss with his helper Kung Suen Chak.

Kung and Pao pondered about the strange tyre tracks for a long time. Suddenly, Kung shouted, "I got it!" Pao's face lit up with joy. Kung continued, "At the time of the Three Kingdoms, someone made cows out of wood and hid food in them. The thief might be using the same idea!" Pao nodded and raced off to the nearby market. There, he asked a wood seller if anyone had bought lots of wood recently. Surprised, the wood seller asked Pao how he had known this and answered that a lord named Yi bought them. With this new information, Pao sent Zhao to find the wooden cow in the fort.

Zhao sneaked effortlessly into the fort and into Lord Yi's bedroom then hid under the bed. When Lord Yi returned to his bedroom, he left his keys in his closet. "Heehee," laughed Lord Yi. "Pao would never find those rice in the cows. Who would have known there is a secret underground room in the Baiyun Mountain?" Having overheard this, Zhao waited for Lord Yi to leave before he fled to inform Pao.

Later, Pao sent Zhao to seize Yi and bring him to the court. Yi was furious. "How dare you? Why are you arresting me?" Pao demanded where the missing rice went. Yi replied, "They were burnt!" Pao roared, "How dare you! You still aren't going to admit you stole the rice, are you?"

Zhao then brought in the first witness into the court. The old man said, "I saw lots of cows crossing by my house the night before yesterday. I had never seen so many cows!" Lord Yi laughed, "That was only a farmer bringing his cows back to the farm late at night." Next, Zhao brought in the second witness. The wood seller claimed, "A few days earlier, Lord Yi went to my shop and demanded for nine tons of wood for a reasonable price. He said that it was for building a bridge." Lord Yi smiled, "Yeah, I was going to build a bridge for the villagers." Finally, Pao declared, "Now for our final 'witness', the wooden cow!" While Pao was judging Yi, several guards had went to the Baiyun Mountains and found the secret room. Later, they retrieved all the wooden cows back to

the court just in time. After Pao finished, Zhao brought a wooden cow into the court. Pao demanded, "Lord Yi, this cow was found in your secret room. Do you confess?" Yi knew he was caught red-handed and so he confessed everything. "I only wanted to make more money by selling the rice! I was greedy. First, I bought tons of wood and made thirty wooden cows. I hid the rice inside them and sent my guards to transport the cows to the underground room in Baiyun Mountain."

Pao stripped Yi of his lord status and sent him to work as a slave in the desert. As for the missing rice, they were finally distributed to the villagers. The villagers were overjoyed and thanked Judge Pao gratefully.

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Tse, Chun Kiu – 12*

Not far from Kaifeng sat a tranquil little village named Yuquan. In this serene village, it hid a scene of chaos in one of its humble houses. A picture had been knocked off the wall, fragments all over the floor. The chairs and tables were toppled, tattered and battered. The owner, the village leader, was known for his orderliness and would not accept anything untidy or messy, even if his life depended on it, but there he was, lying on the floor, dead as a doornail and soaked in blood. The whole place was a horrifying, bloody mess. Amidst this harrowing scene, a dark silhouette slipped away in the moonlight, blending into the shadows. However, he did not notice that a small piece of his ornament had been chipped in the struggle.

The following day, Judge Pao sat in his room, trying to uncover the mysterious death of the village leader in Yuquan. He fingered a piece of broken ornament left at the crime scene, trying to grasp what had happened. The ornament's design was exquisite and had a gorgeous carving of the letter "S". Anyone could easily imagine that the owner must have been wealthy. As Judge Pao was pondering about the crime, a voice broke his train of thought. "Judge Pao! The banks of the Wai Man River are flooding! Please help us and save our crops!" Then other screaming voices arose, and he saw that frantic-looking citizens were outside his courtyard, wringing their hands and wailing. Seeing this, he quickly walked outside into the crowd of panicked townspeople.

When Judge Pao arrived at the river bank, almost half of the city was flooded ankle-deep. The peasants wore ragged clothes, hastening back and forth to bucket the water from their homes. They looked poorer than they were last week. However, Judge Pao decided to solve the more urgent problem first. With his meticulous eye, he scrutinised the river and spotted something unusual. The current in the south of the river was rapid, while the current in the north was much slower. "I know what is happening," Judge Pao said without doubt.

The next day, Judge Pao rode a carriage over to the north side of the river. His suspicions were confirmed when the river current gradually slowed down until it lumbered like a turtle. As he travelled farther and farther into the north, an undeniable outline of a mansion suddenly emerged from the heavy fog. The mansion was enormous, more prominent than all the houses back in Kaifeng. Judge Pao first noticed a unique hipped roof, which only government officials were allowed to have. The second thing he noticed was that the road to the mansion barely had any hoof marks, and the house tiles were shiny and polished.

Judge Pao stepped onto the marble-made steps and knocked on the front door, where the gigantic letters "Shong" had been carved delicately into it. The door opened a bit, and an eye peeked through the tiny crack. It was a man. When he heard that the visitor was Judge Pao, he stiffened and immediately straightened his posture. His face softened to a politer expression, and he quickly informed his master. Then, a well-dressed man in fine silk clothes emerged. "I am WeiShong, a government official. Please excuse my servant for his rudeness, Judge Pao. Please come in." Just as Judge Pao was being led inside the mansion, something caught the corner of his eye. WeiShong's waist was accessorised with an ornament made of jade and chipped. The part chipped off was a part of the letters "Shong".

"You have such a beautiful mansion; please can you show me around?" requested Judge Pao. As he followed WeiShong, he discovered numerous gardens and pavilions that graced the estate. Moreover, they stretched out on the banks of the river. Then, having an inkling about what had happened, Judge Pao courteously excused himself and left.

Judge Pao was drenched in rain and water when he got home, but he did not bother to get changed; he immediately started carefully examining the broken ornament he had found at the crime scene. Then, after reviewing the documents for tax collection, the final piece of the puzzle clicked into place.

The next day, there was a public hearing. When everyone was gathered at the court, Judge Pao declared, "I hereby arrest government official WeiShong for embezzlement and murder! Do you plead not guilty, WeiShong?" There was a collective gasp of shock from everyone. WeiShong was startled but quickly regained his composure and spoke calmly. "With all due respect, I have no idea what you are saying, Judge Pao. What proof do you have with which to charge me?"

"This!" exclaimed Judge Pao, holding out the broken ornament shard. WeiShong's eyes widened, his whole body frozen. "You are a corrupted official who steals tax money from innocent citizens; you built your mansion by exploiting the citizens' tax money. That was why the citizens have become even more impoverished. After expanding on your estate with the stolen money, the construction obstructed the river and caused the flood. The

village leader knew you were corrupted, and you feared he would expose you, so you killed him. In the struggle, a piece of your jade ornament got chipped off. As we can all see, the shard left behind at the crime scene comes from the ornament you are wearing now. Do you still not plead guilty?" Ashen-faced, WeiShong fell to his knees and confessed to his crimes in the face of irrefutable evidence. "I now sentence you to life imprisonment for you to reflect on your faults! You will also have your property demolished and your wealth confiscated and returned to the citizens! The court adjourned!"

The upright Judge Bao had solved another case! The citizens of Kaifeng clapped their hands in glee and proclaimed, "All hail the righteous Judge Pao!"

## *Judge Bao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chan, Wing – 10*

It was a rainy afternoon, Bao Zheng had just finished lunch, happy that he managed to solve the last murder mystery in town. Who is Bao Zheng you may ask? He is the famous Judge Bao, a detective before Sherlock Holmes, who lived in China.

Zhan Zhao ran into Judge Bao's house and screamed "Judge Bao, Judge Bao, there was a dead body in the middle of a forest!" It was a new murder investigation! He quickly got dressed and went to the crime scene.

Soon, he arrived, he saw the dead body, it was pouring, and he saw the victim completely wet, the victim was a young girl that died in a forest, cause of death was unknown, there wasn't any evidence of an accident or a murder, as soon as possible, Judge Bao got to work he examined the blood and it was a murder!

However, there was no evidence that there was anyone near as previously said Judge Bao soon decided to find his student, Mr. Gongsun to help him, they soon found a different coloured leaf and saw red and yellow leaves put in a large circle, however it was not the season for there to be natural red and yellow leaves falling, they also saw a piece of paper writing number on it, and so they decided to count the numbers of red leaves and yellow leaves, once they started they saw that there was another piece of paper writing: age, after finishing they counted 3 red leaves and 6 yellow leaves, they didn't know whether to add, subtract, multiply or divide the numbers to find the age of the killer, while discussing they found out that the bottom of the leaves was not grass, it was concrete! Surrounding the area were trees, nine to be exact, they noticed and they both thought "This made sense  $3+6$  is 9!" They went near all nine trees and on the last one they saw hand broken sticks, they used the same method and found 4 sticks, then, Mr. Gongsun thought "This must be another maths equation! The most similar thing to addition is multiplication!" He told his idea of multiplying the numbers together to Judge Bao and he agreed saying "But what is the meaning of 36?" Mr. Gongsun then said "There is a village nearby, it is said that there are only 36 houses!"

They soon went to the village. They asked a kind lady whether there was anyone in the village missing and she said "Yes, it was the 18 years-old daughter of the owner of house 36!" They suddenly understood the meaning of the number 36!

Soon, they found the family that owns the house and asked each of them very specific questions, the mother said "I have spent the afternoon playing with my son after eating with my daughter" The son said "I spent the entire day playing with mom and sleeping" The father said "I was with my wife in the afternoon after dropping my daughter off at her house!"

Soon after the interrogation Judge Bao found who did it but there was no further evidence.

The day after the interrogation, they went back to the crime scene and saw a knife! It seemed that the murderer tried to go back and hide the body but left the knife! This might be the day they figure out the killer! They put the knife in a basket, to the Kaifeng Prefecture they went, they soon saw some obvious fingerprints and matched it with the suspects and the fingerprints looked exactly like the fathers! Judge Bao thought "All the clues led up to one thing, since the brother and mother were spending time together in the afternoon and the father said that he was spending time with the mother, but the father never said he was spending time with the brother too! In the second sentence he said that he dropped the daughter off then that would mean that he was the last person that saw the victim before she was killed, this all made sense!"

Judge Bao told Zhan Zhao to find the father and take the father to the Kaifeng Prefecture to judge what penalty was worth for the crimes he had committed, after a long discussion and endless of arguments they decided that the crimes he had committed was not only murder it was also thievery and many more, the father was one of the few top tier criminals! It was also said that it was a family tradition to kill the woman after turning 18! Since the residence number 3x6 was 18, they had sentenced him to a death penalty in a few days so he could reflect on the things he had done and also for the preparation of the ceremony.

A few days later, just about 2, the ceremony was held and he was beheaded and everything was over! At least that's what they thought... but what about the rest of the family? You may ask, they were let go as the tradition only existed in the father's side of the family.



# *The Story of Judge Pao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chong, Yin Sing – 10*

Once, there was a village and nobody could enter, the only way to enter was to break in or to be born in the village. It's hard to break in as they have a lot of security guards roaming around the village. But a mysterious thief managed to get around their security system. Most people all thought that the thief was just lonely, but actually, there's a lot more underneath the secrets of the thief.

One day when the moon set, everyone heard a noise coming from the trees of their village, the tree was called "The Great Tree" and they respected and cared for it for at least one hundred years. When they walked towards the tree to see what was going on, nothing was there, No animals, no people, no anything! All they found was one single dollar falling from the tree branch onto the grassy lands near their tree. Then when they turned around they were jump scared by Judge Pao! They never thought Judge Pao would come to their village, as he lived miles away from them! Judge Pao then said he was going to solve the problem of who was roaming around their village illegally. Judge Pao then said that he will find the thief and arrest him.

First, he checked the village to see if there were any footprints that were similar to the thief's, but no, there wasn't any that matched his. He kept looking and looking for more clues. Then this is when he found one and saw that the footprints were similar to the thief's, he also found the thief's identity card and his name was "Mastuer Jan", he was a high school student and Judge Pao could recognize the thief from miles away. The thief was Judge Pao's old friend and he knew exactly how and where he could find him.

Judge Pao then went to the thief's house and checked if the thief was inside, but surprisingly not! Whenever school ended, Mastuer Jan would go back home and sleep for a bit then get up and eat dinner and go back to sleep, he was checking if Mastuer Jan's house had any clues of where he went, and there it was! He found a scratch on the walls and some blood on the floor. He wondered if Mastuer Jan turned to the bad side and killed someone just to earn money! If that was the case, then Judge Pao had to act fast because someone could also perish from Mastuer Jan if judge Pao doesn't stop him from doing so. Then he located Mastuer Jan's locations with the bloody footprints and fingerprints, then when he found out Mastuer Jan didn't kill someone but someone killed him, He was so sad, he wanted to arrest the criminal for life, because whenever Judge Pao finds a criminal, he never arrests the criminal and only gives him warnings. He was angry and sad at the same time.

Then when he found the criminal's location, he wanted to arrest him so badly. The one thing he couldn't resist was saving his friend, but his friend was just fine, but he thought he was murdered, so he asked "What is going on?" He answered "Did you forget today is your birthday?" Then Judge Pao answer "No."

"Then what are you waiting for?" said his friend, then he asked "What were all the bloody things and scratches and thieves?" He answered that the thief was a trick it was actually him and the scratches and blood was fake as well. So now Judge Pao is now having his holiday and he is going to from now on always celebrate his birthday and enjoy it.

## *The New Tale of Judge Bao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chan, Yu Tung Avery – 9*

Judge Bao——A famous “Song Dynasty’s Judge”. His appearance was very dramatic!! He was 100% Chinese but with very black skin colour which looks like an African. But when I searched his history that he was born in Mainland China and really our ancestor. Moreover, he has a moon shape on his forehead. Do you want to know why and how it got there? This happened when he was a kid, his aunt dropped her necklace into the well. At that time, a brave young Judge Bao had to get it back, so he worked with his aunt. He tied a string around his waist and jumped into the well to help her to find it, but it was just like old Chinese folk said “finding a needle in the ocean” which means it would be near impossible to get it back. This left him no choice but to give up. He shook the string while he was upside down in the well, giving his aunt a signal to pull him up. During the journey up, he had a very painful experience. As a result, he got hit by the wall twice deeply. Thus, giving him an unforgettable moon shaped scar. This became the special and unique mark of Judge Bao.

His appearance and name raised my curiosity to read his book and watch the movie about him. His life and his style in judging cases. He judged many cases, he even judged spirits, and asked ghosts to appeal its cases, which is extremely magical. He likes that he has a supreme super power to communicate with spirits and other creatures. He was clever enough to make thieves, villains and criminals feel regret, and tell all the truth and consent that they were guilty by themselves. He also usefully used the environmental evidence and find the witness even if they were scared to hide and left. He can also appoint the right persons and guards around him to help to judge the cases. I read and read and read..... for a couple hours and became very sleepy, and I started to fall asleep.....

The sunlight out of the window woke me up, and I yawned and yelled out and asked my mom to prepare my delicious breakfast. When I got down and stepped out of my bedroom.....I WAS SHOCKED! Terrible things happened at my sight. My house disappeared and all my family members are lost too and I'm at the scene of the “Movie” of Judge Bao. I was standing at a miserable and old place, and it looked like the courtroom that I saw in Judge Bao’s movie. I saw three horrifying “Blades”, they were named as “Dog Head Blade”, “Tiger Head Blade” and “Dragon Head Blade” which were used to execute the murders in the past. I was so nervous and felt my blood pressure was over 200 and heart beating was 100. Many, many questions appeared in my mind. Why am I here? How can I leave? Who will I meet? Where should I hide? While I was still thinking of the next step, suddenly, I heard someone talking and I peeked to take a look behind the curtain. Oh No! King of Song Dynasty and Judge Bao, they were discussing the cases of “Prince was exchanged by the Civet Cat”. This was happened one thousand and twenty-four years ago. I was back to the past? While I was still thinking, the king was walking towards me, he seemed to be investigating an unsolved mystery with Judge Bao. So I prayed that I had a magical power that he would not see me, but instead he just acted like nothing was in front of him and he stepped on my body! It was too rushed for me to escape but at last he stepped on me but I felt nothing. So, I tried to say “hi” to him but he just ignored me and whatever I did. I sang and danced but without anyone clapping hands and praised. Then I realised that I was transparent to them, and maybe even invisible! I was shocked and I thought, ‘am I a spirit or a ghost or even a monster?’ Then I remembered that I drank some “Invisible potion” before I went to the cinema since I want to watch a movie without buying the ticket. I was very excited about it now that I’m invisible and I can do whatever I want!

“Hooray! Now no one can see me, which means I can go and explore the palace! I was excited to travel to the courtroom, the Palace and the Forbidden City, they were humongous! I kept walking but suddenly I fell from the roof of the palace and I fainted. The smell of tasty bread woke me up. When I opened my eyes, I saw a stinky toe stuck in my mouth. Oh no, my sister climbed up to my bed and slept next to me. She shook my head to wake me up and I wondered if I was in reality now. I was dreaming while I was watching the movie. Therefore I dreamed about his story and I got into it.

After reading his cases and movies about him, he has inspired me to become a detective or a lawyer or even a judge to fight for justice when I grow up. His life and way to solve the cases, his judgements and harmony for the poor and those who were in need really impressed me. It will always be deeply recorded in my mind! He was generous and kind to rescue all the innocent people and victims! I have an interesting thought: if he was in Hong Kong nowadays, he must be a good Judge and even a good teacher to serve the community. “Judge Bao”, I'm proud of you that you did appear in our Chinese history.

## *My Adventures with Dai Dai and Judge Pao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Chau, Chun Yin Alfred – 9*

Hi, my name is Alfred. I had a great adventure yesterday. When I was playing with my dog, Dai Dai, she was digging my neighbor's flowerbed. I saw a shiny gold box. I look around and made sure no-one was looking at me. I quickly peek inside and saw a key lock and a key. I used the key to open the lock. Suddenly, surrounding became so bright. I thought, "Is the bus going to heaven about to arrive?". No way! I am just entered into a brand-new world.

I saw a weird person, but I seems became invisible. He couldn't see me and I couldn't talk to him. He was an African villager. When I looked closer, I found he was a Chinese but the skin color was black and there was a moon shaped birthmark on the middle of his forehead. I immediately thought he might be "Moon Knight" or some other "Super Hero" or something ridiculous. When I looked really close, I remembered a character from a movie. He must be "Judge Pao"! My dog sniffed at "Judge Pao" and he said, "What is that? Go away you four legs monster." His crew said, "Relax! It is only a dog." Then his crew turned to Dai Dai and asked, "Doggie, where did you come from?"

Suddenly, we heard a scream from a gigantic house with twelve people in it. Soon, we went inside the house and looked around. We found a dead body and Judge Pao was looking for evidences and clues. He asked those witnesses what happened? The invisible saw a potion on the floor which I felt that was safe. I drank that potion, I became visible again. Everyone was so scared, they thought I might be the killer. Then I explained that I came here to help you. Judge Pao asked me, "How did you know me?" I said, "That is my secret. If you believe me, I am sure I can help to solve this mystery murder case". Judge Pao thought for a while and smiled at me and said, "I believe you!"

My dog responded promptly and did a good job. She sniffed everyone inside the room, but none of them seems suspected as murderer. Dai Dai kept on sniffing around and found the suspected footprint 2km away from the house. We followed the footprint and it leaded to an old hut. In the middle of nowhere or rather in a forest full with plant. We entered the old hut and stepped on a pressure plate, iron bars popped out from the ground. A guy came out from the plant and walked close to us and said, "Judge Pao, I have been waiting for you for years. Can you see the key on my hand? That's your only chance to escape. Do you think I will give you the key? Hahaha. No, I won't." In the meantime, I said, "Not so fast, it's big brain time, you stupid idiot!" Then I snatched the key from his hand and unlock the cell. We all ran out from the cell and the fight started. We knocked him down within 5 minutes and him beg for our forgiveness. He cried and said, "Please, stop, call the police, send me to jail, don't killed me. I don't want to die!!!" I asked him, "Who are you? What's your name? Why do you try to lock us inside? Are you the murderer? Why you kill?" He said, "Yes, I am the murderer and my name is Piglin Brute (character from Minecraft). I kill everyone who dare to insult me as a loser. He deserves it. He laughed at me." We called the police and sent Piglin Brute to the jail. Judge Pao said, "Thanks for your help. Can you tell me who you are? You are so smart. I think you might come from another universe." I said, "You are welcome. In fact, you are very smart too. I really come from another universe coded SMCESPS. It's time for me and Dai Dai to leave now. It's my pleasure to meet you." Then I snapped my finger, Dai Dai and I teleported back to SMCESPS base and met my angry neighbor. She shouted, "Get out of my garden. How dare you dig up my flowerbed? I will call your parent for my loss." Dai Dai and I ran away. We were looking forward for another great adventure.

# *The New Tale of Judge Bao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Feld, Gustave Francois Julien – 11*

It was another normal day of crime solving for justice bao jin tian when he received a black coloured letter when he got home,the letter was written in blood,and it looked like it was fresh blood,he knew where this comes from.With his hands trembling,he read the letter.It said:

Dear Pao,

Come bovn to he < ter o'lb onie<sup>3</sup>t,IM†09TAN/,UR\$\$ T

Frow:

The I fer al Bureau'acy

With a grunt,he put down the letter and burnt it to hide the evidence to not have people freak out over it if they found it.Whenever the Infernal Bureaucracy wrote to him,he knew

that he wouldn't get any sleep that night.So he drank some tea and started the ritual to activate the portal that led to the underworld,he gathered a variety of herbs and put them in a circle and burnt them,then,he made a cut on his arm and painted some of his blood onto a piece of paper in the middle of the circle and started chanting,then,he stood in the middle of the circle as a ring of 1re started forming around him.Then,he was engulfed in the Rames and he felt a sudden tug in his guts and with a 'Whoosh!',he was oI to the underworld to see what the matter was down there,hopefully he would solve the case in a short amount of time so that he could get more sleep,because he also has another case to solve in the overworld,where he lives.

When he entered the underworld,he was escorted to the courtroom by two faceless Raming guards.The tall ceiling of the courtroom was supported by massive pillars with diIerent depictions of death and the devil carved onto them.Judge Bao still hasn't gotten used to entering the courtroom every time.

Judge Bao sat onto the bench and the jury gave him an hour to assess the case and Judge Bao sat there,bewildered for two minutes,until he 1nally said:Let the trial commence.

Everyone got to their seats and the trial started.A wandering spirit wreaked havoc in the spirit world and now many spirits are roaming free around the mortal world.So the rumours he had heard are true,some village folks really did see a ghost at night.The spirit was charged with disturbing the mortal world and therefore will face eternity in hell unless proven innocent.Judge Bao starts:Today we have gathered here at the courtroom of the underworld to testify whether this spirit here who's name in their past life was Lin Ming Zhou is guilty or innocent of the charges he's given of,which is:disturbing the mortal world.With paranormal activity,he has caused more than a dozen mortals to lose their minds over a vision that they saw of one of the spirits that Ming Zho

set free,with more than enough evidence to prove that he is guilty,though the jury will also be the judge of that.Does the defendant have anything to add or say to everyone in this room?Anything you are about to saycannot be added to the evidence given,the jury will decide his fate.But just as Ming Zhou started,a bell rang across the room,that's it for tonight.I'll now dismiss the court and we'll continue tomorrow night.And just like that,judge Bao left the courtroom and the second he did that,he was teleported back into his house.It was very late into the night and he was very tired,he walked to his bed,but just as he started to doze oI,he saw a vision of Ming Zhou.

He saw Ming Zhou as a small boy,playing with his siblings.They were laughing and running around the house,when Ming Zhou suddenly said:'Hey,look!A rabbit!'Ming Zhou and his sibling followed the rabbit into the forest nearby,and at one point,they split up without knowing.Only Ming Zhou found his way out of the forest.He and his family members proceeded to search for the other two,but there was no sign of them.Ming Zhou family then 1nally concluded that perhaps the younger brother and sister had gotten lost and a tiger found them and ate them.After seeing this vision,his vision went blank,then slowly but surely,the could start to see a dim light ahead,he slowly advanced with caution to examine the light,and when he got closer,the light Rashed and standing right in front of Bao Jin tian,was Lin Ming Zhou himself,though looking much paler.Ming Zhou looked up and saw judge Bao,he then dropped onto his knees and started begging for judge Bao's mercy.Judge Bao,having never encountered a spirit in his dreams before stood still,he knew this was a dream so he slowly shook his head and said:'Unfortunately,there is nothing I can do for you.'then Ming Zhou slowly lowered his head and

mumbled:Understood. Then Ming Zhou faded away and judge Bao opened his eyes and he sat up on his bed,contemplating what had just happened.

That night,he performed the ritual again and continued the trial.And that's when Ming Zhou told his story.He was a boy who was born in a poor family,he had two siblings,both younger than him.And then he proceeded to describe the exact thing that happened in judge Bao's dream last night.And so at last,judge Bao concluded that:Lin Ming Zhou broke into the lock of the door that leads to the mortal world,the ones some souls get to walk through when they get a second life.Ming died just to open the door of life to free his siblings from the underworld because he deeply regrets leading them into the forest just because they wanted to chase a rabbit to cook for dinner.But when Ming Zhou opened the door,other spirits came rushing out too.Lin Ming Zhou now regrets his actions and will now agree to his punishment no matter how harsh it is.The jury has decided that he is guilty and he will be sent to the 1elds of punishment for one million years.

## *Judge Bao Zheng's Wisdom*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Fung, Chun Hei – 10*

Dear Diary,

Today is the year of 1036. I, or people may call me Judge Pao, got a present from the King. The present served as the reward for solving the Civet Cat Exchange for the Crown Prince case. The case was actually a very interesting one and required a lot of hard work from our team to sort things out. But the reward I received today really reminded me of the day when I first joined the government.

Originally, I was given tasks on social affairs, and some of these tasks involved making judgments according to the law. Through that experience, I was proven to be fair and clear enough to make correct decisions depending on the evidence available for cases.

Being appreciated by the regional head, I was later promoted to a higher position, moving from being a local official to a district official, then a regional position. I was finally moved to the Royal Palace. There I became the top judge, hearing cases involving complaints and rights violations from ordinary people to relatives of the king.

An interesting case came up to me when I was reading other information on tricky cases. There was a blind woman who claimed, "The King is my son." I felt confused and didn't react to that immediately. She continued to explain, "It was really painful during labouring. That's why I didn't notice my baby was being stolen at that time!"

I tried hard to get more evidence, be it an object or anyone who knows the case. I found relatives of the royal family. They were reluctant but he admitted that the scandal of the king is a real one. Wow! That really surprised me. King was so glad and decided to grant me a present.

The present was a pomander watch. I turned and turned the watch. Suddenly, I went into something which dragged me inside without a second thought. "Am I inside a time machine?" I thought. I closed my eyes because it was so bright – I was not sure when it was the moment I lost my consciousness.

However, when I opened my eyes again, I found myself on a mountain. Looking down, I was shocked by all those skyscrapers – these buildings were much taller than any of those I had ever seen in my life. This was not the world I used to know, a rather crazy idea came to my mind, "Is it the future?"

Suddenly, there was a flying machine getting near to me, and it said to me, "Stop moving. Put your hands into the air." I felt scared and knew what they wanted to do – they wanted to kidnap me!

What can I do? I could only run as fast as I could. I fell down hard, and I hit something on my forehead – leaving me with a moon-shaped scar. However, there was no time for me to hesitate. I kept running but still could not get rid of that machine.

When I was running, I accidentally left the pomander watch behind and lost it. I guessed it may have been stolen or fallen somewhere on the mountain because of the wind. After running for an hour, I stopped because I was too tired. Stepping into the flying machine, I got into a station, and people there asked me a lot of questions as if I was suspicious.

I said calmly, "I am Judge Pao. I am the top judge for my time." No one believed me but then still allowed me to go away.

What I did first was to find the pomander watch that I left. I went back to the same mountain to search for the pomander watch. I saw it and when I tried to take it back, some guys appeared and told me to get away as they were working to investigate cases.

I was so confident and lent them a hand for helping them find clues and evidence.

I was exhausted later and went to a park to sit down to take a rest.

Those guys in blue shirts came up to me to thank me for the assistance provided. When he had not finished talking, the sky started raining.

They asked me to go back to the station as typhoon signal no. 10 would be hoisted soon.

I asked, "What is a typhoon signal 10?" He replied, "A hurricane force wind is blowing or expected to blow with sustained speed reaching 118 km/h or above and gusts that may exceed 220 km/h."

I found it hard to understand but managed to catch an opportunity to tell him all the things that happened to me before meeting him.

He told his crew to help me find the pomander watch, but in vain. An old man walked to me slowly and handed a pomander watch to me!

"I found it on the floor." He said.

Feeling grateful, I kept saying thank you to all of them.

I turned and turned the pomander watch and finally got back to my time.

I told the king everything I saw and everyone laughed at me, saying that I had a great dream the night before. Touching the scar on my forehead, I knew this was not a dream.

I don't care even if no one believes me. Travelling to the future allows me to learn many new things, and the experience of solving the case with those guys in blue shirts offered me an opportunity to learn a lot of knowledge too.

That extra knowledge I learnt from the future will be able to help me solve cases. I am determined and will devote myself in searching for truth all the time.

# *The New Tale of Judge Bao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Kwong, Nathan – 9*

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Originally, I was given tasks on social affairs, and some of these tasks involved making judgments according to the law. Through that experience, I was proven to be fair and clear enough to make correct decisions depending on the evidence available for cases.

Being appreciated by the regional head, I was later promoted to a higher position, moving from being a local official to a district official, then a regional position. I was finally moved to the Royal Palace. There I became the top judge, hearing cases involving complaints and rights violations from ordinary people to relatives of the king.

An interesting case came up to me when I was reading other information on tricky cases. There was a blind woman who claimed, "The King is my son." I felt confused and didn't react to that immediately. She continued to explain, "It was really painful during labouring. That's why I didn't notice my baby was being stolen at that time!"

I tried hard to get more evidence, be it an object or anyone who knows the case. I found relatives of the royal family. They were reluctant but he admitted that the scandal of the king is a real one. Wow! That really surprised me. King was so glad and decided to grant me a present.

The present was a pomander watch. I turned and turned the watch. Suddenly, I went into something which dragged me inside without a second thought. "Am I inside a time machine?" I thought. I closed my eyes because it was so bright – I was not sure when it was the moment I lost my consciousness.

However, when I opened my eyes again, I found myself on a mountain. Looking down, I was shocked by all those skyscrapers – these buildings were much taller than any of those I had ever seen in my life. This was not the world I used to know, a rather crazy idea came to my mind, "Is it the future?"

Suddenly, there was a flying machine getting near to me, and it said to me, "Stop moving. Put your hands into the air." I felt scared and knew what they wanted to do – they wanted to kidnap me!

What can I do? I could only run as fast as I could. I fell down hard, and I hit something on my forehead – leaving me with a moon-shaped scar. However, there was no time for me to hesitate. I kept running but still could not get rid of that machine.

When I was running, I accidentally left the pomander watch behind and lost it. I guessed it may have been stolen or fallen somewhere on the mountain because of the wind. After running for an hour, I stopped because I was too tired. Stepping into the flying machine, I got into a station, and people there asked me a lot of questions as if I was suspicious.

I said calmly, "I am Judge Pao. I am the top judge for my time." No one believed me but then still allowed me to go away.

What I did first was to find the pomander watch that I left. I went back to the same mountain to search for the pomander watch. I saw it and when I tried to take it back, some guys appeared and told me to get away as they were working to investigate cases.

I was so confident and lent them a hand for helping them find clues and evidence.

I was exhausted later and went to a park to sit down to take a rest.

Those guys in blue shirts came up to me to thank me for the assistance provided. When he had not finished talking, the sky started raining.

They asked me to go back to the station as typhoon signal no. 10 would be hoisted soon.



I asked, "What is a typhoon signal 10?" He replied, "A hurricane force wind is blowing or expected to blow with sustained speed reaching 118 km/h or above and gusts that may exceed 220 km/h."

I found it hard to understand but managed to catch an opportunity to tell him all the things that happened to me before meeting him.

He told his crew to help me find the pomander watch, but in vain. An old man walked to me slowly and handed a pomander watch to me!

"I found it on the floor." He said.

Feeling grateful, I kept saying thank you to all of them.

I turned and turned the pomander watch and finally got back to my time.

I told the king everything I saw and everyone laughed at me, saying that I had a great dream the night before. Touching the scar on my forehead, I knew this was not a dream.

I don't care even if no one believes me. Travelling to the future allows me to learn many new things, and the experience of solving the case with those guys in blue shirts offered me an opportunity to learn a lot of knowledge too.

That extra knowledge I learnt from the future will be able to help me solve cases. I am determined and will devote myself in searching for truth all the time.

## *The Killing Dragon*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Lai, Man Hei – 11*

Lady Lee recounts to Judge Pao in China about an old legend of a curse that reportedly runs in the ZhaoDong family since the time of the war, when Sir Zhao was killed by a huge demonic dragon. With the same creature haunting the caves of Beijing ever since, it caused the premature death of many ZhaoDong heirs. He reveals that her friend Lady ZhaoZie, who took the legend of the dragon seriously, was found dead in the HanSheng alley of her estate, ZhaoDong Hall, in the midst of GongShan. The death was attributed to a heart attack, but Lady Lee reveals that Sir Zhao's face retained an expression of horror, and not far from his body were the footprints of a gigantic dragon. Lady Lee now fears for the next in line, Sir ZhaoDong.

Though he dismisses the curse as nonsense, Judge Pao agrees to meet Sir Henry, who is arriving from China, where he has been living. A young and jovial man, Sir ZhaoDong is sceptical about the legend and is eager to take possession of ZhaoDong Hall, in spite of receiving an anonymous note, warning him to stay away from the moor. When someone shadows Sir Zhao while he is walking down a street, Judge Pao asks Lady Lee to go with Sir Zhao and Lady Lee to HanSheng, in order to protect Sir Zhao and search for any clues about who is following him.

The trio arrive at ZhaoDong Hall where the YuWeng couple, the butler and housekeeper reside. The estate is surrounded by lakes and borders. The lake is so deep, animals and humans will not be able to swim up and drown to death. The news that a convict named JianLee, a murderer, has escaped from nearby HanSheng Jail and is hiding in the nearby barren hills adds to the gloomy atmosphere.

There are inexplicable events during the first night, keeping Sir Zhao awake, and only in the daylight do they relax. Judge Pao keeps searching for any lead to the identity of whoever is following Sir Zhao. He in turn faithfully sends details of his investigations to Judge Pao. Among the residents, the YuWeng brother and sister, stand out. JianXu is very friendly and too curious toward Sir Zhao and Judge Pao, while his sibling, Lady Lee seems all too weary of the place and attempts to warn Sir ZhaoDong and Judge Pao of danger.

Judge Pao walks among the hills but his mood is no better inside ZhaoDong Hall. He grows suspicious of the butler who is signalling from a window of the house with a candle to someone on the hill. Meanwhile, Sir Zhao is drawn to Lady YuWeng who seems to be afraid of her brother's attitude to her romantic life. To make the puzzle more complex, there is Lady Lee. She is all too eager to convince Sir Zhao that the curse is real. TianGuang is an old and grumpy neighbour who likes to pry on others by watching through his window. His estranged daughter is TuangRu, who had unclear ties to Sir YuWeng. Even an unknown man is roaming free on the hills and apparently hiding in a temple where ancient tombs have been excavated by Lady Lee.

Lady Lee investigates the man in the temple and discovers that it has been Judge Pao all along. He has been hiding around the hills and is close to solving the mystery. He reveals that the dragon is real and belongs to TianGuang, who promised YuWeng money and convinced her to lure TuangRu out of his house at night in order to scare him with the dragon. YuWeng is in fact TuangRu's wife and is posing as his sister so as to influence Sir Zhao and expose him as well to the dragon. The dragon kills a man on the hills whom Judge Pao and Lady Lee fear is Sir Zhao, but JianXu had given the former's clothes to FungLee, who is his brother-in-law, and FungLee dies instead.

Judge Pao decides to use ZhaoDong as bait to catch TianGuang red-handed by having Sir Zhao accept an invitation to TianGuang's house and so he gives his enemy every chance to unleash the dragon on him. Judge Pao and Lady Lee pretend to leave YuWeng by train, but instead they hide near TianGuang's house with JianXu. Despite the darkly thick fog, Judge Pao and Lady Lee are able to kill the dragon when it attacks Sir Zhao. Meanwhile, TianGuang, in his panicked flight from the scene, seemingly drowns in the lake near the house. Back at ZhaoDong Hall, Judge Pao remarks to Lady Lee that not only was TianGuang a physical and spiritual throwback to Sir ZhaoZheng being a lost relation of Sir GuangDong, but also that he was one of the most unforgettable foes Judge Pao had ever encountered.

## *New Tales of Judge Pao – The Missing Jewel*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Lam, Tak Lok Morris – 9*

Once upon a time, the king alerted Judge Pao to solve a case. He brought Judge Pao to his palace and said “Judge Pao, I have a case for you, the best detective I could find. Somebody has stolen a jewel that my parents gave me when I was still a baby. I need you to find out where the jewel is, and who was the one that stole it.” Judge Pao said “Okay, my pleasure to accept your case. First, I need to know where it was the last time you saw it.”

“It was on a cabinet in my bedroom.”

“When did you find out it was missing?”

“This morning when I woke up.”

“Okay, now bring me to your bedroom,” said Judge Pao. “We need to look for clues.”

The king brought Pao to his bedroom. Pao immediately noticed a small cylinder made of metal on the floor. “It says ‘battery’” He thought to himself. Pao also found a big piece of paper saying ‘TIME MACHI’. He couldn’t read the rest of it because there was a black stain on it. “Hmm... what could it possibly be?” Judge Pao said. “I’ve got an idea!” the king shouted excitedly. He grabbed the piece of paper, ran to the steep river next to the palace and dipped the paper in the water. When Judge Pao caught up, he exclaimed unhappily “Are you trying to remove the stain? That won’t work because the paper’s disintegrated already!” The king was embarrassed. He looked at the remains of the piece of paper flow down the lake. All of a sudden, something caught his vision! He told Judge Pao “There’s a gold box over the lake!” said the king. Judge Pao and the king crossed the river by a bridge nearby. The box was not gigantic, it had only enough room for 2 to 3 people. Judge Pao investigated the box. There was a hatch inside, saying, ‘insert battery’. Judge Pao remembered the small cylinder that was found in the king’s bedroom. He put it inside the hatch. A blue hologram appeared in the box. “What in the world is that?” the king shouted. The hologram showed a man. He said “welcome to Time Machines Co. From the year 3927, humans have made a huge advance in technology. Finally, we have achieved what we had thought of since the 19th century, and that is... to teleport through time. Only with a few neutrons and electrons, we can create an orb that can bring you to any time with a touch. Goodbye, and good luck.” “I didn’t understand anything that guy said!” Judge Pao exclaimed. “And what’s this button that says ‘return to present’? “Maybe it’s going to give us a present! I love presents, let’s press it!” the king said. He pressed the button, and they both got sucked into a portal.

There were bright flashes and loud noises, and JudgePao and the king plopped down onto a shiny floor. They were on the 4th floor of a futuristic mall. People and robots were everywhere. Judge Pao thought, “Maybe the thief might be here!” but the king was not listening. “Wow! What’s this? An ice cream machine? What’s ice cream? Is it an animal? A kind of food? What the heck! And what’s this? A shrink gun? What does it do? Will it...” “How is this king so unintelligent? We should be focusing on solving the case! Not messing around!” Judge Pao thought. “I wonder if there was something that could make people smart. Wait! There’s a machine called Smart Machine! Could it make the king smart? I wonder if...” The two messed around until the next day. Judge Pao yawned. He was really sleepy. It was the same for the king too. But then, the king spotted a skinny man walk out of a store called Time Machines Co. holding a jewel. It was the jewel that was stolen! He told Judge Pao and they both chased after the man. The man saw them, and said “What are you two idiots doing chasing after me in those ancient clothes? His robot drone answered in a robotic voice “They are angry that you travelled back in time and stole their precious jewel. “Thanks Alexander! Said the man.” He ran into a lift and laughed “These people are from ancient times, so they probably won’t even know what this lift is!” as the lift was going up to the 5th floor. “That stupid flying thing!” Said the king. “It’s flying up! What should we do? This universe is so different compared to our universe!”

“What other universe?” A nearby woman wondered. “I thought scientists proved that parallel universes don’t exist last Monday!” “Wait!” said Judge Pao. “You’re correct! There are so many differences, so we can walk in the air!” said Judge Pao

“Why?” the king asked.

“Because we can’t walk in the air in our universe, so we can do it in this universe!” replied Judge Pao.

“Oh yeah! That’s a pretty smart idea!” said the king.  
“Let’s do it” they both said at the same time.

Judge Pao and the king walked off the platform and they actually walked on the air. Just kidding! They didn’t. They fell onto the first floor of the mall, where there was a trampoline park. They fell onto one of them, and bounced to the 5th floor, onto the man. The king grabbed the jewel he was holding and ran to Time Machines Co with Pao. “I think we just need to go in one of these boxes.” Pao said. They went inside, and fortunately, there was a battery there already. The hologram appeared, and started talking, but the king just shouted “Shut up you stupid blue thing!” They went back to their time, and the king was happy. “Thank you for solving the case!” he exclaimed. “No problem!” Judge Pao said.

## *Judge Pao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Lee, Abigail Kate – 11*

It was one stormy night, and Judge Pao was sitting quietly in his house reading his favourite book. There were not many cases lately since he had solved them quickly. Suddenly there was a loud knock on the door. He opened the door to find a young woman and her son crying, "Judge Pao, please help us. My husband had just been killed. Please help us find the murderer!" The woman pleaded while wiping her eyes with her sleeves. "Of course, come in."

"My husband was studying late tonight, while my son and I were quietly sleeping in our rooms. Suddenly, I heard a loud crashing sound close to where he was studying in the house. I decided to go check on him and when I reached his study room, he was stabbed in the heart and his whole desk was drowned in his own blood." The woman explained while trying not to cry. "I see..." said Judge Pao while writing everything down on a scroll. "Did the murderer leave their weapon behind or any clues?" asked Judge Pao, "No, I tried to find clues but there was nothing." she said. "Ok thank you for telling me about this, I'll work on it right away tomorrow morning." said Judge Pao while helping them out.

Next morning, Judge Pao arrived at a small village. Not many people lived in this part of town, so it was pretty easy to commit crimes here. Judge Pao decided to question the woman's neighbours for clues to see if they had seen anyone break in or heard any suspicious noises. He asked an old couple next to the woman's house and they said that the woman and her husband fight quite often and don't really get along. Judge Pao decided to ask the old lady near the woman's house, "I was cooking some extra food when I heard a suspicious noise at that couple's house." After that, Judge Pao went to ask a few other neighbours about the husband's death. Many of them said they didn't see anyone leave or enter the house except the woman and one of her friends. It was a young man who was about her age and was one of her childhood best friends. The woman claimed that she and the young man were just throwing out the trash together, and she had invited the young man in for some tea, and after half an hour she found her husband dead.

A while later, Judge Pao requested to go inside the woman's house to investigate. The whole house was extremely messy: pots were scattered on the floor, many things were broken like plates and cups, there were even faint blood stains scattered around the house. Judge Pao wrote down every little detail that was in the house including everything that was broken and the bloodstains on his scroll. Soon after, there were only two places that judge Pao still had not investigated, it was the study room where the woman's husband brutally died and the kitchen where most things were neatly organised, very unusual for a crime scene. First, Judge Pao decided to check the study room. Scrolls were scattered around the desk and the shelf behind it. There was a big faint bloodstain across the desk where he died, the chair was also covered in blood but some spots were not dry yet. After checking, he went into the kitchen. At first, he could spot nothing out of place. There were only small blood stains on the table and a few damaged plates on the floor, but soon after he checked one of the cabinets, he found a bloody knife. "I think this is the murder weapon. They probably took it from the kitchen and put it back here." explained Judge Pao. After he took one more good look at the whole house, he decided to ask the young man some questions before he went back to his office. Judge Pao knocked on the door, and a handsome young man answered. "Hello, I'm here to ask some questions about a recent murder case." said Judge Pao while holding up his scroll. The young man nodded and stood there patiently. "Why were you in that woman's house?" asked Judge Pao, "well she said that she had loads of garbage she needed to take out and asked if i could help." replied the young man. "Did you see her husband in the study room at that time?" Judge Pao asked, "Yes I did, and before you ask I was in there cuz I was very thirsty and tired from carrying the garbage so I asked for some tea at her house." answered the man. "Ok, thank you, that's all I needed to know," Judge Pao said with a smile while turning away.

Finally, Judge Pao studied his clues, and soon many of the puzzle pieces started to add up to who the murderer was. To clarify his theory, he decided to go back to the village and check the one place he didn't look at. As soon as he reached the village, he leaned toward one of the smelly filthy ceramic jars, which people used to store rubbish, on the floor and looked inside. Just as he had suspected, inside the jars was the woman's husband's body dissected and put into the jars. "No wonder it was so heavy..." said Judge Pao. he quickly marched over to the woman's house and told her what was in the jars and that he knew who the killer was. She looked shocked to hear the news and asked "So who is it!?", "the killer is...YOU" said judge Pao while pointing at the woman. The woman looked very upset and soon explained to him why she had killed her husband. It turns out the woman's parents had arranged for her and her husband to marry when she was thirteen years old, but she never liked him. She was always forced to

like him after their marriage, but she truly loved her childhood best friend. If she did something wrong, her husband would hit her and abuse her often, until a few nights ago she couldn't take it anymore and decided to kill him. She told the young man about this and they both worked together to kill him. After she had killed him, she decided to make it more believable by calling Judge Pao in to “help” her, but what she forgot to worry about was the blood dripping from the body when they carried it and dumped inside the jars. Turns out that the jar was leaking at the bottom through a tiny little crack and when they carried the jars full of body parts outside. The trail of blood led all the way to the door, and once Judge Pao spotted this clue he found out the truth.

## *Young Judge Pao Investigates The Mystery of Pi*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Nair, Dhruv – 9*

It was a fine sunny morning after a rainy week in a small village near Hefei, China. RootPi, a 9-year old boy, discovers that his pet dog Pi is missing. He immediately runs to find his most trusted friend Pao Zheng to help solve the mystery.

RootPi finds Pao near the hills, collecting firewood with his mother. Huffing and puffing he tries to tell Pao everything that had happened.

Pao wiped the sweat of his crescent-shaped birthmark on his forehead and said, "RootPi, you sound quite irrational, and I can't quite make out all the details."

With his mother's permission, Pao accompanies RootPi back to the village to investigate. They run down the hill, dash across the rickety wooden bridge, shoot past the giant Pagoda, and finally reach RootPi's house.

RootPi shows Pao where Pi and he had been playing the previous evening. They find a few little footprints in the wet mud.

"Those are Pi's and my footprints," said RootPi.

"Yes, but whose are those?" said Pao pointing at some gigantic footprints near the dog kennel.

Pao studied them carefully and followed the footprints to the back gate.

Outside the gate, they bumped into Mrs. Fibonacci, "RootPi, I just found your dog's collar near the stream."

Pao and RootPi thanked her and ran to the part of the stream that Mrs. Fibonacci had pointed to. Now things had begun to add up.

At the stream, they interviewed a woman washing clothes who said she heard some angry barks from a little dog a few hours ago. However, the Boatman said he heard nothing. Things were getting suspicious.

As the boys were checking behind the bushes near the stream, Pao found a secret passage.

RootPi exclaims, "Look! There are a lot of footprints here."

RootPi and Pao went into the passage. It got deeper and deeper. They went left, right, left, left, right, right, left, right and finally came into a smelly room. It was full of pet animals in cages. They saw cats, mice, rabbits, hamsters, parrots, spiders, tortoises and a very cute and cheeky monkey. But they did not see any dog, not even one.

Suddenly, the monkey started to clatter as though to warn them. The two boys, suddenly, heard the sound of heavy footsteps and quickly hid between the cages. A man came into the room with a big box. It was the Boatman! The box he was holding started to bark. How strange? Pao and RootPi looked at each other and silently nodded to each other. They had to work together to get out of this tight corner. They stealthily opened the cages and let the animals out. The animals ran helter-skelter. In the hullabaloo that followed, the guard dropped the box and Pi jumped out of the box and smelled his way to RootPi.

RootPi exclaimed ecstatically, "Pi, we found you! We are together again now."

Both the boys acted quickly and escaped from the room. But, they could hear the Boatman thundering behind them.

Pao, RootPi and Pi got back to the stream and ran to some of the King's guards, who were leading their horses to the water. By then the Boatman had also caught up to them.

"Guards! The Boatman is a thief." Young Pao firmly yelled, "He stole my friend's dog and many other pets too."

The Boatman, angrily shouted, "These pesky boys are the ones who stole my dog. Don't listen to them, I often see them together, thick as thieves, playing pranks and causing trouble in the whole village."

RootPi hugged his dog Pi and started to wail and cry. But, Pao acted confidently.

He swiftly covered Pi's furry little eyes and said, "Okay, you say this is your dog? Then tell me, which eye is he blind in?"

The Boatman hesitated momentarily and answered, "The right one, of course."

Pao opened Pi's right eye and it rolled and sparkled with amusement.

"Oh! My mistake, it was the left eye. Yes, the left one is blind." Boatman said apologetically.

"Ha! That proves you are the thief."

Pao lifted Pi for everyone to see. The little dog barked and looked curiously at everyone with his cute black button eyes.

The guards caught the Boatman and then helped rescue all the other pets from the secret passage and returned them to their owners.

The Captain of the guards was impressed with Young Pao's cleverness and said, "You are a talented boy. You should write the imperial exam when you grow up and then you can serve the Emperor."

Young Pao smiled and bowed deeply with gratitude, "Thank you Sir, but today I need to help my mother gather some more firewood."

The three companions Young Pao, RootPi and Pi trotted off along the stream and into the rolling hills, where maybe another adventure awaited them!



## *Judge Bao*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Sun, Wai Mei Joanna – 10*

It was a freezing and foggy September night. The temperature had already reached under 10 Celsius. Me, the famous Judge Pao and my relatives were going to my great grandma's old castle. My great grandma had moved to the city and lived with grandma eleven years ago. But now, I had been driving half lost in the forest. The fog had covered places further than five metres, and the trees were growing so close together.

After five hours of driving, we finally reached the castle. Many things were rotten down and the castle seemed to be collapsing at any moment. After taking a deep breath, I pulled open the heavy, large door and made a squeaky sound like those in the horror movies. As I opened the door, the wind blew in, all the dust swirled around in circles at the very same time. Everything looked very old fashioned and was in dark and brown wooden colors. My relatives buried outside the castle and had a look, as I took out my first step with a raced heart. The floor let out a "squeak!" as I stepped on it. With many squeaking noises following behind, we started to explore the castle. Sometimes, I could even feel the floor vibrating when a person stepped near me, which made me think that we would fall into the underground at any moment.

As we toured around, I could hear people whispering saying that an emerald, which used to be always hanging around great grandma's neck, disappeared on her dead body. I was scared but didn't know if it was true or not. But as I walked upstairs to the second floor, I noticed a painting of a woman placed on the wall. Then I realized that it was great grandma. She was so sweet and smiling to me in the painting, then I noticed that she was wearing a large piece of red emerald around his neck. Someone must've stolen his emerald!

The sky started to turn dark, but the people didn't seem to be wanting to go. Some people started to search around the castle, they must be looking for the emerald. I accidentally heard someone saying the great grandmas' bad memories about them and even discussed how much the emerald could cost. I gasped, the people nowadays wanted money more than their memories!

There was a sudden large squeak downstairs, so I quickly ran down to have a look. A man came dressed in a proper suit, carrying a pile of documents and a small but thick book. He said that he was the lawyer of the castle. As he recognized me, he passed me the small book secretly and said that it was the diary of my great grandma. He also said that my great grandma trusted me the most and told the lawyer to give me the diary after something serious happened just in case and never let anyone else look at the diary. The diary was filled full of the memories of me with my great grandma and thought that I could never see her again.

She rarely writes about the other relatives. That's why the lawyer said that she trusted me the most! "I have to find the emerald before anyone does!", I thought affirmatively.

So, I searched the castle starting from the most possible place which is the bedroom. I didn't miss any corners, but the emerald didn't show up. As I passed through the hallway, some of the relatives started to yell at me, saying that I shouldn't be searching for the emerald for no reason. I ignored them, going forward to the next room.

I walked to a room with a half rotten wooden sign that wrote 'Dressing Room' hanged on the door. There were two large, empty wooden cupboards sticking to the two sides of the room. In between the cupboards, there was a mirror with wooden edges covered with a thick piece of dust attached to a dressing table. Suddenly, a person grabbed me at the back and told me not to scream. Then he said in a deep voice "the clue to find the emerald is on the very back page of the diary. He slowly loosened his arms and walked away, I realized it was the lawyer! I quickly open the last page of the diary, which wrote, 'The emerald is hidden inside the lowest drawer inside the cupboard' I then quickly open the drawer. "Yes! It is there! Great grandma helped me!" I thought excitedly.

But as I took the emerald out, something hit me so hard as I let out a scream. I fell onto the floor strengthless. But the lawyer appeared in front of me with an evil smile, saying, "Haha, surprise, I won this game, see ya next time!" Using my last strength, I watched him taking the emerald away from me and left proudly, saying, "Hm... How much should I give to the relatives? 10 percent? 20 percent? Hahahaha!"

This time, I completely lost the game, but I won't anymore.

## *The Case of the Bloody Wedding*

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School, Wu, Yat Sum – 11*

Once upon a time, in China, a famous official called Judge Pao, was appointed to take charge of the taxes in HeZhou, a place in China. At that time, he sorted a lot of cases. He was known as the “God of Chinese Justice”. His famous cases include the Case of the Broken Tongue of the Cow, the Trial of the Stone Case..... But have you heard of the Case of the Bloody Wedding?

Going back to the past, when Judge Pao was being an official for a month, he and some other officials were walking along the streets, while he heard some Guzheng music along the roads. It turns out that somebody was going to get married. The bride was in a carriage, carried by 4 carriage men, and she was wearing a red dress. She looked out of the window. She had big, black eyes, and long, straight, black hair. “The Bride is quite pretty.....” an official said too, “She should be meeting her groom.”

As the music faded, and the crowd went away, Judge Pao went back to his room and rested.

A day later, a woman with black hair came and asked for Judge Pao’s help. “When I went to meet my groom, I saw him lying dead...” The woman sobbed and cried. Judge Pao realised it was the woman from the carriage. “Take me to the crime scene,” said Judge Pao, and he headed to the house, along with the woman.

When they arrived at the house, all they saw was a house full of gold. It has a big garden for gardening and an attic. Judge Pao asked for the situation that she saw when she arrived. “I saw a pile of blood on the floor and blood in the sheets of the bed. He was lying in a cross, with two deep cuts at the back, two on the chest, and also a knife that was stabbed through his head,” she said, horrified and scared.

Judge Pao examined the room. The room was messy and there were some shards of glass on the ground. The bed was slept in and wasn't tidied. The curtains were opened, as well as the window. Cold breezes rustled in, and they shuddered.

“Thank you, Madam. I will try and investigate.....” Voice still, he noticed something on the ground. It was a string of footprints. He followed the footprints but he lost track of them on the window. The footprints were covered in mud. Judge Pao, looking through the window, asked: “How many floors are there again?” “There are 3 floors, including the attic.” He then asked again: “Which floor are we on?” “The second one, with the bathroom.” The woman replied.

After his investigation of the murder scene, he went back to his room and thought about it. Where do the footprints lead to? Was it a trap, or a clue?

A couple of days later, he went back to the crime scene alone. The mud on the footprints were dried up.

“Nobody can enter the house without an invitation. There are guards watching. So, the only people who can enter the house are only the bride, the groom, the carriage-men, and the servants. If the servants wanted to kill the master, they would have done it before. The bride is possibly not the murderer. So the suspects are the 4 carriage-men,” Judge Pao said, analysing, “The carriage-men crossed roads with mud in town. According to the mud on the footprints, the 4 carriage-men will be the most suspicious suspects.”

Judge Pao thought he had almost cracked the case, so he laughed and laughed.

A couple of days later, he gathered the suspects in his room. “I have informed you to bring along the shoes you have worn on the marriage day. Have you all brought it out?” “Yes.” They all replied. Judge Pao took all of the shoes and examined them. “The footprints were in a small size, with twenty-six small rocks long,” he thought, then he found out that one of the pairs is smaller than the others, and met all the requirements of the footprints.

Judge Pao had found out the murderer. “Guards! Take him to jail and execute him!” “No! Have mercy, Judge Pao! I can explain!” begged the carriage-man. So, Judge Pao let him speak.

“Me and the bride, Alice, fell in love. But as I’m poor, her father doesn’t let her stay with me, instead let her marry a rich man. Alice refused at once but her father didn’t listen. He said, ‘As long as the rich guy likes Alice, I’ll let her marry him.’ I didn’t want her to marry him,” he said, honestly, “Because I’ve heard a lot of complaints and cries from Alice, so I’ve decided to kill the rich man and protect her. I just wanted her to be happy……” he finished talking, and cried sadly.

Judge Pao was touched by his words, but he has to follow the law, execution is unavoidable. He sighed and said: “Thank you for being honest with me. But things should be settled. You have to apologise to the groom’s family and then go to jail for the rest of your life. That’s the least punishment for murdering others. I am very merciful this time.”

Not long later, the man (accompanied by some guards) apologised to the groom’s relatives and went to jail. The bride was heartbroken. Although the bride and the man can never meet again, their hearts are still linked to each other. Judge Pao then solved another case.

What case will Judge Pao meet next time? A murder case, or a theft case? A disappearing case? Or even something worse?

## *The Lost Fossil*

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Chan, Ava – 11*

A dark shadow slipped by, letting out an evil grin that betrayed all innocence.

As Judge Pao woke up that morning, he felt unusually uncomfortable. He always heard his servants arguing, or his fans ringing the doorbell, asking for an autograph. However, this morning was strangely silent, without any shouting or yelling. As he walked downstairs to the living room, he immediately knew what had just happened. Theft!

There were three people in the room, along with the minister. The minister said, 'A fossil was lost in the museum at around 2:30 AM. These are the people who are found in the museum at that time. The CCTV was broken, so we have no idea who the thief is.' When the minister finished speaking, he stepped back to let Judge Pao have a clearer look at them. 'Explain yourselves,' Judge Pao ordered. The first person said confidently, 'Hi, I'm the baker for the cafeteria. I was making a cake during the night,' The second person stammered, 'H...hi, I...I am the s...security guard there,' The third person said, 'Hello, I had a run last night. I was thirsty, so I slipped in for a drink. You saw me there last night, didn't you?' As he said that, he was looking at the first person, who nodded. The second person was very suspicious.

'Do you mind if I look at your homes for further investigation?' Judge Pao asked. The baker said, 'Sure! I'm happy to!' The guard said, 'No, I don't want to.' Everyone was shocked to hear this. 'If you are the thief, then just tell us and don't waste our time!' The runner exclaimed.

Judge Pao went to the baker's house first for investigation. The baker's house was really clean, but Judge Pao thought something wasn't right. 'When did you last clean your living room?' Judge Pao asked.

'Around 3 last night.'

'How much time do you usually need to drive home from work?'

'About half an hour.'

Suspicious, Judge Pao thought. Why on Earth would anyone clean in the night? And, more importantly, how could he get home in thirty minutes while baking a cake?

Judge Pao went to the guard's house. He rang the doorbell. No one answered. He knocked on the door. 'Go away! I told you; I don't want you here!' Judge Pao heard the guard yell. However, Judge Pao wouldn't give up. He begged and persuaded, then argued and convinced, and eventually, after several minutes of arguing, the guard reluctantly let Judge Pao in. The house was clean and tidy, and there was even a CCTV camera. 'May I have a look at that?' Judge Pao asked, and to his surprise, the guard just shrugged. There wasn't single evidence that tells anyone he stole anything. 'May I tell you something?' the guard suddenly asked. Judge Pao nodded. 'Actually, you can't buy any sort of drink near the bakery or the kitchen, so the runner could never have met the baker. Besides, the bakery is really near the room where the fossil is placed. I think the others are pretty suspicious...'

'Thanks, that was really important information,' Judge Pao replied. After that, he went to the runner's house. When he was invited into the house, he saw footprints, blankets and bed sheets everywhere. 'Sorry, I haven't been cleaning my house these days. I'm pretty busy, you know.' Weird, Judge Pao thought. Just as he thought he was going to do further investigation, a person rushed in. 'I'm the museum's founder. We checked the CCTV of the room beside the lost fossil's room. The back door is the only way to get to the room. The baker and the runner are both found in that room at around 2 hours after midnight.'

'Looks like the mystery is solved,' said Judge Pao. He immediately flipped over some of the bed sheets. Beneath them lay a huge fossil. After this incident, both the baker and the runner were fined and sentenced to prison. The guard received a pay rise, and everything was back to normal, yet again.

# *The Mystery of the Stolen Purse*

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Fong, Natalie – 10*

Once, there lived an important person named Judge Pao. He was a brilliant detective who lived in the Tang Dynasty. Judge Pao solved a lot of mysteries for hundreds of people who were in need of help.

One day, a poor blind person's purse, given to her by her grandmother, was stolen by a thief dressed in black on the street. She called for help on the street loudly and waved her arms frantically. However, everyone pretended that they couldn't hear her. The blind woman walked on the street, calling for help. Judge Pao happened to pass by and he took pity on her. He asked one of his guards to ask her what the matter was. The blind woman explained that a precious purse was stolen from her. Judge Pao decided to help her to solve this case and asked his guards to escort the blind woman to her home first.

At night, Judge Pao sat on his grand chair in the middle of a hall, thinking about the mystery. He asked a student whom he had taught for more than twenty years for inspiration. His student suggested asking who was on the street at that time. Judge Pao thought that was a great idea. The next day, Judge Pao asked his trustworthy guards to carry him by his carriage to the very same street that the blind woman lost her purse. They found a beggar on the street that they also saw yesterday. So, they asked the beggar if he saw anyone there yesterday. The beggar said that he saw a person in black, a person wearing clothes made of silk, as well as a person selling oranges. Judge Pao thought for a moment, then asked his guards to take him home first.

Judge Pao thought all day at home. Apart from dealing with his usual business, he thought about the case. He asked his guards to find the person dressed in black. Within a day, the guards found the person. They took Judge Pao to see the man. Judge Pao investigated the case so he asked the man about his age, why, when and what he was doing on the street at that time. The man answered that he was 16, and he was walking along the street to his grandmother's house, which seemed to be a perfectly normal answer, but to Judge Pao, he thought that needed investigating. However, he continued interviewing his suspects. He found the woman dressed in silk clothes one day. He asked the woman the same questions. From her, he knew that she came from a royal family and she was 21. She was crossing the road as she had to go to her mansion, which was on the other side of the road. Seeing her silk clothes and fashionable hair, he ticked her off his suspect list because he thought that she was innocent. Next up was the grocer. Judge Pao bought all his fruit from him so he ticked him off the list, too. The man dressed in black was the only one left.

Judge Pao wanted to confirm about the mystery so he asked the blind woman if she had smelt anything. The woman answered that she smelt really expensive perfume, and that made Judge Pao think: Perfume? Expensive? Wait, the woman dressed in silk clothes?! Oh no! That was totally unexpected! Judge Pao thought for a minute and then asked his guards to quickly search for the royal woman.

When they found the woman, she was at the port, waiting for a ship to take her to another country while carrying a large package. Judge Pao asked his guards to seize her and they did. It turned out that the purse was really valuable and two women were actually cousins!!! The grandmother gave it to the blind woman's mother and a blind woman's mother passed it on to the blind woman. The royal woman was arrested and put into jail.

To conclude, Judge Pao is really a talented detective.

# *Resurrection*

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Jing, Annie – 11*

I'm lying on a bed, a purely white bed. It doesn't feel like the one I'm acquainted with. It's stiff and it always drains the sense of drowsiness from me.

I'm sick, and as the doctor says, in a very severe condition. I often eavesdrop on the neatly dressed nurses and the doctors with grim faces. They always speak in the same apprehensive tone and reach the same conclusion. I'm really getting bored of it.

I'm not longing for anything. What I want is to take one last gaze at the lovely jovial bird I've once dragged out of death. I hope she hasn't forgotten me. I hope she's flapping her tiny wings and pecking the window right now.

On the twelfth night in that spotlessly clean room, it's full moon. As I'm scribbling on my leather-bundled diary, the opalescent moonlight illuminates the dark; the scattered stars flicker above my head, and the massive silhouettes of the trees are like soldiers, remaining by my side.

A surge of drowsiness fluctuates and heaves inside me. I gradually feel my head lolling aside and my eyelids closing together, exhaling the last breath...

I hear muffled voices in my mind, or perhaps around me. There're mum's, shrieking my name and mourning over me. I want to answer her, but I just can't separate my eyelids, nor lips. It's a sorrow feeling, especially when I sense my dad's whisper beside my ears.

I crumple my fists and gather my strength. I finally get my eyes open, though the light fades, so do the voices as well. Everywhere is dark and silent, until a spot of red light ignites in the midst.

There're the noises of someone scratching a match as several lamps around me burst into flames. The tinders are bright, but less in amount, forming an indistinct shadow under me. When the main lamp overhead ignites, the surrounding goes still and quiet once more.

I realise that there's someone sitting in front of me. He's wearing a well-painted mask, in the colour of black and red. His robe is adorned with an assortment of weird patterns and it looks quite silky.

This eccentric appearance intimidates me a lot. The room is dim and it seems as if it's endless. I glance in both directions but find only darkness. I return to the man and notice a scar shaped as a moon on his forehead.

A ridiculous thought bursts into my mind. I blurt, 'Are you Judge Pao? Where am I?' I fidget doubtfully, staring at the man with slight fear.

'I am indeed, Judge Pao. You're now at the underworld, having an important trial,' he answers composedly as he places his hands on the rickety desk in front of him.

'Trial? Why's that? I didn't commit a crime, did I?'

It's a dull chuckle.

'No, you didn't. But you're now dead. You must do a report which defines your road.'

That word, 'dead'. How can it be said that directly?

'What you need to do now, is to tell me your name, age and the good things or bad things you've done.'

I obey, 'I'm Leung Hoi Jing, ten years old this year.'

Judge Pao scribbles on a paper as I say. He nods and looks up, instructing, 'Any good things?' He hesitates for a moment and says, 'Or bad things?'

I spin my mind quickly and reply, 'I've saved a bird and I gave her a name, River. Her feathers are sky blue, very charming. I hope I can bring her here and—' I realise what I've said, as I splutter, 'Ah no, not here.'

Judge Pao casts me a smile as he records our conversations intently on the piece of paper. He asks, 'Bad things?'

'Erm, I think there are, but I don't remember any,' I answer frankly.

'Any wills?'

'Yes. I wish my parents won't be too sad. I wish they can just erm, like just forget about me. And about River, I wish I can offer her a new cage, as the old one is shabby.'

I glance at the writings of Judge Pao and continue almost absent-mindedly, 'I wish I can go to heaven, so I can meet my grandpa and grandma.' My nose suddenly goes sour, but I suppress it.

'Girl, you don't belong to heaven, nor hell. Go back to your own world and remain kind and grateful...'

My eyes are forced to be closed as my feet leave the ground and soar up weightlessly. I hover and after a fleeting moment, I feel myself lying in a bed.

'Is she okay?'

'Better than ever.'

I open my eyes wide and enlarge them when I see my parents both smiling pleasantly at me. They look calm, but I know they're just hiding the agitation from me.

'Jesus Christ! Autumn! You're awake!' Mum leans forward and gives me a rib-breaking hug. I feel the warmth and the radiant sunshine outside my window. I am back to my world.

I'm back home only two days later. I chortle gleefully as I notice the brand-new cage on the polished wooden desk. I slump on the cosy, squishy sofa. Mum sits beside me and asks, 'How're you feeling?'

'Spectacular! Mum, I had a dream. I dreamt about Judge Pao and he's really a good man. It's he who sent me back. It's he who accomplished my will!'

Mum doesn't speak a word, but I know everything from her smile.

## *The Heartbroken Trial*

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Kwok, Hester – 11*

'I always went to the Temple of Light with my family.

'Ever since I knew how to walk, my parents insisted that I had to make going to that temple every night a habit.

'That night was no exception, only that I offered to help do the chores before I went out. My legs took the lead on where to go, which path to take.

'Suddenly, the leaves rustled noisily. I turned around instantly and saw nothing but a still clump of bushes. It must've been the wind, I thought.

'I continued to walk along the road, aware of my surroundings, though nothing weird happened anymore. Finally, I reached the Temple of Light.

'I didn't notice anything odd, but when I pushed the heavy doors open, I heard glass shattering, and saw, before the glowing statue...' Zhang choked. Even though she kept wiping the tears away, it was pointless as she couldn't stop.

'You saw the dead bodies of your parents,' concluded Judge Pao with a stern but concerned look on his face. Zhang nodded quietly.

'Very well,' Pao decided, 'you may go now. I'll investigate this extraordinary case personally.' Zhang was eager to rise from the glamorous hall which was very much like the Temple of Light. It had the same golden pillars and marble floors, which reminded her a lot about the night that would change her life completely.

Judge Pao strode imposingly on the road Zhang had mentioned and reached the temple. The temple was so peaceful that it was hard to believe that a murder had happened a night before.

The walls were dark and trimmed with golden. Light illuminated through the windows, which were translucent and made of vivid stained glass.

Pao took a glance around the room. Plates of fruits and delicacies surrounded the golden statue of some god Pao couldn't recognise. The shattered glass wasn't cleared yet, and the Judge bent his round body to observe.

'Judge Pao?' his assistant asked tentatively, 'Have you figured something out?'

Pao raised his hand to tell him not to speak. He studied the glass in every detail, determined to crack the case. In the end, he gathered a few shards and went outside. He grabbed the blood-red dagger which he suspected was the weapon and returned to the capital.

His assistant was dumbfounded at Pao's swift acts, but as before, Judge Pao always solved the problem.

It was three days after the murder. The sky was bright blue and everywhere was lively, but all of them seemed like an insult to Zhang.

Zhang was summoned to the hearing. She couldn't help but feel nervous, and curious about what Pao wanted.

When she entered the room, everywhere was quiet, and her shoes clipped on the floor sharply. Pao was waiting at the end of the hall, sitting on his high armchair. Next to him were a few prefects and a rag-clothed man. The face was familiar. The dark, unreadable expression, the markings of old age, the messy hair...

'Chan?' Zhang asked in disbelief. 'What are you doing here? Where's your glasses...?'

'You know him?' asked Pao.

'Yes, he's the beggar who begs for money every day by the door! What's he doing here?'



‘We analysed the fingerprints left on the dagger and traced them back to him,’ said a prefect. ‘However, he wishes to repeat the story in front of you.’

Zhang stared at Chan as he began, ‘That night, I went to the temple to pray, for your parents cheated on me, telling me to go away as they don’t have any money to spare me, no place to shelter me —’

‘That was before they knew you were a murderer!’ the judge snapped and Chan became silent. ‘You thought you’d gained their promise, but once they heard about the news of that criminal on the run, they became suspicious of you and prayed to their god for guidance! How dare you kill them after listening to their desperate prayers!’

‘There’s no proof! I just grabbed the hilt of the dagger to prevent the killing!’ Chan refuted.

‘Then why didn’t the murderer kill you too? You were only a weak beggar. There’re no other fingerprints on the hilt either. Moreover, where are your glasses? From what Miss Zhang has informed me of, you were practically as blind as a bat without them! However, I found pieces of plain glass in the shards of the shattered window. It must’ve shattered during the conflict. If they didn’t belong to your glasses, what do they belong to?’

Chan was speechless. He stammered, ‘I ... I ...’

‘Bring him out!’ Pao commanded with his sonorous voice, and the prefects dragged him out by the arms.

Zhang couldn’t comprehend what happened. She couldn’t believe it. Tears started to stream down her cheeks again.

‘Zhang,’ Pao called sternly as she raised her eyes. ‘Chan told me in detail about what your parents prayed for. Their final words.’

Zhang dabbed her eyes with the silk cloth. Pao continued quietly, ‘They wished that you wouldn’t be harmed.’

It was so quiet in the hall that you could hear a pin drop. Time seemed to have stopped. Nothing else mattered for Zhang except for the words that echoed in her mind.

She was what her parents had cared for in the end. Just as they always did.

## *One Last Mission*

*St. Matthew's Lutheran School (S.M.P.), Yuen, Tsz Ching – 11*

Judge Pao, 62-year-old, was a retired police officer, who recently returned to his hometown. He had always been a curious man. One day, when he was strolling through the streets, the wanted poster of the mysterious Han Huizhong, a notorious vigilante who was said to have a master of infiltration and stealing, made him intrigued. If a criminal as skillful as him had not been caught after six long years, he thought, then where was he now? He had to find the answer. Judge Pao decided to pick up the case once again and set off to find him at any cost.

It all began when Judge Pao went down to the archives in his office, rummaging through thousands of old cases until suddenly – bingo! He struck gold, discovering Han's file. It was dated 1061 – two days ago – about a mysterious thief who had stolen the King's treasure without fail. Witnesses believed this could have been none other than Han himself. Knowing that Han must still be in the area, Judge Pao donned his hat eagerly and pulled up his coat sleeves determinedly.

"It's time to catch this crook!" he declared boldly before setting out on his trail immediately. But it wasn't easy – Judge Pao stumbled over pebbles and climbed up hills looking for clues, and even rowed across a small lake just in case! Despite these tough conditions, nothing could stop him from achieving his mission – every night before bed he thought deeply over what he had learned so far until sleep finally overcame him – exhausted but satisfied.

One day during another investigation around town, Judge Pao noticed a strange wooden plank hanging off an archway at the temple entrance. "Hmm... That could be important" thought Judge Pao inquisitively as he decided to investigate further. Sure enough behind some crates, he found a rope nearby as if someone had intentionally placed it there. Hidden underneath these objects were something unexpected – black fabric and a knife!

Judge Pao knew that crime was on an increasing rise after noticing things like people worriedly barricading their doors shut or not letting their children out of the house anymore, even adding pressure on police stations to impose strict repressing laws... He asked few questions here and there as well but couldn't find anything substantial about Han – which drove him crazy each time! But Judge Pao was determined nonetheless to catch this kingpin no matter what it takes – who knows, maybe tomorrow will bring good news?

Judge Pao knew that capturing the notorious criminal, Han, would not be easy as he had a number of people working for him and there were few resources. "Still, I must try," Pao thought determinedly.

One day, at exactly 8 pm, Judge Pao witnessed an intruder trying to break into a restaurant near his place! He knew this was probably related to Han's doing and immediately chased after him with other guards as backup. However, they couldn't catch him in time and he disappeared like air right away! Feeling all hope lost, Judge Pao went back home despondently.

Little did Judge Pao know that fate had something else in store for him – for when he returned next day at 8 pm again with some guards enlisted as backup who should appear but the very same intruder! This time Judge Pao moved quickly to capture him and upon interrogation found out that it wasn't hanging himself but one of his trusty allies – Xiao! However, no matter how they tried they couldn't shake anything loose from him.

Feeling all hope lost, Judge Pao walked out of the station with his head bowed low. Suddenly, a mysterious man appeared at his side with several guards behind him! Judge Pao turned around in indignation and exclaimed, "Who are you?"

The man replied arrogantly, "Whoever I am is none of your business."

Judge Pao saw his chance and shouted, "I have a deal for you – two hundred credits and your freedom if you tell me where I can find Han!"

The mysterious man smirked deviously, "Why should I trust you?"

Seeing no other way out, Judge Pao reasoned, "You can trust me because if we don't both get something out of this then it won't be worth it for either of us." Understanding this logic, he agreed to the deal. Xiao told Pao the current location of Han. Gathering some policemen with him he headed out in pursuit of Han.

Judge Pao roared triumphantly, "We've done it! We've captured Han and foiled his treacherous plans!" His loyal troops cheered in response as they rode back to their hometown.

Flashbacks from the fight resurfaced in their heads; even though they suffered some injuries, they had fought bravely at the face of danger. However each moment of fear had paid off magnificently.

They paused for a moment to look upon the defeated rebels and then continued on. Despite their success, no one

celebrated as if out of respect for those who fell in this war of attrition.

Judge Pao finally managed to capture Han and returned back triumphant to his town!

Judge Pao was applauded for his efforts and thanked by many citizens who now felt safe in the town knowing that justice had been served. Little did they know that protecting his beloved hometown was Judge Pao's last mission before his death.

## *Judge Pao and the Case of the Farmers*

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Cheung, Yu Sik Abbie – 10*

Thousands of years ago, deep in ancient China, there lived two farmers. One was hardworking and humble, called Farmer Wang. On the other hand, the other farmer, Farmer Chan, was bone idle and rarely worked. A myriad of wild weeds and bushes covered Farmer Chan's field like a colossal, leafy dome because he never tended to it. However, Farmer Wang owned a strong, powerful ox that helped him every day with his chores. The cow often trotted over to Farmer Chan's farm to feast on the grass and returned to work in Farmer Wang's farm when it was full of energy.

Soon the seasons had flitted by and autumn had approached, letting a sweep of delicate gold crash over the trees and Farmer Wang's field like a colossal wave. The birds sang of the promise of harvest and fortune. Farmer Wang's contented features were made warmer by the gentle shafts of sunlight. Beaming, he harvested the crops and sold them, returning home with a hundred golden, gleaming coins. But as he skipped down the muddy path to his home, whistling a cheery, lively tune, he glimpsed his neighbour waiting for him in front of his door with his nose turned high up in the air. But little did Farmer Wang know, things would take a turn for the worse.

"Your ox fed on my grass! Without me, your ox would have never gotten enough energy to work for you. Obviously, fifty coins belong to me!" Farmer Chan explained haughtily.

Overhearing the bickering of the farmers, Judge Pao, who had been on a pleasant autumn stroll, halted in his steps out of curiosity, "What's happening?" Farmer Wang gave Farmer Chan a withering glance and told him what was happening. Thoughts whirring like gears in his head, Judge Pao smiled at Farmer Chan. "I cannot deny that there is logic in your defense. Instead of half the coins, you could take twenty coins. It would be much more reasonable." Farmer Chan, not hesitating for the slightest moment, agreed promptly. It was an excellent offer to earn twenty coins without even lifting a finger.

Casting a glance at Farmer Chan's messy field, Judge Pao asked why it only had wild grass instead of crops. Farmer Chan only yawned, "Hiring someone to plough the soil and clear the grass takes fifty coins." He let out a horrible bark of laughter. "I could just lie back and enjoy life. I don't even need crops in my field." The slurred words that tumbled from his mouth made Judge Pao's blood boil, but he held his composure and kept the revulsion and disgust from showing on his face.

Stroking his wispy beard thoughtfully, Judge Pao's eyes glinted. It was time to show justice. "Farmer Wang's ox has already ploughed the soil by walking on it and has cleared the grass by eating it. So, in fact, you owe Farmer Wang fifty coins. Deducting the twenty coins he has offered, you still owe him thirty coins. If you fail to pay the due amount in a year, you will be arrested!" Farmer Chan's face was drained of all color. Scared out of his wits, he began to stutter, "B-But..." Judge Pao gave him a nonchalant smile. "If that is all, I'm afraid I have other business to tend to. I will be off now." His expression was calm and unfazed as he strode away from the two stunned farmers.

The trees and the flowers had grown, blossomed and withered, and before anyone could tell, a year had whisked by. A crisp breeze announced the arrival of autumn. Judge Pao eventually returned to the farmers' houses, passing beneath the glistening, dancing leaves that hung desperately to the branches. Farmer Chan burst out from his house's door, gleaming beads of sweat clinging to his face, elation painted across his features. In his hand was a small but heavy leather sack. "I grew the crops and sold them! I earned thirty coins, take them!" He bellowed breathlessly. His trousers were ragged and dirty, his clothes were plastered to his sun-tanned skin with sweat, but delight was glinting in his dark eyes. Judge Pao swiped the coins in his outstretched palm and called out, "Farmer Wang!" A series of hasty footsteps later, Farmer Wang appeared, his anxious face flushed by the heat of the sunlight.

Judge Pao gently placed the sack of coins into Farmer Wang's hand. "I believe this belongs to you." Farmer Wang stared at the sack for a moment, the leather reflected in his dark eyes. He looked up and stretched his hand out, drawing in a slow breath as he hesitated for the briefest of moments and spoke. "This... it shouldn't be mine."

Farmer Chan stared at him blankly. "What do you mean? I owe you thirty coins. It's your money." Farmer Wang shook his head profusely. "No, I didn't work for this. It shouldn't be mine. Take it back." Thrusting the sack into Farmer Chan's hands, he turned towards Judge Pao and gave him a serene smile. "I didn't work for this, so it should

be his. He turned out to be quite kind and easy to approach once he became hardworking. He always asks for advice on growing crops and we have become good friends. Thank you, Judge Pao.”

Judge Pao left, his satisfied smile illuminated under the sun as the two farmers got back to work. The two farmers had both learnt an extremely valuable lesson: Farmer Chan learnt to work hard instead of being lazy, and Farmer Wang learnt to never take what he didn't work for. Judge Pao had, once again, brought peace and justice.

## *The Raging Tiger Sign*

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Chong, Hon Wah Samuel – 11*

Alone in the dark, there was a fisherman, who bought a piece of land a week ago. As the clock struck midnight, he was woken up by a faint “creak”. The fisherman immediately crawled out of bed and peeked at the corridor. At the end of a room, stood a mysterious shadow. The fisherman crept over to get a closer look. “Who...who are you?” the fisherman demanded. There wasn’t a single reply from the shadow. Gradually, the shadow pulled out a knife from his pocket, and stabbed it into the fisherman’s chest. “No...” the fisherman’s eyes rolled to the back of his head, and he collapsed. Quickly, the shadow buried the corpse into the front yard, leaving the knife with it, and ran away. The land was abandoned for a decade, until one day...

Wilson the farmer bought the abandoned land ten years later. He started planting crops but stopped when he realized there was a lump in the front yard. Curiously, Wilson started digging, until he smelt something rotten coming from the hole. He dug a bit further and realized there was a dead corpse in his lawn! The color drained from his face, as a knife was on it! Wilson examined the knife and found a raging tiger sign on it. His blood turned into ice, as he picked up the knife and retrieved it to report the emergency.

Listening to Wilson’s worries, Judge Pao frowned. Something wasn’t right about the knife. The raging tiger sign was abnormally familiar. Judge Pao kept the knife with him and decided to visit some friends. At night, as usual, Judge Pao returned to the Department of Hell to sort out the affairs of Afterlife. Judge Pao flipped through the former landowners’ death registry and told them to meet him. Judge Pao asked, showing the knife, “Does this look familiar to you?” the moaning souls nodded. Suddenly, a shocking realization struck Judge Pao. All the owners of that piece of land were killed by a knife with a raging tiger on it! Also, the incidents happened exactly at midnight one week after the land was bought! “Could the land be haunted? Or is somebody related?” Judge Pao squirmed uneasily in his seat. Glancing at the knife, Judge Pao knew there was a possibility that the murderer could be a knife seller, so he decided to visit Reagan’s knife store the next day.

The next day, Judge Pao made a beeline towards the store. Judge Pao questioned Reagan sternly, “Do you recognise this? Can you recall any buyers?” Reagan shrugged, “This kind of valuable knives were a limited-edition decades ago. They were all bought by a wealthy man who hid them well in his mansion.” “He must be the culprit! Nobody except him has the access to the knives!” one of Judge Pao’s followers shouted. Reagan frowned deeply, “I wouldn’t say that. In fact, the wealthy man, who only had the access to the knives, died long ago, killed by his own knife.” An idea struck Judge Pao. He turned to his followers, “Come, I have a plan to stop the murderer once and for all.”

After getting the address of the mansion, Judge Pao ordered a few soldiers to hide in the bushes by the mansion that night. An hour before midnight, a soft “creak” came from the front gates. The shadow was there! Judge Pao, who was hiding under the front steps signaled everybody to wait. Judge Pao peeped through a broken window of the mansion, and saw the shadow exit the back door and enter a shed in the backyard. Judge Pao screamed, “NOW!” and the soldiers charged towards the wooden shed. “Come out, or face the consequences!” Judge Pao called. The shadow raced out, holding a tiger-faced knife, planning to stab Judge Pao in the chest. Fortunately, the soldiers pushed the shadow to a side and snatched the knife away. The shadow tried to squirm out of the soldiers’ grip, but they were too strong. Judge Pao ripped off the shadow’s mask and discovered the truth.

“Why did you do it?” Judge Pao asked the dead, wealthy man’s son, Jason. “Why did you kill the landowners and your father?” Jason yelled, full of rage, “The piece of land once belonged to our family! It had valuable meanings that are kept in a secret. After a few years, my father decided we had to move. I wanted to stay, but my father wouldn’t listen! I didn’t have enough money to buy the land back, so I killed my father, hoping the money would pass to me, but it still wasn’t enough! I killed every owner of the place, assuring nobody lives there, until I have enough money to buy it back!” Judge Pao said, “That’s why every owner was killed. You set up a time limit to see if they retreat. If they don’t, you’ll murder them. Also, you used the tiger knives to cover your acts and blame your father for doing it.” The soldiers captured the mad son, and he was well guarded every day. However, days later, an unexpected case happened...

A few nights later, Wilson the farmer heaved a sigh of relief and got in bed. He was glad that the case was over. Just when he was about to snore, an arrow with a raging tiger broke the window and pierced Wilson's heart. Wilson breathed out his last breath and lay still forever. Strangely, Jason had been well guarded, assuring he couldn't have done that. There was truly something weird related to the land. Perhaps it was haunted, or there was another story. Whatever that made the land so valuable must be full of mysteries. Whether or not, Judge Pao was on the case. He was sure he could find the reason behind.

# *The Case of the Manhole*

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Lam, Yuk Hang – 11*

Night. The mysterious black cloth engulfed the starry sky, where the luminous moon sailed like a silvery boat. Just the best time for a stroll, he thought. Whistling, he walked along the long, winding road in the nearby park close to his mother's mansion. A clang echoed through the gloomy park as he walked down a step of stairs. He turned around and saw his wallet in a manhole, floating upon the water's surface. He cursed his misfortune. The wallet, tall in size, was given to him by his brother. He himself was not concerned about the wallet that much, but he knew that it was the thought that counted—a gift. Sighing, he bent over and lifted the manhole cover, followed by an attempt to reach the wallet. On the spur of the moment, his shoe seemingly slipped and he, facefirst, tumbled down the deep manhole, into the cold water. As he gasped for air, a familiar face appeared in front of his eyes. "Sorry, it had to be done." With that said, the face disappeared from the manhole, and the world went black.

Two. 17th October 2149. Morning.

"Madam, no clues have been found." "Madam, forensic evidence results are negative." Sentences buzzed like bees around Chan. Annoyed, she waved them all aside and shook her head disbelievingly. The case seemed like a planned murder, but all it had done was lead them into one big wild goose chase. As the chief investigator, she had been assigned to follow this peculiar case. It was about a man who mysteriously fell into a deep manhole at night. Her head buzzed with suspicions, but all of them were proved wrong. After a moment of contradiction in her head, Chan gave up. "Bring me the case files. This is officially a cold case." The forensic officer came to her side and told her, "Do not give up, as the victim's mother claimed it was not an accident, and she'd go on a hunger strike if the murderer wasn't found." Chan sighed. "Final idea — call the police scientist lab and power up the time machine. We're getting help from a legend in Ancient China."

Three. Qing Dynasty. Pao Court. Noon.

"Sir, several people are in front of the Court, demanding your presence. They're dressed in weird clothes." Pao raised an eyebrow at the reporting soldier. "Bring them in." Chan, her team of scientists and the victim's relatives rushed into the courtroom. "Judge Pao, allow us an introduction. We are from the future and would like your help investigating a peculiar case." Pao was sceptical, but he believed that the people in front of him were extraordinary, so he allowed them to continue with the details.

"So you're telling me you're from the future and a man has slipped down a hole trying to get a satchel. And he was found by his brother when he came looking for him. This is most peculiar." After a brief introduction of the details, this case had stumped even Judge Pao. "Court commences tomorrow."

Four. Qing Dynasty. Pao Court. Dawn.

Pao wandered in the garden, thinking about the case at noon. The officer was right. Every lead had left to a wild goose chase. Suddenly, an idea flashed into his mind—I'll ask Guanyin for help!

Deep at night, Pao visited the Guanyin Temple. Taking a deep breath, he stepped inside. "Pusa, please, help me solve the case! If the victim was innocent, let him come back to life! It is the only way this case can be uncovered." As Pao spoke the words, a cold wind rustled through the temple, shattering a plate. Arose a golden buddha statue, raising its hand and writing in the air using a shaft of light, "The hole was coated with a layer of oil. The man was trying to retrieve his satchel from the hole when he slipped and perished." Then, as quick as a flash, the buddha disappeared in a blinding light.

Pao left the temple and headed towards the court. Muffled screams came from the victim's bodybag. In delight, Pao opened the bag and found the victim alive. "Bearded monster!" The man's eyes widened in fear. "Fear not, for I am Judge Pao. You are in the past, brought by future investigators. Rest for now. Judging commences in the morning."

Five. Qing Dynasty. Pao Court. The following day.

Morning. The future investigators streamed into the Pao Court. "People, I've brought a witness. It's the victim himself, for he has come to life the previous night. Speak for yourself!" The man sorrowfully gazed at the murderer in the court, who sat alone in melancholy. His mouth opened, yet closed again. "It was an accident." Gasps echoed around the courtroom when a voice shouted, "No! I was the one who killed him! He was innocent!" Heads turned to the voice whose face glistened with tears. He walked over to the man and knelt. "Brother..." The man's voice was shaky. He wanted to protect his brother from such a fate, but he knew the truth was out.



The man's brother was chest-deep in debt. The loan sharks threatened to take away his house if he couldn't pay back in time. Desperate, he thought of using family property to pay off the debt. He devised a plan to murder his brother to get his family possessions. He gave his brother a long wallet and coated the manhole with oil. As the man walked down the step of stairs, his wallet slipped and the man drowned to death trying to pick it up.

Upon hearing the truth, Judge Pao asked the man if he wanted to put his brother to justice. The man immediately refused and asked for his brother's pardon. He was forgiven, and everyone departed Pao gratefully.

The case, to the public, was left cold, but deep inside the man's and his brother's hearts, the case had ended 3000 years ago.

# *The Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chan, Cheuk Yiu Isis – 11*

Once upon a time, there was a talented detective—Judge Pao. Judge Pao had a long white beard and a crescent moon tattoo on his forehead. He wore a long cape with huge sleeves like any other ancient Chinese person would.

Judge Pao was a brave, hardworking and intelligent man and he had solved thousands and thousands of crimes and cases during his life, but there was one that troubled him a lot and was the most memorable...

It was the case of a horrifying monster that was killing a lot of innocent citizens, and it had seemed to be unstoppable. Judge Pao knew that he had to crack this case and kill the monster or there would be a lot more innocent people being injured or killed by this monster.

“But where to start investigating?” he thought.

“Ah! Of course!” he exclaimed, “I should start with the victims and investigate more!”

After checking in the hospital for victims, he noticed that every single victim’s corpse had a body part missing.

“Why?”

He pondered in deep silence for a very long time. “Why would the monster need to do that?”

Then he went to the library to find some books that would relate to that monster and give him some information and an idea of what the monster looked like. And to his luck, he found a book *Monsters from World Wide* by a famous explorer. He sat down to read and read... Bingo!!!

“This must be it!” Judge Pao said as he read out the monster’s information, Name: The Griffin, this monster looks like an eagle but is five times bigger and MUCH more dangerous. The Griffin is normally found in China and it likes to eat humans. Many Griffins are tamed by their masters and many live in wild. Griffins are very dangerous and they are in fact human (or at least they once were). The masters can misuse the griffins by leashing them on their enemies.

Judge kept reading about the Griffins and decided that it was likely that the griffin killed its master after it has been unlocked.

He concluded that the Griffin simply ate the body parts of the victims that were missing from the corpse, but there must be more to that...hmm... and it also meant that this griffin that had been attacking this city might have a master that was behind all.

Judge Pao was so tired from all the investigation that he fell asleep in the library. He also figured out that the griffin only attacked at night like an owl and that it could be killed once its head was cut off.

Later that night, Judge Pao had a vision in his dream and he knew very clearly that he was predicting the future since it had happened a few times already but the vision was different. He saw in his vision that the griffin ate the body parts of the victims to get stronger. Judge Pao also saw in his vision that the monster was going to attack the next night and it was targeting a man with strong arms. Judge Pao knew he had to stop this from happening or the griffin would get even stronger and stronger to the point where it was actually unstoppable, so he gathered all the police and the strongest fighters of the time and he armed them with powerful weapons and armour to prepare for the fight on that very night.

The time had finally come, there at the village the griffin was going to attack, stood Judge Pao, the police and the fighters.

BOOM! A house just crumbled!!!! There they saw the scary and terrifying griffin. It was an intense battle between the griffin and the fighters. There was a moment where the fighters almost sliced down the griffin, but then it sent out a massive shockwave.

In the very end, a lot of brave warriors died in that one battle, but the fighters and Judge Pao won and slashed the head off from the griffin.

After the griffin was killed, all the citizens there and Judge Pao lived happily ever after.

# *The Tragedy on London Bridge*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chen, Shiyi Philippe – 10*

The Tragedy on London Bridge    Morning, 6/6/1816

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It was an ordinary day, the sky is murky and black. Sam, a policeman was waking on London Bridge, but somehow he is felling threatened from his intuition. Suddenly, a mysterious man wearing black robes took a knife and fight with him. Sam took the murderer's hat, but he was killed and his blood flooded the street. Meanwhile, in Baker Street, Sherlock Holmes and Bao Gong were having breakfast together. Suddenly, Sherlock and Bao heard some rush footsteps outside. Ronald pushed the door and started to tell Bao Gong and Sherlock what happened on London Bridge. Sherlock knew, if somebody murdered the police, it must be related to Mr. X, leading the biggest crime organization in London. He asked to go to London bridge with Sherlock and three policemen.

Baker Street    10 am, 6/6/1816

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They went to London Bridge. On the streets, they found the remains of Sam, and it was stinky. It was already rotten and nobody could even see a human's shape. The only thing they found is the murderer's Railway ticket and his hat.

"It seemed that the murderer took Sam's hat to make a disguise!"

"I don't think so, Sam may just have robbed it from him!"

At last, they had only taken the ticket and the hat.

Bao Gong immediately found a vacuum cleaner, which had been used in another case before. Sherlock and all the policemen were confused, they thought that they should look at the remains of Sam or the ticket.

"Why are you taking that out?"

"Because the ticket of the Underground may distract our progress!"

The vacuum cleaner looks extremely abnormal. "This vacuum cleaner has a glass at the end of it, so that after we pumped in, we can find the dirt on the cap."

"Why would dirt help us to find the murderer?"

"Because that will identify where he lives!"

"Really? To look at which area in London has the same dirt with the hat?"

He started to pump the bag. After many tries, he succeeded and the glass was full of dirt.

There were mountains of dirt there. Most was flour, plus cinnamon, paprika, salt, pepper, curry powder and sweet pepper powder. On the back, there were graphite powders.

"It must be a dirty place."

"A place full of flour mills and a spice factory."

"A place that would have graphite powders on benches."

Smith looks at the ticket for the Underground, which was from London Bridge Station to Upminster. So Smith thought that the murderer must live in Upminster.

But Albert doubted. He experienced his whole childhood in Upminster. There was a spice factory. But he could assure that there was no flour mills.

Suddenly, Bao Gong asked, "Sherlock, do you have a phone book of London?"

Sherlock didn't, but Smith got one, but he left it in the police office. So he ran out of the house to the police office.

Five minutes later, Smith, who was panting, came back with the phonebook. Bao and Sherlock started to check it.

“There are five flour mills in London, three in Whitechapel. There are six spice factories in London, the biggest one is in Whitechapel and the other five don’t have flour mills nearby. So the murderer must live in Whitechapel!”

“Whitechapel, are you serious? That is the biggest underground crime union, led by Mr. X, the Darkside’s home!

#### The Whitechapel “War” Afternoon, 7/6/1816

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Whitechapel was a dreadful place. There were clouds and dusts everywhere, and one couldn’t see anything outside five meters.

There were millions of houses on two sides of a hundred roads, all in brown, covered by muds. All houses were identical and even locals would get lost in there!

“How are we going to find where he lives?”

“A bicycle! The citizen near London Bridge said that the murderer had a bicycle!” Bao shouted, “We will find out where he lived!”

So, they started searching. After an hour, most of them couldn’t walk one more step, except Bao Gong who was still working. Suddenly, he found a bicycle lying in front of a house’s gate.

Bao Gong called all the searching gang. They used the key to open the door, but there was nobody inside.

“It seems that the murderer is really poor, that's why he joined Mr. X.”

“Now let’s just be prepared to catch him.”

When the murderer stepped in the room, Ronald and Albert arrested him immediately.

#### Murderer’s Story 5pm 10/6 1816

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A week later Albert took Pisces, the murderer, to the police office.

“Well, why did you kill Sam?”

“Because Mr.X told me to do so!”

After being quiet for a while, Pisces started his story----

When I was a child, I lived in Strafford, a dreadful place full of smoky chimneys and poor people of course.

My mom and dad were workers in cloth factories, and I started to work since I was ten years old. Our “master” was Lucius Kurtis, an evil guy. We worked fifteen hours non-stop but only got a loaf of bread and a cup of water every day.

Lucius has a son, called Sam who is a member of the police force. Tension raised between us, and we became enemies. When I grew up, and moved to Whitechapel, I worked in a flour mill. Everything was almost same as before. One day, I received a letter from Mr.X. and he offered me a salary of one thousand pounds! It was incredible. Mr.X trusted me entirely and assigned me of tasks to kill police. I had already killed Ralph and Jack.

Mr.X ordered me to kill Sam Kurtis and I did it after one week for X and also for myself.

“Quite a touching story!” said Albert, “Tell me how to locate Darkside, so you can save your own life.”

“They just moved to a new place two weeks ago.”

“Lambourn, a beautiful town. It is in the middle of Swindon and Reading. A great village if you enjoy country life. But Darkside’s already settled there, and they are definitely planning more murders.”

“So any chance to stop them?”

“Yes, we get agents to kill Mr. X. Most of Darkside members worked only for money, so if we can control Mr. X, it will be very easy to destroy the organization.” “Well, what are we waiting for?!”

# *The Adventures of Judge Bao: Disappearance of the Crescent–Moon Mark*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheng, Ethan – 10*

I was tired of my job. You would too if you carried two identifies, a detective during the day and a judge in the Underworld during the night. Running up and down eighteen scorching levels, I couldn't sleep a wink. So, I decided to take a vacation, and no one believed me. I took a good night's rest in the Overworld. This was how the story began ...

The next morning, I woke up and noticed right away that something had gone WRONG. I checked myself in the mirror for bugs and (luckily) didn't find any. I brushed away the hair covering my forehead, only to find that my crescent–moon symbol had disappeared! The symbol had something to do with my extraordinary ability to travel through the eighteen dimensions and four realms. The thought wasn't too frightening at first, but then I remembered with despair that someone had once told me that if I left the Underworld for longer than a week, I would slowly turn to stone and would never turn back. At that thought, my legs started to wobble. I rushed to prepare for my journey back to the Underworld. Going back without my teleportation powers would be tricky and extremely difficult. It meant that I had to go through the other realms!

The first realm before the Underworld was the Rock Realm, which was also known as the Realm of the Giants. It was the home of huge, blundering giants who also were the sworn enemies of us, the Underworld citizens. SWOOSH went the air next to my ear as I traveled down the tunnel to the Rock Realm. Suddenly, I found myself flying and realized that I was in fact falling! SPLOOSH I was suddenly submerged in water. I started swimming for my life, but the waves were too strong! To my relief, I saw land and I climbed onto shore. I looked at the large body of water I had just struggled through. Just then, a shadow loomed over the water and there was a thundering splash; water sprayed everywhere, soaking me wet from head to toe. The splash was a Giant, and he was running towards me. I suddenly realized that the “sea” I had swum in was a random puddle by the street. So, I hurried along the way, not even bothering to try sneak my way through. I looked around but found nothing. Just when I was about to accept my fate and hand myself to the Giant, I saw something gleaming out from the corner of my eye. It was the exit portal!

I danced my dance of joy, or rather, I staggered towards the portal. My sixth sense started to tingle, and my brain was telling me something important, but my body wasn't listening. I was so exhausted that I staggered forwards and lunged into the portal. Again, I found myself flying at neck breaking speed. I hurled through space until the ground came into view. I smacked onto the ground with a deafening SLAP, a giant spike missed my head by inches. Oh no! The portal I had entered hadn't led me to the Underworld. Instead, I was standing on the spiky ground of Queen Gertrude's Realm! Their Queen, “Gertrude”, was known for her cruelty to others and her own kind. To stop criminals from getting away, the fourth realm only had an entry portal and there was NO WAY OUT!

I tried to stand up but my torso seemed like it was on fire, and it felt like every single bone in my body was shattered. I might have stayed in the Underworld for too long. Feeling desperate, I forced myself to think hard. I remembered; someone had told me that Queen Gertrude kept a secret exit portal for herself deep in her hiding place.

I stealthily sneaked through the spikey yet barren, purple ground of the bone–chilling Spike Realm. It was wide and empty. A few Spwindlers were patrolling the grounds. I guessed that Gertrude and her faithful minions were out capturing more defenseless souls to devour. I stepped out of the shadow and with what I saw, I immediately regretted it. Millions of bodies hung limp from rusty chains that were tied to a wall. “They must've had their souls sucked out of them” I thought grimly. I spotted some rusted weapons on the ground. I crept over there and picked up a fiery looking sword. I tiptoed across and had almost reached the portal when suddenly, a voice rumbled from behind.

“Well, well, what do we have here?”

I turned my head slowly, dreading what I would see. Gertrude and her minions were staring at me, daring me to come forward. Suddenly, Gertrude made a sucking noise and the portal disappeared with a flash.

“No!” I shouted.

Gertrude could control the portal. Now the only way to get back home was to defeat and kill Gertrude so that the portal would reappear. Gertrude smirked and rumbled.

“I see that you have found your friend’s sword.”

I was confused, then I saw a mark on the blade. It was General Lucas’s Fire Sword. General Lucas and I had been best friend since we were kids. He had been taken by the Spwindlers. I stared at her; my fists clenched tight around my friend’s blade. I couldn’t believe my ears, he was dead. Tears were streaming down my face. I could feel a power rushing through me. I could feel Lucas’s soul next to me, urging me on. I lunged forward and plunged the Fire Sword deep into Gertrude’s heart; slime splattered everywhere. Caught by surprise, the minions could only stand there gasping as they watched their leader fall. I rushed forward and lunged into the portal before they could recover.

A sudden brightness blinded me for a moment, and suddenly I was home in the Underworld, in bed. My Crescent–Moon had been returned. Was that all a dream?! Wait! The Fire Sword was in my hand.

## *Judge Bao's New Case — The Missing Cat*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheng, Yan Wing Marilyn – 10*

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE CAT IS MISSING!!” Autumn yelled into the phone. Her mother just called her and informed her that her cat Meili had disappeared that morning while she was at work.

Autumn immediately rushed home. She went to see if the cat was on her bed, underneath the couch, behind the curtains, or in the bed covers. Meili was nowhere to be found! Feeling hopeless, she went on her computer to make a flyer of her missing cat. Just when she was about to print it out, she noticed an advertisement on the side of a webpage that happened to be open in the background. “Got a mystery to solve? Sherlock Holmes and Judge Bao at your service. Call this number: 1234–5678.”

“Sherlock Holmes? Isn’t he a fictional character? And who’s Judge Bao? Hmmm... it’s worth a try... It is free after all.” Autumn dialed the number. “Hello. Thank you for calling. Your wish will be granted.” The other side hung up. Autumn was very confused. Thinking that it was a scam, she went on to print her flyers.

That night while Autumn was sleeping, she heard the door bell ring. Ding–dong! Autumn slowly trudged to the door and opened it. She saw a very old person wearing ancient Chinese robes. The man had a moon–shaped mark on his forehead. Autumn looked to his right and found a six–feet–tall slanky man wearing a wool tweed overcoat with a pipe in his mouth. “Am I still dreaming?” Autumn pinched her thigh and screamed, “Ouch! I am not dreaming! WHO ARE YOU? Are you robbing my house? You won’t find anything here!”

The men pushed their way in. The slanky man asked for British tea with a scone, while the Chinese man asked for green tea with turnip cake. Autumn looked at them suspiciously and asked, “What are your names? What are you doing here?” Realizing that they were not going to get their orders fulfilled, the slanky man replied, “I am Sherlock Holmes, the best detective in history. This is the great Judge Bao. We got a call from you. We should ask you why you called?” Autumn suddenly realized that the number she called earlier that was not a scam! She probably had wasted paper and thousands of trees printing flyers! Autumn quickly introduced herself and told them the situation of her poor missing cat, Meili. “A missing cat is surely a very serious business! No time to waste! Sherlock, we have to help this young girl!” Judge Bao said.

Sherlock asked, “Is there a police station around here? How far are we from Scotland Yard?” Judge Bao said, “We are not even near England! This is Hong Kong, and Hong Kong belongs to China! Autumn, do you have those, um, ‘movable eyes’ here? Those usually on ceilings?” Not understanding Judge Bao, Sherlock asked, “Are you talking about bats? What do bats have to do with a cat?” Autumn asked, “Do you mean a CCTV?” and pointed to one. Judge Bao gave her an approving nod. He instructed Autumn to play back the recording of that morning. Sherlock watched them in awe, as he had never heard of CCTV! They saw Meili at one point in the recording. She was walking towards the CCTV, and she pushed the camera with her paw towards the wall. “What a sneaky cat!” Sherlock sighed, “Now how do we know where it went?” Judge Bao said, “Shush, Sherlock! I am trying to listen.” Cling, clang, clash! Judge Bao grinned.

Judge Bao asked Autumn to give him a tour of the house. They were able to find three rooms with miscellaneous things on the floor. Judge Bao inspected the rooms carefully. The first room was a bathroom. It was a small room and there was hardly any space for Meili to hide. Autumn’s mother’s makeup and skincare products littered the floor. The second room was Autumn’s bedroom. “Sorry, my room is very messy because I don’t have time to clean it. And there’s all the school stuff... art stuff... snacks... you know...” said Autumn embarrassedly. The third room was the kitchen. It had grocery bags, boxes, tins and laundry things on the floor.

Sherlock declared, “I know where Meili is! She must be in Autumn’s room! Cats like comfortable places! Autumn’s bed looks soft to me!” Judge Bao shook his head and said, “It is the kitchen. Have you noticed that Meili’s bowl in the living room was empty? Meili would definitely look for food. The cat food is stored on top of the fridge. And the fridge is in the kitchen. And Sherlock, didn’t you see that Autumn’s room is carpeted? The items on the floor could not have made the sounds we heard in the recording. But the cans and tins in the kitchen would certainly make the noises. Autumn, get a ladder.”



Autumn immediately went to get a ladder, hoping that Judge Bao was correct. Autumn carefully got on the ladder, and to their surprise, Meili was on top of the fridge stuffing her face with cat food!

Autumn quickly thanked Judge Bao and insisted to make him some turnip cakes as a thank you gift. Sherlock Holmes sat in the corner in disbelief. “How did you know about CCTV? How did you know about what a fridge is? How did you know what a cat likes?” “I have lived many years, my young apprentice. And I am always the best!”

## *Judge Pao and the Deadly Virus*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Choi, Ming Kwan Katreece – 11*

Sirens rang... more and more different sirens were ringing. Police and ambulances were going in different directions to save lives. People were at home and afraid to come out, fearing they might catch a new deadly virus. The year was 2020. There has been an outbreak of a deadly virus, and it was spreading quickly all over the world. Nobody knew how it started. All we knew was that it was harmful. Already one tenth of the world population has been wiped out due to this virus.

Katreece Choi was a local student in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, her best friend, Bao Bao, has just caught the virus. Katreece was very worried about Bao Bao. As Katreece left her computer on while looking after Bao Bao, suddenly there was a loud noise, “Bang!”. A flash of lightning, the room went into darkness. Slowly there was a light glowing from the computer. The light took the form of a curved moon shape. Then a face was showing through the light. It was a man and his skin was dark. He had a crescent moon on his forehead. “I am Judge Pao from the Song dynasty, Kaifeng. Are you Katreece Choi from 2020? he asked. “Yes, I am,” Katreece replied, not knowing what was going on. “Come with me to chase a mad magician named Mortifise. He has been releasing a deadly spell virus in my world killing many people. I have been tracking him down, therefore I have come to your world. Will you help me, brave Katreece?” Judge Pao said. Without hesitation, Katreece said, “Yes! Let’s find Mortifise, stop him, and reverse the spell virus so that all of us will be saved!”

Finding Mortifise was not easy, but Judge Pao brought his team captain – Captain Chin, an excellent tracker. Captain Chin knew the location of Mortifise was hidden in a Cup, which happened to be the trophy of a tennis challenge. The rule to the challenge was straightforward. Whoever could beat the dynamic duo – Roger Del and Raphael Nadin one set of tennis would win. But how hard it was to beat such great players. Katreece played tennis, but her usual partner, Bao Bao was resting in bed. Katreece had to think of a solution. Judge Pao said, “Please don’t give up. We must give this a try. Katreece, can you teach Captain Chin to play tennis? He can swing his sword very well. Surely, he can swing a tennis racket.” Katreece was positive and agreed to it. Indeed, Captain Chin was a fast learner because he was very skillful in Kung Fu. Also, he knew how to walk on water. He was fast and never missed the ball.

Despite Roger and Raphael being the favorites to win, they had never seen anything like the defensive ability of Captain Chin. The match was very even. Katreece was also playing very well, chasing after every ball. She was diving around the court and scratched herself on the knee. Katreece ignored the pain and continued. Her leg was shaking, but Katreece was running for every point. Katreece, Captain Chin, Roger, and Raphael were locked at sudden death. One point to decide the match. Roger saw tiredness on Katreece’s face, yet she did not give up and was extremely determined. Finally, Roger asked, “Why don’t you give up, Katreece?” Katreece said, “I cannot. I need that cup to stop the spell virus”. Roger said, “If you can return my 250km/hour serve, I will let you take the cup. So Roger served a cannonball at Katreece reaching 300km/hour. Judge Pao jumped into the court and supported Katreece from the back calling his power from the moon. Katreece was able to block the ball back. Roger was impressed and let Katreece, Judge Pao, and Captain Chin take the cup. From the cup, Judge Pao learned that Mortifise was hiding on top of a mountain in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Queenstown was a beautiful place. It had high mountains, and top of the mountains was covered by snow. This place was untouched by humans. Everything was natural, and there were no aggressive animals or plants. All natural things had their place and were living in harmony. Mortifise had been hiding at the top of mountain brewing his next deadly spell virus. Judge Pao, Katreece, and Captain Chin traveled up there. Mortifise saw they were coming so he tried to escape down the mountain. The mountain was marked with bike tracks. Katreece loved riding bikes, and riding on a mountain bike was natural for her. Katreece carried Judge Pao while Captain Chin was using his ‘walking on water’ skill. Mortifise had already learned how to ride a mountain bike.

The chase began. They were going down S-shaped tracks, and there were high bumps along the way. Mortifise was going fast and jumping high. Katreece and Judge Pao followed closely behind him.

Captain Chin was fast. He came around the front of Mortifise and stopped him. Mortifise tumbled on the ground. Judge Pao asked him why he had been casting this evil spell on us in both worlds. Mortifise angrily said, "I hate the humankind as they destroy the environment." Judge Pao said, "Hate cannot solve conflicts. We need to work together in order to achieve harmony. Look at how many people are suffering from your spell. Some are still unwell, and their children are waiting for their parents to come home. The way of life is to follow upright things. Can you stop?" Mortifise regretted and recognized that he was acting out of too much emotion. He reverted all his spell viruses. Bao Bao and the world were saved!

Judge Pao and Captain Chin bid farewell to Katreece, leaving the present world with a handscroll with the phrase, "Be righteous". Judge Pao's pursuit of righteousness and justice was admirable and will be forever remembered by all.

## ***Buried Bodies***

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Fok, Alicia – 12*

It was a dark stormy night. Judge Pao stayed in his room, working hard on several cases about children and adults disappearing into the woods with his assistant Chang reading a few novels. Three faint knocks were heard, and Chang rushed to the door hurriedly.

A scruffy woman stood at his doorstep. Her hair was tangled, her eyes were red rimmed, and her face was full of sorrow. It was a saddening sight.

"My son," she sobbed tearfully and clutched wildly at Judge Pao's arm. "I found him dead in the woods just after he went out to hunt. There were scars over him. There was so much blood."

Judge Pao ushered her into the house and made her sit down. Chang hastily poured her a cup of tea. She wept loudly as Judge Pao comforted her. He placed a dim candle in a lantern and made his way to the woods with Chang following. They found a body lying on the wet dirt. He peered closely and saw a young boy with numerous scars on his body.

His bow and arrows were broken in half and there was no sign of any footprints on the mud. Judge Pao stayed there for a long time with Chang investigating. This was the first time a case had left the two troubled.

The woman's son was taken to the prefect station and Judge Pao gathered all the witnesses and suspects. Chang and Judge Pao got to know that the young boy that died was called Yang, and his mother worked as a maid at a rich family's house.

Yang's mother worked for Lady Li, and Lady Li despised Yang. Yang was superlative at everything, unlike Lady Li's child. Even if Lady Li had gotten Yang killed, nobody would know. Lady Li could've found

somebody to do the dirty jobs for her. Lady Li was the main suspect, but there was no proof.

Judge Pao worked as a supernatural judge in the underworld during the nighttime. Nobody knew that. It was Judge Pao's greatest secret. Not even Chang, who had worked alongside Judge Pao for plenty of years.

It was midnight and Judge Pao was in the afterlife. He roamed through countless spirits who were about to be judged. Some looked happy, some were sad. Judge Pao scanned through the horizon of souls and his sharp eyes landed on one face.

He saw Yang. Yang had a pure face. Without those grotesque scars, his face was smooth and pearly, which gleamed in the bright yellow sunset.

Judge Pao made his way to Yang and asked him if he knew how he died.

"I don't even remember, honestly. All I know is I was hunting, and a dark purple mist started to surround the forest and I saw a huge figure blundering through the trees. Then everything turned black," he said. "I didn't feel any pain."

Judge Pao's face darkened. He had heard people finding carcasses in the woods without livers and brains. This could only mean that it was a Wangliang. An ancient Chinese demon that ate the livers and brains of corpses. Judge Pao blessed Yang and returned to earth when it was still dark. He prepared stone tigers and pine trees. He had known humans turn into Wangliangs because of greed and envy. He wondered if this was also a human in disguise.

As Yang had said, a thick mist clouded the forest and a huge creature wandered through the forest. Judge Pao took out the stone lions and cast a net onto the beast. It shrank and a human shape was seen.

"Chang?" Judge Pao gasped and shrank back in alarm. The varmint looked at Judge Pao with jealousy in his eyes. Chang said, "You are the one who gets all the riches and honor. I am left with nothing. You take the credit for my work." Chang bared his teeth and Judge Pao sighed.

Chang was locked in prison for the rest of his life. All of those poor children and young men and women were killed all because of misunderstanding.

Judge Pao and the village buried their bodies and he said a silent prayer and blessed them. He looked up to the heavens and closed his eyes as a single tear rolled down his cheek.

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Fung, Yan Amber – 10*

Judge Pao groaned as he finished his work, sorting out the affairs of the Afterlife. As he was about to teleport back home, a man cornered him and pleaded, "Please, Mr Pao, please help my son! I died just as it happened."

"What happened?" asked Judge Pao curiously.

"Well, I gave my son, Ernie, our family treasure, and little did I know that while Ernie was sleeping, someone stole it!" cried the man desperately.

"All right, what does it look like?"

The man named Chester told Judge Pao that it was a golden cup with the letter 'R' on it, representing the initial of their family's last name.

This was the first time Judge Pao was confused. With just so little information, how could he possibly solve the case? However, no matter how hard it was to crack this mystery, he would never give up.

The next day, Judge Pao decided to check Ernie's apartment for fingerprints while Ernie was at school. This way, there would be no distractions. Judge Pao carefully examined the boy's bedroom and noticed footprints leading to the window. He looked down nineteen floors and smiled. There could be witnesses!

Alice had caught a glimpse of a tall, hooded figure while watching TV late at night.

"When did you see this person?" Judge Pao questioned her coolly.

"Oh, at two in the morning," Alice replied timidly.

"What was he using to climb down?"

"He was using a long rope to climb down, I think... I only caught a quick glimpse of him, but bits of the rope got stuck on my balcony."

Judge Pao rushed to the balcony and found a piece of rope lying on a plant. He touched it softly and smelled it, hoping to pick up the scent. He immediately found it oddly familiar and remembered the scent from the street below when he was walking over to Ernie's apartment.

After he bade Alice a thankful goodbye, he sprinted to Park Avenue and dodged all the bustling people. At last, he saw an unusual-shaped building that looked like it was about to cave in.

He raced to the mailboxes and saw a glistening golden shine on the sixth floor's mailbox. He darted to the elevator and pressed the button for the sixth floor. Finding the thief's apartment was almost impossible as there were countless doors. Luckily, a young boy and lady unlocked their door. They froze, gazing at Judge Pao, looking as though they were both about to scream.

"Hello," said Judge Pao pleasantly.

"He-hello," said the lady anxiously.

"Could you tell me where apartment 617A is?"

"O-okay, well, it's r-right next t-to the window o-on the left."

"Thank you," said Judge Pao gratefully. He knocked on the door of 617A. A man with a cigarette in his mouth opened the door roughly.

"Who are you?" he asked, glaring at Judge Pao.

"Oh! Just a man who is going to arrest you for stealing a golden cup."

The man looked horrified and tried to close the door, but Judge Pao was too quick. He took the man by his collar and tied his two hands together with the rope from Alice's balcony.

"Oi! You! What do ya' think ya' doing?" said a gruff-looking man coming out of a room.

"How many of you are inside?" asked Judge Pao politely.

"Only the three o' us."

"Three?" Judge Pao didn't know what to do. Who stole the cup?

"Yeah! Only Judy, me, and Christella. Why?"

"So two men and one woman, am I correct?"

The man called Conrad snorted loudly, "Yeah! What, ya wanna be one o' us?"

"No, thank you. Although I am guessing that you people are holding a possession that does not belong to you?"

"Nah, we don' do thiefin' anymo'!" said the man airily.

"Wait, so you haven't stolen anything in the past few days?"

"Yeah! I think Christella might've stolen somethin' by accident, though."

"Where is she at the moment?"

"Ay! Christella!" shouted the man.

"Yeah, what?" a woman wearing headphones with long blonde curls falling on her shoulders came out of the hallway.

"Yeah, well, this ol' man 'ere was askin' what ya' stole yesterday!" said the man.

"Oh, it's nothing. Just my old friend's cup," said Christella.

"Which old friend?"

"Hernando Rofer, do you know him? His cup has been missing for four years already!"

"Hold on, so you weren't exactly stealing Chester's cup?"

"Of course not! That dungheap Chester took Hernando's cup because Chester knew Hernando's is like my best bud and hates us because my cousin's child bullied Ernie! So I got it back for my pal!"

Judge Pao suddenly sank like a stone.

Chester wanted Judge Pao to send one of the most vicious gangs in New York City to the prison of Hell so that Chester wouldn't be a suspect.

"Follow me," Judge Pao said, and the four of them set off to the Clouds of Afterlife. Chester was sitting with an angel, playing chess on a glass table.

"Hey, Chester!" called Judge Pao.

"Ay! Judge Pao! How are you? Have you found our treasure yet?" asked Chester. Looking at the group of thieves behind Judge Pao, Chester looked delighted. "Are you going to send them to the prison of Hell?" he asked eagerly.

"No," Judge Pao held up the golden cup, "I am sending you!"

Chester ran for it, and Christella ran after him.

"I got him. What do you plan to do to him?" asked Christella, breathlessly holding Chester by the scruff of his neck.

"Thank you, Christella, I owe you," Judge Pao bowed his head kindly. He took Chester by his arm and brought him to the deadly prison of Hell.

The legendary Judge Pao had cracked yet another puzzling case, using his never-give-up attitude that I think we all ought to adopt.



# *The Prophecy*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Ho, Hin Fung Herrick – 11*

“Get me out of here! I am Sun Wukong, the Great Sage, Heaven’s Equal! You can’t hold me forever! Release me, NOW!”

I used to love the huge green mountains of China, my home. But now, trapped under this mountain, I was screaming on top of my lungs but nobody helped me. Nobody heard me.

When I grew in power, The Jade Emperor noticed my formidable strength. He invited me to Heaven and gave me a job as a stable boy for the Cloud Horses of Heaven. I grew with rage, as how dare the Emperor gave the Great Monkey King such a low position job? I rebelled against him, and the warriors were too weak to stop me. They had to call in Buddha. That thoughtless Buddha trapped me under Five Finger Mountain and imprisoned me for five hundred years.

Many years later my story was well written as a legend to accompany the monk Tang Sanzang on a journey to the West. But what happened during my five hundred years of imprisonment? It was my secret. Take it from me, the great Monkey King, as this is the tale of the Lost Five Hundred Years.

Eons ago, I was born from a holy stone on top of a mountain. Even the powerful Buddha did not know my abilities. I could channel my energy onto anything, including this mountain. I closed my eyes. I used the Yin and Yang inside of me to crack reality itself. Suddenly, the Golden Winds of Heaven circled the mountain. I broke time and space itself. I meditated, and shattered universes appeared before me, like stars in the night sky.

“Think that these are all different universes and different timelines. Now I travel to a time where I am respected, a time where the Flower Fruit Mountain will forever be protected and the most powerful in the realm,” I spoke to myself and vanished into the golden leaves of a peach tree.

Opening my eyes, I arrived hundreds of thousands of years in the future, kneeling in a crater. I looked around me and saw some figures in the distance.

“Monkeys!” I shouted, “Your King has returned! The Great Sage, Sun Wukong!”

No reaction. “Monkeys? Hello?” I asked, walking closer to the mysterious figures, “Why are you holding those glowing tablets? Where did all your fur go?”

They looked around me, puzzled. Little did I know, everything was about to change. I also noticed that all the green mountains of China were gone and became these suspicious tall towers made of glass and steel. What had the monkeys done? I took a look at one of the glowing tablets. On it, I saw things that meddled my sanity. Was the world’s knowledge stored in such a small device?

“What is the meaning of all these?” I shouted, “What is the magic that has kept you glued to these enchanted tablets of steel?” The hairless monkeys all turned on me with confused looks on their faces. They started to raise their tablets. I thought they were praising me. Finally! About time I got some respect! But then, the tablets turned into glowing little flashes of light.

“Where am I?” I felt confused yet intrigued and asked, “How did the monkeys come to be this way?”

Riding on my magical cloud “Jin Dou Yun”, I travelled over every corner of the realm. To my dismay, the whole world had been destroyed except for one place. On top of lush green mountains in China, I saw my kind. My hairy friends. Monkeys. I stealthily snuck after them and found them gathering peaches from the blossoms.

“They don’t seem hungry,” I thought to myself, “Why are they gathering so many peaches, only for them to be wasted?” They jumped into some thick parts of the forest and disappeared. I followed them and found something surprising. I screamed, “It’s my throne! Here is my home Flower Fruit Mountain!”

The whole world was ruined except Flower Fruit Mountain because of my holy protection spell. The monkeys placed the peaches on the throne. I guessed, after all this time they still hoped I would come back. There were some giant pillars of jade behind the throne. On the tablets, there were engraved thousands and thousands of sacred texts. They depicted wars and sufferings since the Tang Dynasty, demons, and monsters roaming the mortal realm, and a heavenly chosen monkey accompanying a monk to save humanity by delivering holy texts from the West.

But beneath the pillars read, “Nevertheless, The Prophecy That Never Happened...”

I didn’t care about the prophecy at all and went on exploring the future world. Everywhere I went, I saw suffering, war, pollution, hunger and death. Although I had become the king of this realm, I didn’t seem happy no matter what I owned. I missed the beautiful world with love and peace.

After five hundred years of exploring and thinking, I finally realized the world was ruined because the Prophecy had never come true. The chosen monkey was me. The holy texts of peace were never delivered because I hadn’t been there to deliver them after I teleported to the future. It was me who caused the world to become like this. Faithfully knowing my mission, I closed my eyes and told myself, “I need to go back to the Tang Dynasty and save the world.”

At the moment, the heavenly energy awakened my soul. “I am not The Great Sage, Heaven’s Equal,” I said firmly, “I am the awakened Monkey of Vacuity.”

Encased in stone again, I opened my eyes and saw a figure heading toward me. “Hello, monkey,” he said in a gentle voice, “What are you doing here in the rocks? I’m Tang Sanzang.”

“I have been waiting for you for five hundred years!” I exclaimed.

And so, our Journey to the West began.

# *The Mysterious Case*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Hui, Hailey Doria – 9*

Judge Pao, the great detective was born many years ago in the expansive China. He was good at solving different cases and puzzles so he became a world famous crime fighter. As he became famous, his stories and tales began to spread around the world. Many people knew him because of the moon shape in the middle of his forehead. Judge Pao also had a kind and clever partner, a scientist, who always hit the books. He lived with Judge Pao in a house which was also their office, in which they conducted all their detective work.

One morning, a man went to a luxury car shop. There were many expensive cars in the shop. The man wore an odd-looking hat which was all black and had holes in it. His cloth was old and skanky, his shoes were black. All you could say is that he looked poor and rather dirty. After the shop closed, the checking service came to check if any of the cars had already been wrecked.

One of the staff from the checking service cried “There’s something missing, sir!”

All of the staff were shocked. The shop had only opened three days before. How come there was already parts been missing? Wondered the salesman of the car shop. A few days later, Judge Pao went to the shop. The salesman told him that there were missing parts in a car.

Judge Pao asked “Is there usually a lot of people going in this shop?”

The staff replied “Yes, especially today.”

“May I see the CCTV?” Judge Pao asked.

They quickly showed him the video of the mysterious event. He felt really curious when he saw a man who stayed at the shop for hours according to the footage. At that moment, he saw that the man was hiding and waiting for the shop to close.

Judge Pao exclaimed, “I think that’s the problem. The man was hiding and after you left, the man stole the parts from the car when nobody was watching, so he could sell it for money.”

Why did the man forget that we could see him doing all this on CCTV?” asked the inquisitive partner as his astonishment had now turned to curiosity.

“Because he clearly thought nobody would see this.” Judge Pao answered.

At night, it began to rain and digging sounds were coming from Judge Pao’s Garden. Judge Pao and his partner quickly ran to the garden, but when they arrived, there were no signs of digging at all. But when Judge Pao went to the back of the garden where there were many squirrels, he found that there was a suspicious hole there. Judge Pao knew that there must be something in the wind, but he realised it was just a trick because there was actually nothing under the garden. Moreover, if there was really something under it, Judge Pao would have found.

The next morning, Judge Pao and his partner passed by the car shop. It was a coincidence that he recognised the man from the CCTV footage walking around the car shop and peeking through the glass of the car shop.

“What are you doing?” asked Judge Pao dubiously, glaring at the man.

The man darted away as fast as a lightning. Judge Pao immediately hopped on his partner’s brown bicycle, chased after him while his partner ran after them. Although Judge Pao was quite slow on the bicycle, he soon caught the man.

“You certainly tried, but you cannot fool me!” Judge Pao said and tied the man’s hand and wrist with a tight rope.

“Wh...what do m...mean?” asked the man, pretending to be serious.

“I have evidence if you don’t confess for what you have done!” Judge Pao calmly said.

“I want to go to jail more than seeing you!” the man screamed with evilness.

Soon, the police came and arrested the man. And so, Judge Pao and his partner went back to their home and chatted.

“Mission complete!” Judge Pao said happily.

“What do you mean by “though you have tried, you cannot fool me?” Asked the delightful partner.

“Well, because the trick he made was digging in our garden to distract our attention on his theft of the car parts.” Responded Judge Pao.

“Then why did he need to steal the parts from a car?” Questioned his partner.

“Because he could sell it for money and the shop couldn’t sell it if it lost some parts inside the car. There was however, something in the wind. There was something missing, they hadn’t solved the mystery entirely. So, as they did every day, Judge Pao and his partner set off to the local prison to further continue their investigation into the enigmatic car parts thief.

# *My Soul Judging Time By Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Hung, Daphne – 9*

My eyes fluttered open, not prepared to adjust to the blinding light that was above me. A bright chandelier hung above me, lighting the room with an eerie glow. I felt confused when I found that I couldn't remember anything. It was as if someone had drawn every single drop of memory I had about my life and left me to start fresh. I saw a figure loom over me. My squinting eyes finally adjusted to the light and found a man's face. A memory clicked into its place and he became oddly familiar. That face was a man's face of whom I had studied in school for so long. "Judge Pao?! You're the one who judges souls and predicts if people are good, right? A-a-a-and you solve mysteries? What are you doing here?"

"Someone has asked me to solve a mystery of what is to happen at this dinner party. Would you mind if we solve it together?"

"Yes! I would be honoured! Well, with all that I've read about you, your mystery solving skills could be of help."

I looked around, studying the different people around us. A bored-looking waiter wandered around, offering everyone delicious-looking treats. A tall slim old man who introduced himself as Dr. Keefe, a literature teacher, was laughing with author and hostess Ms. Jolintine. Afterwards, Dr. Keefe excused himself to the living room to answer a "super important phone call." Judge Pao and I were bored and decided to check out the 2nd floor to excite ourselves.

Suddenly, the room went pitch black. We heard a piercing scream, Judge Pao and I raced downstairs toward the sound. When the lights came on about 5 minutes later, Ms. Jolintine, sprawled in front of us, had a knife stabbed into her stomach. She was dead.

After about a half hour of screams and tears, Judge Pao and I announced we would question people individually to get to the bottom of this. We interrogated the waiter, Dan, he claimed he was in the kitchen making the food when the lights went out. When he heard the agonizing scream, he rushed to the voice because he was worried, and when the lights turned on, he was right in front of the body! Dan tearfully admitted that he and Ms. Jolintine had gone to the same high school and used to date. He still liked her and said he would never kill her.

Dr. Keefe was in the front room on the phone when the lights went out. He went back to the main room but tripped on a coffee table. When asked why there was no noise, he said he has very quiet shoes. I didn't really believe him at first, but Judge Pao said to move on and continue questioning. I agreed, since he was the expert. Dr. Keefe also said he and Ms. Jolintine had worked together over the years on novels, so they were close friends.

Dr. Keefe suddenly pointed at us. "Shouldn't it be *us* questioning *you*? After all, you both suspiciously left in the middle of all this so it was probably you! You killed her!"

"Uh, excuse me? We were upstairs, and besides I don't have any reason to—" Judge Pao stopped me.

“Don’t worry,” he whispered. Aloud he said, “It’s alright everyone, no need to blame each other.”

Then, Judge Pao turned to Dan. “You were best friends with Ms. Jolintine, weren’t you? But... you were more than friends. You liked her, didn’t you?”

“I really did... I can’t believe she’s d—d—dead,” he choked between words in tears.

“How could she suddenly just go to you and not me?” Dan yelled. “I was with her before, and you — you stole her from me! And now...”

Judge Pao said, “Ha! I knew it. Dan, you didn’t mean to kill her, did you?”

“Dr. Keefe had left in a hurry to answer a phone call and Ms. Jolintine was in the living room, so Dr. Keefe couldn’t have done it. But Dan, you were in the kitchen close to Ms. Jolintine. When the lights went out, you grabbed a knife to stab Dr. Keefe and get your love back. But you didn’t know he had left the room, and you killed Ms. Jolintine instead.”

“I—I couldn’t see! O—of course any a—accident could h—happen w—without anyone noticing... I—I care for her so much, and I’ve j—just killed h—her!”

Then I realized what happened. “Dan, you said Ms. Jolintine used to spend a lot of time with you, but now she has been spending all her time with Dr. Keefe. Isn’t that why you did this?”

“Yes. I’m sorry.”

“Good job!” Judge Pao smiled. “I didn’t see that coming. Now for this one, I’m going to judge their souls and bring him *down*.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, they killed someone so I have to do the same thing to them too.”

“No! Even though he did something bad, they should be punished, but not killed.”

“Yes, but what should their punishment be? Fifty years of torture in hell?”

“No no no! Not that extreme. Shouldn’t we just give them jail time or community service? I mean, everyone deserves a second chance. It’s the right thing to do.

Suddenly, everyone vanished. Only Judge Pao remained.

“Good job. You have proven to me that you’re a good person.”

“*What* is going on?” I screamed, then stopped. I suddenly remembered how

I got here. I had passed away.

“All this time I was judging your soul, and you have proven that you’re a good person, and fit to go to Heaven.”

“Thank you, Judge Pao,” I bowed. “I will be sure to be good in Heaven.” One of the doors in the mansion clicked open, leading to a beautiful, indescribable garden. I walked through the door and into the garden with a smile, turning the next few pages of my life.

# *The New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Jor, Eamon – 10*

It was just past 6 am when the alarm went off, and I had to wake up and get ready for my day as a judge in the local court. I have been in this role for over ten years.

However, today was different. When I woke up, I found myself dressed in funny attire and jostling in a sedan chair. It stopped after a few minutes when I heard someone calling in an alien dialect, “Pao Da Ren (Justice Bao), we have arrived.” The dialect spoken was similar but not the same as Putonghua spoken by Chinese people nowadays. As I stepped out, I entered what seemed to be ancient *ya men* (police station cum law court), like the many I had seen in TV dramas and movies.

I soon noticed the flags and banners with the big Chinese character “Song”(宋). Am I on the set of the latest period drama in the making? Confused, I was ushered into a seat behind a traditional Chinese desk in the centre of the courthouse by a person dressed in an ancient costume. I didn't recall signing up to appear in a movie or re-enactment.

A moment later, it started pouring down, and two people were locked in a heated argument outside the court. All eyes in the court were on me. I summoned my lieutenants to let them in.

The two persons were named Lo and Yao. Both were blushing with anger as they entered the court. Lo started, “Pao Da Ren, my name is Lo. I run an umbrella shop near the East Gate of Kai Feng city. Earlier, I took one of my umbrellas from the shop to visit my friend. While I was walking, it stopped raining, then I accidentally dropped my umbrella, and this gentleman here (pointing at Yao) picked it up. He started claiming it was his umbrella and asked me to provide proof that the umbrella was mine.

Yao said, “No, that umbrella is mine, I dropped it, but he (pointing at Lo) took it.”

They started arguing again until I slammed on the desk and ordered them to stop scrapping at once. Neither side could produce any evidence to support their case.

As a judge sitting in the local court, evidence is presented to the court BEFORE the litigation commences. I was about to throw both of them out of the court and admonish them for wasting my time when I remembered reading about a similar case dealt with by the famous Judge Pao during the Song dynasty. So, I ripped the umbrella into halves and gave each half to each of them as Judge Pao had done in the original story.

After that, they left the court, and I ordered my two lieutenants to follow them and listen to what they had to say outside the court.

After around half an hour, my lieutenants returned to report what they saw and heard. According to them, Lo was mad at me and started cursing me. He said, “This judge is the worst I have ever seen!” But Yao seemed to be calm. Wow, things did happen in exactly the same way as what I read from the countless legends about Judge Pao!

According to the original story, Judge Pao would have made his verdict based on the different reactions of Lo and Yao and awarded compensation to Lo based on his genuine discontent about my decision to rip the umbrella in half. However, I decided to do things differently. No judge should ever decide the outcome of a case based purely on his or her intuition.

I summoned the two back into the court the next day and asked them to produce evidence and witnesses. It turned out the umbrella in question was only sold in Lo's shop, and Yao could not produce any proof of purchase. Also, a passer-by who witnessed the argument confirmed Lo's version of the incident. With this evidence, I had Yao arrested for robbery, and he was also to compensate Lo for the ripped umbrella.

Hence the case was successfully resolved, and although the result was the same as in the original story, I was pleased that justice was delivered in a more familiar way – fairer and more scientific despite the fact that took a bit longer. It had been a long day, and I started to dose off in my sedan chair on the way back to my residence. Then, I heard the faint beeping of the alarm clock, which got louder and louder. As I woke up, I realised that it was all a dream! I was just relieved that I was a modern-day judge!

# *The New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Jor, Eamon – 10*

It was just past 6 am when the alarm went off, and I had to wake up and get ready for my day as a judge in the local court. I have been in this role for over ten years.

However, today was different. When I woke up, I found myself dressed in funny attire and jostling in a sedan chair. It stopped after a few minutes when I heard someone calling in an alien dialect, “Pao Da Ren (Justice Bao), we have arrived.” The dialect spoken was similar but not the same as Putonghua spoken by Chinese people nowadays. As I stepped out, I entered what seemed to be ancient *ya men* (police station cum law court), like the many I had seen in TV dramas and movies.

I soon noticed the flags and banners with the big Chinese character “Song”(宋). Am I on the set of the latest period drama in the making? Confused, I was ushered into a seat behind a traditional Chinese desk in the centre of the courthouse by a person dressed in an ancient costume. I didn't recall signing up to appear in a movie or re-enactment.

A moment later, it started pouring down, and two people were locked in a heated argument outside the court. All eyes in the court were on me. I summoned my lieutenants to let them in.

The two persons were named Lo and Yao. Both were blushing with anger as they entered the court. Lo started, “Pao Da Ren, my name is Lo. I run an umbrella shop near the East Gate of Kai Feng city. Earlier, I took one of my umbrellas from the shop to visit my friend. While I was walking, it stopped raining, then I accidentally dropped my umbrella, and this gentleman here (pointing at Yao) picked it up. He started claiming it was his umbrella and asked me to provide proof that the umbrella was mine.

Yao said, “No, that umbrella is mine, I dropped it, but he (pointing at Lo) took it.”

They started arguing again until I slammed on the desk and ordered them to stop scrapping at once. Neither side could produce any evidence to support their case.

As a judge sitting in the local court, evidence is presented to the court BEFORE the litigation commences. I was about to throw both of them out of the court and admonish them for wasting my time when I remembered reading about a similar case dealt with by the famous Judge Pao during the Song dynasty. So, I ripped the umbrella into halves and gave each half to each of them as Judge Pao had done in the original story.

After that, they left the court, and I ordered my two lieutenants to follow them and listen to what they had to say outside the court.

After around half an hour, my lieutenants returned to report what they saw and heard. According to them, Lo was mad at me and started cursing me. He said, “This judge is the worst I have ever seen!” But Yao seemed to be calm. Wow, things did happen in exactly the same way as what I read from the countless legends about Judge Pao!

According to the original story, Judge Pao would have made his verdict based on the different reactions of Lo and Yao and awarded compensation to Lo based on his genuine discontent about my decision to rip the umbrella in half. However, I decided to do things differently. No judge should ever decide the outcome of a case based purely on his or her intuition.

I summoned the two back into the court the next day and asked them to produce evidence and witnesses. It turned out the umbrella in question was only sold in Lo's shop, and Yao could not produce any proof of purchase. Also, a passer-by who witnessed the argument confirmed Lo's version of the incident. With this evidence, I had Yao arrested for robbery, and he was also to compensate Lo for the ripped umbrella.

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# The Sapphire Vase

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lai, Hailey – 10*

It was an unusual day. Hoi Fung Fu, the court of famous Judge Pao was full in and out, with thousands of people. All of them remained dead silent, including the defendants, the Ping couple. This pair of evildoers were kneeling in the middle of the court waiting for Judge Pao's trial. And here, the story begins:

Chi was a charcoal merchant in the suburb area in Hoi Fung, the capital city of the Sung dynasty. He was a generous person that allowed unwealthy customers to defer payment when their financial condition was not well. In a year when the economy was in recession, Chi was in bankruptcy, therefore he was forced to collect the outstanding debts in order to cover his own. He thought of a client, the Ping couple, who were once poor when they firstly began their business with Chi, but then became well-off and ran a ceramic shop. The Pings owed him the payment of two tons of charcoal, and it was time to settle this outstanding debt.

Chi visited the Ping's workshop; nobody was there. He decided to pick up one item in the shop as collateral. Chi spotted a shiny blue vase, grabbed it and left the shop.

When he was back home, he regretted it because he thought it was not appropriate to take away debtor's property without consent and wished to talk to Ping in person to clear the debt. However, it was at night, which was too late for a chat, Chi decided to go to sleep and would deal with Ping the next day.

In the midnight, Chi heard a voice from the vase. It was a spirit called Tang. Chi was flabbergasted by the spirit. Once Chi cooled his head, Tang began to tell his story: Tang was an overseas businessman who once passed Ping's house. Ping allowed him to stay at his tavern overnight. Ping and his wife Lili searched Tang's luggage and found out it was full of gold. Their evil minds led them to murder Tang and rob all his belongings. In order to hide the crime, the couple burned Tang into ashes in a furnace and made him into a sapphire vase. With this big fortune, the Pings emerged as the richest tycoons in town.

Chi was deeply sympathetic on Tang's tragedy, and next day came to Judge Pao to report the case. As he listened to this supernatural story, Judge Pao thought it was too ridiculous, and gave a physical punishment to Chi as a warning. Yet, Chi insisted it was true and tried to summon Tang's spirit in front of Pao. The judge and his team were astonished and believed in what Chi and Tang said.

Judge Pao made a public announcement to open the court case. The mass was outraged because of the Ping's evil deed. Without mass support, the Pings were in a difficult situation. However, nothing could change the Pings' heart which was hard as rock. Without any core evidence, the Ping wildly fantasized that justice would never descend upon them as long as they didn't confess their sins.

The Pings, Chi and the vase were summoned before Judge Pao. The Pings denied everything that Chi accused them of. While they were scolding each other vigorously, suddenly, the vase began to talk and shocked all the witnesses including the Pings. Tang condemned the Pings' sinister plan of homicide and plunder of his treasures. The Pings were deeply horrified as the ghost revealed the truth to the public. Nevertheless, they remained stiff and refused to plea guilty.

After the first day of court, Judge Pao tried his emotional tactic by talking to Ping and Lili separately. They were told respectively that their partner betrayed them and admitted everything they had done. Ping was as firm as steel. However, Lili was moved because of her jealousy towards Ping's maid. She confessed she participated in the robbing but rejected she was the one who murdered Tang. It was Ping who stabbed Tang. This oral evidence was countersigned by Lili and all the witnesses. This was crucial progress, Judge Pao needed to make his biggest effort to give Ping the last blow.

Next day, Judge Pao read Lili's testimony to Ping and all witnesses. Ping realized he was betrayed. Staring at his wife with rage, Ping suppressed his anger but within a few seconds, he began to claim in front of Pao that he was not guilty, and Chi was making unjust charges due to his secret agenda to take over Ping's business. Without hesitation, Judge Pao summoned Tang's widow and his son, which was out of everyone's expectation. The widow explained to Pao what happened to the day Tang had disappeared. As Ping sneered at the widow's accusation, the vase shouted: "We both have the same wedding ring. Ping chopped me in haste and did not notice my ring finger fall into the corner

of the room under the shelf!” Ping was stunned by this news since he never realized that night, his carelessness to detail would lead him to his final doomsday.

Judge Pao quickly ordered his men to search Ping’s mansion. There, they found a finger bone with a wedding ring that was the same as the widow was wearing at the court.

Unable to hide anymore, Ping confessed all the crimes he committed. Judge Pao sentenced the couple to death. The public jubilated as justice was served. The widow, the son and Chi sobbed emotionally when Tang thanked them with tears and left the vase for a better afterlife.

# *Stories of Judge Bao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lai, Hiu Tung Serena – 10*

Sam ran as fast as his tired legs could take him. He was getting chased by criminals again. Sam was an amateur detective and bad people always wanted to catch him. He soon reached Bao City. A man greeted him. Sam couldn't help staring at his forehead, there was a moon shaped thing on it! The man began speaking in a foreign language. "Excuse me?" Sam asked. The man immediately started speaking English. "Hi, I'm Judge Bao. What brings you here to Bao City? Sam hurriedly explained what was going on. "I can offer you shelter, but you have to help me solve this crime in return. Sam couldn't be happier.

"So, every Saturday morning, some of my important documents go missing. I always keep guard of them during the daytime, so I assume someone is stealing them while I'm asleep. I've got 3 suspects in my mind. John, an old friend who always seemed jealous of me. Lilian, my maid who has access to all my stuff. But I don't really think it's her, as she's been very trustworthy in the past. And Michael, the gardener." Bao explained. Sam began taking notes and they arranged to meet the suspects next Saturday morning.

On Saturday,

Sam first began questioning Lilian:

"What do you normally do on a Friday night?" Lilian began speaking in broken English "I'm busy cleaning Bao kitchen, it is always so dirty. And then around 11 pm I sleep."

He asked Michael the same question.

"I was busy collecting the apples as it is harvesting season." Michael said.

Then, it was John's turn.

"I was sleeping" He simply said.

Back home, Sam groaned. He wasn't getting anywhere! But just then, he thought of a plan. On Friday, he put a special kind of powder on the documents that lasted for 24 hours. He met with the suspects again on Saturday morning and requested to check their hands. Lilian was first. Sam didn't see anything, so he moved on. Michael's hand didn't seem to have any powder, so Sam knew the answer: it was John. He looked for him everywhere. But he was gone. "He run far, far away, sir." Lilian said. "He what??" Sam exclaimed. "I know where he is." Bao said. "He's in his favourite restaurant."

They rushed there and found John. He tried to run but they caught him. "Can you tell me why you stole the documents?" "I uhmm..." "Okay fine. I planned to sell them. It's just, I was always jealous of Bao's achievements... and my family situation is not doing well, so I thought, why not make some money? But I didn't sell them in the end, I swear, they're still at home. I realized I couldn't do that to a friend." Bao was touched and furious at the same time. "You could've just asked me!" John apologized and Bao forgave him. Sam smiled. Bao eventually got his documents back and was overjoyed. Sam smiled.

Case Closed.

## *Where is Sherlock Holmes?*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lam, Pak Yi Chloris – 9*

“Help! Please! Someone, anyone!” A pregnant woman screams desperately at the top of her lungs, with a newborn crying in her arms. The house in front of her was swirling in molten red, heat waves from the fire that made it impossible for rescuers to break in. All she could do was get down on her knees hopelessly while watching her husband swallowed by the flame.

A week later, this woman, Mei-xing, was taken to Judge Pao’s public courtroom as a suspect for her husband, Tie-niu’s murdering. She was reportedly witnessed by her neighbours, the Qin’s couple, to have set her own house on fire on the day of the incident, before running away with the baby. Additionally, the elder brother of the victim, Guo-niu, also came to the court, claiming that Mei-xing had a motive behind her action. Coming from a destitute family, Mei-xing did not marry Tie-niu out of genuine love, but merely financial benefits. Guo-niu presented evidence that Mei-xing was still in contact with her childhood lover. Now that his brother is gone, Mei-xing could potentially receive all his inheritance. Mei-xing looked pale, and remained on the ground without saying a word.

The crowd in the background gasped and started babbling. “What a malicious woman!” “Killing her own husband, how dare she!” “Death penalty for her!” The courtroom was in uproar. “Silence!” A deep, commanding voice echoed around the room. All eyes gazed towards the source of that comment. Needless to say, Judge Pao has a strong presence that made him stand out from the average person. If his sleek silky uniform could be a symbolism of his neatness, then the dragon embroidery on it represented his authority. He had striking dark skin, and the crescent birthmark on his forehead seemed to express the mission he was born with – to uphold justice as clear as the reflection of the moon. After a moment, he finally spoke, “There is too little evidence to conclude the case right now, we will come back to it in a week, after interrogations.” “We-Wu...”

A rookie cop spoke up, “there is a witness on the scene with clear motives from the suspect, why do we still...”. Judge Pao stopped him abruptly to direct everyone’s attention to the autopsy he conducted personally. Although the cause of death is undetermined due to the burnt corpse, fractures were found in both the victim’s ribcage and hip. Judge Pao was always able to notice details like no others, “we must re-evaluate the crime scene.”

When they arrived at the Tie-niu’s house, Judge Pao immediately felt the neighbour testaments were fabricated. He noticed firstly, the gas barrels used to set the place on fire were three times the size of Mei-xing, which made it almost physically impossible for her to commit the crime. But more importantly, there were signs of intruders as the gates were destroyed and later put back together to conceal it. After careful consideration, Judge Pao realised this was not the first crime scene. The real murderer disguised his own acts and planned it on Mei-xing. Under Judge Pao’s order, his team conducted a comprehensive background check on everybody related to the case and found out that the Qin’s had had financial problems for the past six months. The investigation revealed a completely different truth underneath the faultless evidence.

“I know the town is against me, but I am innocent. I lost the love of my life and every day since then has been a torture,” Mei-xing cried her eyes out. She went on with her story monotone, trying hard to hold back tears, “Tie-niu told me he had a business meeting that night so I went to bed with our newborn very early. The next thing I knew, I was choking on smoke and ran outside,” Judge Pao rustled his fingers and asked, “and who was the meeting with?” “His brother, Guo-niu. They...”

When Guo-niu heard his name mentioned, he interrupted Mei-xing abruptly. “What are you trying to say? You heartless murderer and cheater! Today there should be justice for my beloved brother!” He raged at Mei-xing and instigated the audience to do the same. “Paw-Paw!” Judge Pao slammed a wooden block on his table. He gazed at the baby in Mei-xing’s arms and subtly made a comment. “I was just wondering...if this woman was so evil, and you loved your brother so much, how come you let your nephew stay with her this entire time?”

Hao Yu did not answer. A guard proceeded to toss a black gown on the floor. “Do you recognise this?” “How? This is impossible! I burned them alongside Tie-niu!” Guo-niu howled hysterically. The room gasped. Judge Pao knew the trap he set had worked. On the day of investigation, they found pieces of toasted fabric uniquely produced by Guo-niu’s company. The Qin’s couple also admitted being bribed by Guo-niu to give false statements. But this was not sufficient evidence so they resembled a similar gown to fish out the truth. And Guo-niu took the bait.

The town was surprised to find out the amiable Guo-niu had long been jealous of his brother's achievements and finally decided to kill him. When he found out that Mei-xing survived the fire, he immediately framed her for the crime. Guo-niu was sent to life imprisonment, to pay a massive price for his greed.

A decade had passed by, which brought wrinkles to Judge Pao's face but it never took down his spirit to look for truth. He was later visited by the same 10-year-old boy with the brightest smile, followed by his mother. Unlike his usual seriousness, Judge Pao embraced the little boy. Judge Pao had been secretly funding them with monthly allowance since the case had been closed. Mei-xing did not know how to express her gratitude. Judge Pao seemed to be able to read her mind, "there is no thank you needed, I am just doing my job."

## *Judge Pao the China Sherlock Holmes that Really Existed In The World*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Li, Yaoguang Estelle – 9*

Before there were many famous detectives and strong and fearless heroes like detective Pikachu, bat man and Sherlock Holmes, there was a heroic Judge Pao. Judge Pao was and is the really existed China Sherlock Holmes. Judge Pao was a famous and amazing judge, who was destined to fight crime and judge the serious and important affairs of death in his workplace known as "The Infernal Bureacracy", his legacy has lived for more than a mere 1000 years, here are three of his famous cases: Chen Shi Mei has two kids and a wife named Qin Xiang Lian. But he got tired of them he went to see the Emperor and lied about his marriage and became the exclusive Emperor's son-in-law, when his wife found him in the capital, she begged for him to go back home in the city but he refused to go and ask his personal servant to go and kill his poor wife and children but the servant was kind-hearted and let Qin Xiang Lian and her children escape and he killed himself. At last Qin Xiang Lian found judge and told him everything, and judge pao executed Chen Shi Mei for lying to the powerful emperor and abandoning his poor wife and sad children; a fine silk merchant under the name Liu Shi Chang was on a trip to his home but decided to stop by to get some food and have a place to sleep overnight at a place at Zhao Da's house, the owner of a pottery shop. Zhao Da was greedy of Liu's fine silk and riches and poisoned Liu's well-cooked dinner and after Liu died, Zhao Da then burned Liu's remains and turned him into a black basin and was later on bought by an old man whose name was Zhang Bie Gu as Zhao owed him a debt. Zhang eventually met Liu's ghost who was possessing the black basin ever since his doomed death and was told of poor Liu's cruel death at the hands of Zhao Da, later Zhang Bie Gu told judge pao everything and Zhao was arrested and then executed for murdering and robbing poor Liu; Judge Pao investigated a man's suspicious and mysterious death whose cause was ruled naturally. After an autopsy, his coroner confirmed the earlier report that there was no sign of any injury in the body. At his house, the coroner discussed the matter with his wife, who explained that a person could force long steel nails into someone's brain, leaving no other fortunate injury in the body. The next day, the coroner went to investigate and really found a steel nail indeed, and the widow was arrested for confessed to adultery and mariticide. Afterwards Judge Pao began to question the coroner's wife and found out that the coroner was actually her second husband and that her first husband has died the same way. Then Judge pao ordered his guards to go to the cemetery and unearth the first husband's coffin and sure enough there was also a steel nail in the skull as well as the first dead man.

Judge pao's fame spread as fast as a wild fire around China and judge Pao was so famous for the crimes and cases he solved that he and his name was illustrated in books, epic movies and social media that are translated in many different languages such as Chinese, English and French!

Judge Pao was abandoned by his cruel father because he was dark-skinned and terribly ugly that Judge Pao was considered cursed by bad omens but later on adopted by his kind and cheerful elder sister-in-law and many years later Judge Pao had to tearfully execute his ambitious nephew-in-law Bao mian.

Even though Judge pao is Chinese and he was born in China, he has a fascinating Hong Kong connection. His line of descent has been recorded exceptionally carefully with a famous family in the honorable city, known for the prestigious patriarch Sir Y.K. Pao and also short for Pao Yue-Kong. And Hong-Kong the prestigious home of his beloved and amazing grandchildren who wins awards about many global indexes for having an amazing word legal system and one of Earth's best corruption-fighting operations.

The famous and very special hero judge Pao would have been very proud for them if he was still alive that time.

The huge and gigantic present China is still not peaceful and holy and many people still kill, rob, and still ambitious and toxic, they still do the bad and terrible things and Judge Pao is not there when help is needed but that did not stop people from having other Judges in china and Hong Kong but we all know that in this huge world can not replace the brave and victorious man who was called Pao Zheng.

# *Judge of the Underworld*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Ling, Zu-yi Alicia – 10*

10-year old Jani Pao was in the middle of a good dream. In her dream, a tiny UFO had flown through her window. Then out of the hatch came a family of talking jellybeans!

“Hi jellybeans! I’m Jani! Welcome to—ARGHHHHH!” Jani screamed. A glowing vortex had appeared out of nowhere and sucked her up!

“I DON’T WANT TO DIE!” Jani shrieked as she hurtled head-first through a tunnel of light. Then with a heavy THUD, she landed face-down on a hard floor and proceeded to faint.

When Jani regained consciousness, she found herself in a small room. Rubbing her sore face as she sat up, she saw that the floor was lined with gray stone tiles.

“I hate you!” Jani whispered, glaring at the floor.

The rest of the room looked considerably better than the floor. The walls were a pleasant shade of cream, though strangely there were no windows. The only source of light came from the torches that rested in the brackets built into the wall. The torchlights constantly flickered, causing shadows to dance across the room.

“Hello, Jani.” a voice called.

Jani was so shaken that she jumped three feet off the floor! She slowly turned around, and saw that a strange man was behind her. He wore a traditional Chinese judge costume, complete with the hat. He had fair skin, and in the middle of his forehead was a birthmark in the shape of a crescent moon.

“W-wh—who are you?” Jani’s voice came out a trembling whisper.

“The legendary Judge Pao, of course.” the stranger replied. “And I’m also your great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather.”

Looking from Judge Pao to herself, she realized that it must be true. They shared the same fair skin, high eyebrows, and twinkling eyes.

“Wait a second! Isn’t your face supposed to be black?” Jani exclaimed.

“Why do I get asked this every time?” Judge Pao sighed. “I actually have fair skin; the black is just for dramatic effect in TV shows and operas!”

“Oh...okay.” Jani hesitated. “Err...why am I here?”

Judge Pao stroked his beard leisurely, thinking how best to proceed. “Did you know that I am the immortal Yama of the Infernal Bureaucracy in the Underworld?” He said after a while.

“Yes, I’ve read about that somewhere before, but I thought it was just a story!” Jani remembered. Her class had done a unit on Judge Pao last year.

“It is true.” Judge Pao confirmed.

Jani was shocked. What her many-times-great grandfather was saying was hardly possible, but Jani had a feeling that she should trust him.

“I am a supernatural judge, and I deal with all the affairs of the afterlife. But do you know how time consuming my job is? When I first started, I was so busy, I almost never had time to eat or sleep!” Judge Pao sighed. “One man was not enough for the job. I decided that I would choose one of every new generation that holds the blood of Pao, to join my council.”

“Then...am I the chosen one of my generation?” Jani questioned.

“Yes. You have pieced it together rather fast! I am pleased with my choice.” Judge Pao grinned. “I have decided you are ready. Now I will bring you to the Underworld, where you can meet the rest of the council.”

Judge Pao took a small glass dagger out, and sliced through the air. For a moment nothing happened. Then with a flash of blinding light, the air ripped apart, revealing another realm...the Underworld! Without a moment of hesitation, Jani stepped into another world.

Jani blinked. Then she blinked again. The Infernal Bureaucracy was not the hellish place she had thought it would be, not at all. The floor beneath her was made of gold, studded with exquisite gemstones. There were stone pillars carved with phoenixes and dragons, delicate flowers in shades of pink and purple winding around them. Above her, the silver ceiling was strewn with starry inscriptions written in ancient languages. Despite having never learned any foreign tongues, Jani seemed to understand the strange letterings.

“Through here.” Judge Pao said, pushing open a set of shining bronze doors carved with an image of scales.

Jani walked through, to find a vast room with walls of marble. There were many large windows, revealing the picturesque scenery outside. Marvelous thrones occupied every corner of the room. Some were made of jewels, some were made of flowers, and there were a few that seemed to be made of continuously flowing water.

“I call a meeting for the Council of the Underworld!” Judge Pao boomed. His voice shook the floor, sending Jani crashing into a throne. As Jani stood up, she saw that with puffs of colorful smoke, the members of the council materialized on their thrones.

“Great-grand-aunt!” Jani waved excitedly. Her great-grand-aunt sat sophisticatedly on a throne of jade, beaming proudly at her. She wasn’t too surprised, as the council were all people with Pao blood.

Suddenly, Judge Pao’s voice rang out, loud but not earth-shaking like before. “Attention all council members! Today we will welcome another of us. She is Jani Pao, the chosen one of her generation!”

A deafening cheer rose from the council. Everyone clapped wholeheartedly.

“But first, Jani must say her promise.” Judge Pao declared. The crowd fell silent. “Jani, do you vow to use your wisdom to do good in the world?”

Jani let his words hang in the air for a moment. “I do!” Jani answered, her voice strong and clear.

With a shower of sparks, a new throne emerged from the ground, made from pure crystal. As Jani made her way to her new throne, she was again drowned in a sea of cheers.



## *Judge Pao.*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Ng, Bui Ngar Blair – 12*

Did you know that China has a famous judge that was known for his justice? Meet Pao Zheng, also known as “Pao Gong” or “Judge Pao”.

Pao Zheng was born in the year 999, which was in the Song Dynasty back then. He grew up among the lower working class, so he understood the hatred of corruption and the desire for justice.

When Pao Zheng was 29, he passed the highest level of the

imperial examination and became a qualified Jinshi (Imperial Scholar). Pao Zheng was asked to be the magistrate (the official that was in charge of a county in China) of Jianchang but he refused because he wanted to take care of his elderly parents.

After his parents passed away, Pao Zheng, who was 39 years old then, was appointed the magistrate of Tianchang. It was then when he was first known as a skilled judge.

In 1040 Pao Zheng was promoted to the prefect of Duanzhou. It was famous for the ink stones that were made in there. These ink stones were presented to the imperial court every year. But Pao Zheng found out that the previous prefects had took more ink stones than the ones which were supposed to give to the imperial court. So, Pao Zheng told the manufacturers to only give the required ink stones. When his tenure ended in 1043, Pao Zheng left without taking any ink stone for himself.

In 1057 Pao Zheng was appointed to be the magistrate of Kaifeng for a few months but he made several changes to the rules in there, for example allowing the citizens directly give complaints to the ministers. This helped the ministers to find out and punish the officers that were believed to be corrupt.

Pao Zheng has been the Minister of Finance. But even though of his high rank, he lived a modest life.

Because of Pao Zheng's fame and his reputation, his name had become the symbol of a honest and upright official. Someone even said he was the god Yama that worked in the Infernal Bureaucracy that was able to judge the affairs like he judged the living people.

# *The Case of the Missing Jade Elephants*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Pak, Hung Lik Justin – 11*

In the year 1034, in Anhui Province, there was a lazy but cunning man by the name of Li Tan. His family was once very wealthy, but Tan spent the money on expensive food, luxurious silk clothing, and holding costly feasts. He also never worked hard to earn money, so he was always short of money.

One day, Tan asked his brother Li Chen, who was a pharmacist, to retrieve the Li family heirloom, two jade sculptures of elephants, from his neighbor Han Wen's home. Chen originally refused to retrieve them because he'd never heard of them and didn't believe the story. However, Tan convinced him into thinking Han Wen borrowed them since he wanted to see if the elephants glowed in the dark. He also promised to share the jade elephants with Chen. After some consideration, Chen agreed to the plan and went to Han Wen's house to request the return of the heirloom. When no one answered, Chen climbed onto the roof. Chen was very smart, so he used his knife as a wedge to remove the roof tiles one by one. Soon, there was a hole big enough for him to jump in. However, in doing so, he broke off a piece of his especially long fingernail, leaving evidence. After locating and stealing the bag, he put it up the side of his robe, put the roof tiles back in place, quickly climbed out, and escaped, forgetting about the broken fingernail piece.

When Han Wen came back, he looked for the jade elephants, but couldn't find it anywhere. He asked his family if they took them, but they all denied it. One of his slaves told him he saw Chen stealing it while walking to the bathroom, but Han Wen said he would never do such a thing. Not long after, his roof cleaner came and told him there was a strange-smelling fingernail clipping stuck between some loose roof tiles. After a few more minutes of searching, he went to Judge Pao for help, as he had heard stories of Judge Pao's great feats. After Han Wen told Judge Pao everything he knew and gave him the fingernail clipping, he brought it to his nose and smelled it, and smelled ginseng. Judge Pao immediately asked his guards to ask every pharmacist in the village to bring some ginseng to him in person, as he was already hatching a plan in his mind.

By the time Judge Pao's guards came back with the pharmacists, Judge Pao had already fully developed his plan. Judge Pao pretended to act worried and said: "You may be wondering why I brought you here. I have a close friend who is very sick. I was hoping you could give me some ginseng to help him." The pharmacists were very kind, so they calmly gave Judge Pao their ginseng. Judge Pao accepted the ginseng until he saw Chen's broken fingernail. Judge Pao yelled "Halt!" and everyone quickly froze in terror. Judge Pao pulled out the broken fingernail clipping and found out it matched Chen's broken fingernail completely.

Judge Pao stood up and bellowed: "So you stole Han Wen's jade elephants!"

In his defense, Chen said: "My brother Tan sent me to steal it!"

Judge Pao knew Chen could be telling the truth, so he asked Chen to tell where Tan was. He knew Tan went to the local casino to gamble every day, and that was where he was.

After the guards brought Tan to Judge Pao, he asked: "Did you really send Chen to steal the jade elephant sculpture?"

Tan knew he could lie and get away, so he said: "No, I didn't. I warned him against stealing it, but he didn't listen."

Fortunately for Chen, one of the pharmacists overheard them plotting to steal the jade elephants because the window was open.

The pharmacist said: "He's lying. When I was going home for dinner, I heard some loud talking from upstairs. I looked up and saw an open window where the talking was coming from, so I decided to eavesdrop to see what they were talking about. I heard something about stealing jade elephants from a man named Han Wen and something about sharing them."

After hearing this, Judge Pao said: "Very well. That does not sound like a lie at all." He turned to Tan. "And as for you, you have been found guilty of theft, bribery, framing, encouraging others to commit crimes, and lying to a judge! I sentence you to 25 years in prison. Guards, bring him to his cell."

He turned his attention to Chen. "You, Chen, are found guilty of theft. You will be sentenced to a year in prison and three months of community service. Guards, put him in his cell."

Finally, he looked at the pharmacists, Han Wen, and his family. "Apologies. You may leave now."

The first to leave were the pharmacists. They all were shaking from nervousness, as they only thought they were there to give Judge Pao ginseng for his friend. Next, Han Wen walked away, his hands shaking with fear because of the intensity. Finally, Han Wen's family exited. All of Han Wen's family looked like they were about to faint.

However, after they calmed down, they all walked happily back home, talking about the events of the day.

This story teaches us to choose your friends wisely (Han Wen and Tan), to think before you act (Chen stealing the jade elephants), and to be honest to people (Tan lying to Judge Pao).

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Qiu, Lily – 9*

Judge Pao was a crusading figure who fought crime. No criminals had ever escaped from his fierce axes! People admired him as much as they were afraid of him!

But he also had a soft side. He cared for everybody and would listen to them genuinely regardless of where they came from and whether they were rich or poor. All his motives were to help the people in his country.

One story of his famous detective skills is 'The Dog who Disappeared'.

It starts like this: There was once a man called Chen Chao, and he had a very intelligent guard dog. One day, when he returned home from work, he realised that his dog was gone!

Chao's dog was a faithful and intelligent German Shepherd. Chao was very worried and immediately started searching everywhere for his dog. But he couldn't find his dog anywhere. So he returned to his house, tired and defeated. He sat outside, on a bench staring blankly at the open space.

A neighbor noticed his weariness. "What's wrong?" He asked. "I lost my dog!" Chao replied despondently. "I've searched everywhere, but I can't find him!"

"Perhaps somebody took it while you were gone," the neighbor suggested, "and then sold it."

"You should go to Judge Pao," the neighbor continued. "He'll help you find your dog!" Then the neighbor left.

So, Chao did. He went over to Judge Pao's court right away and begged Judge Pao to help him find his dog. At first, The Judge was reluctant. "There are many other more important cases I have to solve!" He snapped. "Not just yours!" But Chao wasn't one to give up easily, he kept begging the Judge, explaining he had exhausted all means with no result, and he believed someone had stolen his dog.

In the end, the Judge gave in and said "All right, all right. I'll help you find your dog. I just hope it's worth it! Come to me tomorrow in the morning, 11 o'clock, and I will tell you the plan." Then he shoed Chao away.

The next morning Chao woke up early. He felt apprehensive over hearing about the Judge's plan to find his dog.

He ate a breakfast of rice porridge, got dressed and quickly dashed to Judge Pao's court. He paced from one foot to another as he nervously waited to go in.

The moment the doors opened, Chao rushed in. He threw himself in a trembling kowtow before Judge Pao. "Master," he cried, "What is the plan?" "Be patient, Chao," Judge Pao said. "I will eventually tell you, don't worry."

After a while, the Judge started to tell Chao the plan. "My guards and you shall put up posters everywhere to tell everybody that my team would like to hire a working German Shepherd dog, because that's your dog's breed. The posters shall also say that whoever sells a dog like that to me will get paid 100 taels of silver.

"You will put up posters tomorrow asking people to bring their dogs to me the day after tomorrow. When we meet the dogs, you shall be there, although nobody except for me and my guards shall know your presence. You will then identify which dog is yours. Does your dog have any special features?"

"Yes, it does." Replied Chao. "Once it was injured in a hit and run, so it has a scar on its left leg. The tip of its right ear was also scratched off."

"Alright." The Judge says. "Now you can go!" Chao thanked Judge Pao and left.

The next day, Chao returned to Judge Pao's court. The Judge sent him and his guards with loads of posters in their arms to the town square. Later they got split into a few groups and started to put up the posters.

On the third day, the people started arriving with their dogs. There were farmers, traders and beggars, all with their German Shepherd dogs. But none of them was Chao's.

It was getting late in the afternoon. Chao almost lost all hope, thinking of giving up. Suddenly, a young man walked in. He was holding a big German Shepherd dog on the leash. Chao recognized his dog immediately. He stood behind a pillar where only Judge Pao could see him. He gave Judge Pao the signal of finding his dog. Judge Pao had a glimpse of the scar on the dog's left leg and the scratch on the dog's ear. He knew at once that it was Chao's dog.

He questioned the young man, "Where did you get that dog? Is it yours? Does it have any scars or injuries?"

The man lied, "I got this dog from an alleyway. It was abandoned there. It was a puppy when I found it. I have treated it well ever since. And no, it does not have any injuries. It is a healthy, strong and intelligent dog."

But then Judge Pao slammed his fist on his table. "You lied!" He shouted. "I can clearly see a scar on his left leg! And the tip of his right ear is gone!"

The man knew he was caught, and he trembled with fear. "Tell me the truth!" The Judge commanded. "Is it or is it not your dog?"

Judge Pao also asked Chao to present himself. Chao's dog saw its master and ran to him thrillingly with its wagging tail. The man knew he could only spill the beans about what he did. He admitted he had stolen the dog from the neighborhood. The Judge said "I will not give you the money since it does not belong to you. But I will give you a last chance. If, next time, you steal again, you will be locked up and put in jail!"

So the man got his warning from Judge Pao, and Chao got his dog back. That's the story of 'The Dog who Disappeared'. See how smart and helpful Judge Pao is?

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Tang, Yuen Hei – 10*

Far away from the land, on a remote island, a massive dragon came from the sky, destroying and attacking villagers. It had stolen the gemstone of nature's heart. The villagers had been threatened at least twice by the dragon previously. The destruction of nature would prove devastating to the mainland. Yura's parents believed the dragon was dangerous, and everybody was expecting the worst. They told Yura the story behind the legend, which aroused her curiosity about the dragon. Yura felt a deep connection to the island and to all the creatures who belonged on it. She wanted to save the island and stop the tragedy from happening.

The small islands of Joy and Peace were connected to the Emmanuel Mainland by a bridge. Joy Island was known for its happy memories. This island used to be filled with laughter and musical melodies flowing through it. But it changed after the island's heart was stolen. Happiness was gone, and flowers were wilting.

Yura took a deep breath before she entered the forest.

The forest was dark.

The forest was quiet.

Yura passed a high cliff along the wooded passageways and climbed over glowing stepping stones. The route ran through a forest on the small, volcanic island of Peace, which was connected to the centre of nature's heart. With every step she walked, she saw some QR codes popping up from the ground. Yura pointed her camera at one of the QR codes, tapping the banners that appeared on her phone. It showed a route on Google Maps directing her towards underwater mazes and tunnels.

Along the way, a scene of a stunning, mysterious underwater world glimmered with magic. To her astonishment, a group of sea creatures led Yura to an unknown destination – The Kingdom of Judge Pao.

Judge Pao was invited to participate in the journey to find the gemstone and face off against the dragon in a heroic final battle to restore the balance between darkness and light. Before Yura entered the dynasty, Judge Pao took out his smartphone. He swiped up with his finger and unlocked his phone with his face ID. Capturing Yura's face on the app called "BaoZheng". Judge Pao was wearing an iPod, which transferred Yura's data with the help of advanced technology. According to the information he received, Judge Pao noticed that Yura had been sent by the spirit of nature! Meanwhile, a bevy of doves flew over his head.

He started to locate the dragon's location with Google Maps. The dragon was flying over the gigantic mountains, all the while ruining the heart of the island. Judge Pao summoned bats and soldiers to hunt the dragon down. He aimed to insert a SIM card into the dragon's brain.

Soon after, the soldiers emerged from the forest. The soldiers were panting and sweaty, holding a massive white net. Inside the net was the dragon. It was dark green, its scales sparkled, and its mouth was tied shut with tape. It tried to roar as loud as it could until it was out of breath. Yura and Judge Pao were in total shock after they had witnessed the scene with their own eyes. Judge Pao took a deep breath, slowly released the dragon from the white net, and removed the tape. The dragon roared again. This time it was so loud that you could have heard it on the

moon. The dragon flapped its enormous wings and tried to escape from danger. Judge Pao placed his hand on the dragon's head and prayed. SIM card inserted.

Yura and Judge Pao thought this was the best way to stop the dragon from polluting and destroying nature. Therefore, Judge Pao talked to the dragon in its ancient language and said, "Dear dragon, we have an earnest request. We want to keep the world safe, so please don't torture people and destroy our island."

"Well, I have damaged trees and mountains these past couple of years just because I have nothing to eat..." cried the dragon.

Judge Pao had a great idea! He suggested that the dragon could come work at his underwater palace as one of the soldiers. In return, he would provide food for the dragon's family. They would not starve and bully the villagers anymore! As a result, the dragon smiled and happily agreed that it would never hurt anyone again.

## *Mei and the Judge*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Ting, Paige – 12*

Centuries ago, there lived a brilliant judge. His name was Judge Pao. He had proven himself genius time and time again by solving crimes in the bustling city where he lived in China. But he'll show up later.

One summer evening, I was sitting in the library of my father's home with a scroll spread before me on the rosewood table. I could hear my stepmother and father arguing in the dining room. Stepmother Chang was nothing like the kind ladies in the fairytales I'd read. Everything I said or did, it seemed, was used against me. She taught me lessons on "how to be a lady", and "proper Chinese etiquette", but those lessons would soon be turned into weapons, as she would constantly harp on my unladylike air. This became my biggest shame.

Father sighed. "Mei is just a little girl!"

Stepmother Chang accused, "A little girl who reads! No proper lady should be literate. Hnnh, it wouldn't surprise me if she were in the library now!"

"She is your daughter too, Chang," Father retorted. "You should support her passions instead of spitting in her face about how unladylike she is!"

"Well, I don't see *you* reading to her!" Stepmother Chang shot back.

"What are you saying, Chang?"

"Don't always accuse me of being irrational! Really, you are nothing like a normal father. You just let her run wild and do what she wants, you don't care that she is a disgrace and embarrassment to our family, you don't care that she grows up to be a polite lady who doesn't disturb the room with her loud voice. Girls like her, especially, who always have a point to prove, they must learn that it's better to keep quiet like a lady should. What I teach her is a favour that she disregards."

"That is why she should have a kind mother figure in her life who will guide her," Father said sensibly. "I'm busy making sure we have enough food on our plates."

Stepmother Chang stormed off. Her footsteps drew nearer and nearer...

The creaky wooden doors of the library swung open with a ferocious bang.

I'd been caught.

Stepmother Chang pointed her bony finger at me. "Witchery!" She gasped. "A scroll teaching advanced biology? How dare you? You know full well this is forbidden, yet you still continue to read? And what are you wearing? Put on a proper dress instead of these plain rags!"

"Witchery?" I was puzzled. "I'm just trying to learn."

"Lies! This case will be reported to Judge Pao straight away! He will make things right, you little brat!"

"*What?*"

"That's right, Witch!" Stepmother Chang didn't give me a chance to explain. "You will be executed for performing dark magic!"

*Oh my sky*, I thought, *It's just a biology book. All you want is to get rid of me so you can have my father's money.*

The next day, Judge Pao came to my father's home to see our library, and examine the house.

As we stood before him in the library, he stroked his beard and said, "These scholarly scrolls are certainly very rare... I don't believe the child—Mei, is it?—was trying to perform witchery. What is your evidence?"



“This scroll! About biology!” Stepmother Chang spoke viciously and quickly. “How can she even comprehend this text without any proper education? It must be magic for her to teach herself!”

“This doesn’t make sense,” Judge Pao said calmly as he turned to face Stepmother Chang. “Look at this from a logical point of view. This girl must be smart if she has taught herself to read scientific works. Her mind works differently. And that’s a good thing.”

Frustrated and furious, Stepmother Chang turned to me and grabbed my arm so tightly it hurt. She whispered in my ear, “You, child, *you* don’t understand. And I *will* get you executed, just you wait!” She couldn’t find a way to argue against the Judge’s point.

While Judge Pao wasn’t looking, Stepmother Chang put her hand on my chest and seized me. I could feel my heartbeat getting weaker and weaker. Then I dropped to the ground.

When I woke up, I found myself lying on my porcelain pillow, with Father and Judge Pao by my side. There was no doctor.

“It turns out that your stepmother is an Evil Sorceress herself,” he said. “And yet she accused you of witchery.”

I wanted to laugh in triumph but my chest still hurt.

“I saw you going unconscious, but before I rushed to help you, the purple dust lingering above that witch’s hand caught my eye. When she realised that I had caught her, she tried to do the same to me too. As you know, I am Judge of the Underworld, so it’s not that easy to defeat me.

“Now she has been sent straight to jail, where she will be executed soon. I found in your biology scroll an extra page of bamboo advertising witchcraft and sorcery. She used the floating dust to take your energy. To steal your power. You do *have* magic inside of you, Mei. But you have yet to harness it. And when you do, promise me that you will use it for good.”

“Yes, Judge Pao,” I replied.

Father nodded in agreement as he put his arms around me.

“I must admit that before today, I thought I knew many things,” the Great Judge said. “But you, my girl, have taught me a lesson that no teacher would teach: girls can be smart too.”

For the first time since Father married this Sorceress, I smiled a true smile.

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Tsoi, Wai Ching Honey – 10*

One day, I decided to tidy the storage room a bit as it was very disorganised. As I looked around absentmindedly, I saw a black figure with the shape of a house lying beside me. I picked it up immediately and discovered that it was a broken wooden cuckoo clock. The hands of the clock weren't secure and a figure bird was dangling out of the clock. I was somehow amazed by my discovery and uncontrollably began moving the pointy hands on the face backwards. I tried to stop myself, but I can't. It was as if my hands had brains of their own. I tried to pull my hands away, and run out of the room, to no avail. "Help! Help! Mum? Dad? Please help me!" Just then, my muscles felt numb and I fell onto the floor. Then, I fainted.

When I woke up again, I was sitting on a makeup table which didn't seem like my mother's. I looked at my surroundings. I saw a red four-poster bed with pink curtains and a large wardrobe. I glimpsed back at the makeup table and saw a horrifying sight in the mirror. I was not me! My face was different, and I was wearing a long pink silk robe. It was embroidered with white flower patterns and frames. It was utterly gorgeous. My hair was tied like a breadstick attached to my head, covered with golden clips. I adjust my head well for a good look at my appearance.

While I looked at my new appearance, I thought, wait, one moment I was in the storage room with a cuckoo clock and the next I am in a bedroom that belongs to another person in the past? Hmm...what happened? I sighed, unable to think of a reasonable answer. I decided to think on the fancy four-poster bed.

I pulled the curtains and I smelled a queer odour from the bed. I tugged the blankets to see what was the source and gasped. A dead woman with a big tummy covered in blood was lying on my bed! I shrieked, glanced at my hands and they were covered in fresh blood. I discovered that the entire bed was covered in blood as I touched different parts of the bed. I opened the door with my bloody hands and yelled, "Anyone! Help!" I heard nothing except for my echo. Feeling exasperated. I screamed again in Mandarin, "Help!" A young woman dressed in a blue robe came rushing in.

"Sister? Why are your hands covered in blood? Who did you kill?" questioned my so-called sister hysterically.

"I didn't kill anybody!" I protested in my best Mandarin. "I just found this dead body of a pregnant woman on my bed!"

"YOU KILLED PEARL?" interrupted my elder sister. I blankly looked at my bloody hands. There was a lot to process. I am in another body, I would probably be put to prison for a really long time or get executed because they would suspect me of murder. I must be framed. But who was the real murderer?

"Did you kill your eldest sister, Pearl, who was pregnant with a boy?" questioned my mother.

"No!" I explained, relieved that somebody was willing to hear me out rather than to see the framed evidence in my hands. "I woke up on the makeup table and found the bed." I was furious. Why didn't anyone believe me? I had to solve this mystery. After quite an investigation and arguments between me and the police, they sent me to court with handcuffs on my hands.

After a while, the guards pushed me to the cramped courtroom and pressed me down to kneel in front of the judge's podium. The judge's podium was simply a table with tea, and a long wooden chair the length of a sofa decorated with carved dragons. Judge Pao signalled me to speak, suddenly, a surge of memory burst into my brain. I remembered things that the ordinary Jade Mei Chen experienced. I didn't know how it came, or why it came only when I was facing the judge, but I know this memory would be the only way to save my life.

"I remembered," I said confidently, "my elder sister, Moon Li Chen and Pearl Ling Chen were sending me my tea while I looked for my missing makeup products. I drank it immediately and felt dizzy. Then, Moon took a knife, walked towards Pearl, and pushed her onto my bed. I could only witness Moon stab Pearl with the kitchen knife while Pearl screamed in agony as I didn't have any energy to move. However, since the murder took place when nobody was at home as they were greeting my fiancé, there were no witnesses, except for me. Eventually, I fell on the makeup table, fainted, and I forgot everything."

Judge Pao's serious, concentrated face slightly relaxed, "I believe that your experience is true,"

"Indeed," explained judge Pao. "That is the main reason why everyone suspected that Jade Mei Chen murdered Pearl Ling Chen. On the other hand, I have noticed for a long time that you had tiny drops of blood on

your wrist and rough marks on your hands. You must have forgotten to wash your shoes because your shoe tips are covered with blood! Jade Mei Chen's story made perfect sense. I was extremely impressed by Judge Pao. I should learn from his attentiveness.

"I am a fair judge. I will only punish the ones that are wrong and let go the ones that are right. Your attempt to kill two people, and framing another is punishable by death. Bring me my dog sword and secure Pearl on the piece of log. Tell the press to announce the results of today's trial in the papers."

I smiled when I saw Moon's terrified face. I was satisfied to see that this problems was resolved.

Just then, I felt lightheaded , then, I fainted again.

# *Stories of Judge Bao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wang, Yucheng Maggie – 10*

About 1000 years ago, in ancient China, there was a brilliant detective named Judge Pao. He was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 999, and he was commonly known as Bao Gong. He has a passion for justice and he was such an honest and rightful man that he would even betray his own blood relatives for the sake of the law.

One day, he received a message saying that Miss Du was found dead in her own bedroom, so he decided to go and investigate the scene. He rode on horseback for about an hour, and finally arrived at the crime scene. He examined the room and noticed that there was blood all over the floor, and a body without a head. He searched the whole house but all he could find was a note on the wall saying that “When a fish and a pig meet in the sky, you will meet me.” Judge Pao ripped it out from the wall and carefully put it in his nangbao.

He examined the body and he noticed that the blood was not yet dry. He took out a small handkerchief and used it to wipe the floor so it would be stained with blood. Then he examined the room and noticed that there was a hole in a painting on the wall and the shape of the hole – similar to the one on the victim’s body. Judge Pao realized that this sort of holes could only be made by a sword, for it was the only thing that could make such a small marking yet could also break through such a hard painting.

He brought all the evidence he had found back to his office and present it to the authorities. They examined the scene themselves. So, they all went there at once on horseback. When they arrived, they carefully searched all the corners of the house. They noticed that nothing was stolen but there was a hat in the wardrobe that was not Miss Du’s hat. Since they couldn’t find anything else, they just took the hat back to the office.

When Judge Pao saw it, he thought: Why wasn’t it there when I went there? And who put it there? Could it be the murderer? He pondered about this all day, trying to figure out if he had been watched by the murderer all along. It was as if the murderer was playing a game.

Soon, they found out the three suspects that could have murdered Miss Du and left the strange note. The three suspects were Mr. Men, Mr. Lin and Mr. Hu. Suddenly, Judge Pao looked up in the sky, and he saw two clouds shaped like a pig and a fish meet in the sky. After hearing what the suspects had to say, Judge Po thought about it and decided to put the most suspicious one in jail. The most suspicious one was Mr. Lin, because he was sweating even when the wind was strong and he kept on thinking of something he was doing and where he was at that time.

# *The Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wang, Yuxing Mak – 12*

It was a chilly evening, the wind was howling like ghosts and the sky was as dark as a black hole. A lonely house stood in the middle of a cold and abandoned hillside, looming over the skeletal looking trees. Suddenly, an ear piercing scream pierced through the hillside, the wind was howling louder than ever and the tiny hillside seemed to rumble. . .

March, 1025, Judge Pao was questioning a rich man about his wife's mysterious disappearance in his office. The rich man claimed that it was just after he showered that morning, when he found himself in front of a puddle of fresh blood in the living room. He also said that the window had been broken forcefully.

Judge Pao arrived at the little hillside, which was the rich man's house, about half an hour later and carefully inspected the living room. There was dried blood on the floor and, if you look out the window, you could see wooden shards in the garden. He suspected that the man had lied about the incident happening this morning because the blood looked like it had already dried up several days ago.

Suddenly, Judge Pao caught a smell of rancid odor that came from a nearby cupboard. He opened it, and to his horror, he found a chopped-up body part dipped in blood; and a women's head with one missing eyeball and blood flowing from her mouth and nose. Judge Pao ordered his men to arrest the rich man, and then had him sentenced to death.

It was the day of execution, the rich man was tied from head to toe, Judge Pao's servants forced him into the dungeon. Surprisingly, the rich man's eyes were blank and emotionless, he didn't even struggle, it was like he was possessed. As the executioner lifted the silver blade, his eyes rolled up and he dropped to the floor, the executioner was dead. When one of Judge Pao's servants opened the dungeon door, neither of the rich man or the executioner was in sight. It was said that the servant died three hours later.

The next day, Judge Pao sent a servant to collect the women's body. When the servant got there, the house was darker than usual, and it was not stinky! When he opened the cupboard, nothing was there! Then, he heard whispering, so he turned back, and everything went dark...

Judge Pao was pacing around waiting for the servant who was supposed to collect the women's body. His patience was wearing out, and he was getting increasingly anxious and started walking toward the door when suddenly it burst open and a woman, staggered her robe soaked in blood, screaming "help! Judge Pao! A man wearing a servant's uniform broke into my house and killed my son!" and broke down in tears. Judge Pao quickly locked the door and inquisitively asked about the killer's appearance. The woman told him what the killer looked like between huge sobs and suddenly added, in a very misty, mysterious whisper "I am a demon!"

Without warning, the woman suddenly jumped up as high as the ceiling morphed into the most horrible looking creature. The creature looked like a giant bat crossed with a hairless monkey, her eyes were blazing red and her ghastly mouth was filled with black, withered fangs. Her disgusting claws were dripping blood on the floor and the nails looked rotten, and as if they had been bitten by cockroaches.

The nightmarish creature landed on the floor with a loud thud and started quietly walking towards the horrorstruck Judge Pao. Judge Pao could actually smell her revolting breath and he felt like he was about to faint, the demon was getting closer ... and closer... when...

Dong! Judge Pao suddenly sat up he looked around, drenched in sweat. He was in his bedroom. His heart was pounding in his chest, so hard that he thought his ribs were going to explode. Everything made sense now that Judge Pao had found out all of it had been a dream. His breathing eventually slowed down and he casually got off the bed and went down for breakfast when he saw a puddle of blood on the floor...

# *The Legend of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Hing Yuet Anna – 9*

Do you know who Judge Pao was? Judge Pao was a justice fighter in China who lived more than a thousand years ago. His full name is “Pao Zheng” and people sometimes called him “Pao Gong” or “Pao Qingtian”. Similar to a Japanese Detective, Conan, Judge Pao started to inspect many cases when he was young. For example, he solved an arson case when he was a student and several other murder cases after he became a judge. He was known as being fair and he dared to punish powerful families if they broke the law or crossed any form of legal line. Judge Pao is still to this day one of the most celebrated cultural symbols of justice in Chinese society.

Judge Pao was born a thousand years ago in Anhui, China. He was a strong and tall man. He had black skin with a long beard. He also had a half-moon mark on his forehead. His outlook was different than that of the general Chinese. The Pao family included Judge Pao's two elder brothers and they had over 15 years age difference with him. He was the third son of the Pao family. There is a rumour surrounding his birth. Judge Pao was born when his parents were very old. When his mother gave birth to him, it was not long after that his father found Judge Pao's skin to be darker than usual. He told his second brother to throw him into the mountain and let the lions, cheetahs or tigers eat him. They did this because his father thought Judge Pao would bring bad luck to the Pao family. After a while, his eldest brother did not want his little brother to die so he carried him home. At the same time, his brother's wife also had a baby. However, they did not have enough milk to feed both babies. His eldest brother and his wife decided to give their own baby up and take care of Judge Pao. That's why Judge Pao had the best relationship with his eldest brother and his wife. When he was young, he was already a clever, honest and upright student. He was helpful and liked to study law related stories. He sometimes helped his teacher solve difficult problems. As he grew older, his kindness grew and he helped more people. Everyone liked him so much and wanted him to be their leader. With a strong team behind him, he got victory in several investigations over the course of his life.

One particular day, Judge Pao was investigating a case of thievery. The case involved a poor child. His father had died and his mother was sick. One day, the poor kid was selling some oily fried dough. Luckily, he finished selling all the fried dough and earned 100 coins. It was enough to buy medicine for his mother. After walking for an entire day, he was tired and slept on a rock beside the road. After he woke up, he could not find his coins. He was sad and anxious, so he cried and cried.

At the same time, Judge Pao was walking near the little kid and asked “Kid, why are you crying?”.

The kid answered, “My 100 coins were lost.”

Judge Pao asked “Who stole your coins?”

The kid said “I don't know.” He continued “I just slept on the rock.”

Judge Pao said “I know who stole your coins. The rock stole your coins!”

After Judge Pao said that, he ordered the police to arrest the stone and question the stone in the court. Everyone in the court felt weird and funny about the fact that the stone stole the coins.

Then, Judge Pao asked the stone “Stone, did you steal the kid’s coins?” Of course, the stone did not answer. Judge Pao asked a few more times, but the stone did not answer so he ordered some policemen to punish the stone. Then, everyone in the court started making malicious gossip about Judge Pao. He was angry, so he punished and fined them one coin each. Everyone in the court had to put one coin into the bowl filled up with water. Suddenly, a man threw one coin into the bowl and the oil floated to the top of the water.

Judge Pao shouted at him, “You stole the kid’s coins!”

Judge Pao explained “The fried dough had oil on it. When the kid used his oily hand to touch the coins, the coins will have oil.” Judge Pao told the thief to give the 100 coins back to the kid.

This was only one of many solved cases. He actually helped more people to solve cases during his adult time. To sum up, I will share my view to Judge Pao. First, if you watched more of Judge Pao’s television drama, you will know that Judge Pao liked to observe the details of all matters. Second, I guess Judge Pao liked to gain new knowledge too because it helped him to solve complicated cases. Do you think Judge Pao was a lucky child or not? Anyway, Judge Pao was a smart and upright man. His story taught many young generations to extend justice and help more and more people like himself. He lived a miraculous life and will always be remembered for his service to the law.

# *The Empresses*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Sze Ching Hannah – 12*

Somewhere in the Universe, there is the Milky Way. And in the Milky way, there is our Solar System. And the third planet from the sun is the Earth, the home to all living things, animals, plants, and people. And in ALL people, there are heroes, to bring justice to the world... Once you hear the word 'hero', I assume you'd think of heroes like Ironman, Superman, or even Deadpool! But I'm not talking about those Marvel and DC heroes, but real-life heroes, detectives, spies, and so on. This story is based on one detective. Before you get going on with detectives like Detective Pikachu, Batman, or Sherlock Holmes, I just have to tell you that it's none of the above. More than a thousand years before any other justice fighters, there was – drum roll, please? –

Judge Pao!

Back in the Song Dynasty in Kaifeng city, there lived Judge Pao who was famous for his impartiality and uprightness. He was a judge in his court in the daytime and was the Maya from Hell in the nighttime.

One day, Empress Liu was invited to eat lunch with her son Emperor Renzong. She accepted the offer and went to the imperial palace the following day to meet him. In the luxurious royal palace sitting room, they were having fun, talking, and laughing. Of course, I didn't dare to eavesdrop on them. After conversing for quite a while, they ate some extra fancy royal dishes and drank some fine wine. The empress and the emperor had a good mother-and-son relationship.

A few days later, the emperor and empress were having lunch together again. Only this time, the emperor found his mother unusually quiet. 'She used to have so much to talk about,' thought the emperor. The emperor later decided to ask the servants why his mother was acting so strangely. After asking every single servant that worked in the palace, there was finally an answer. One of the servants admitted to being bribed to keep the secret that the real empress had been killed by someone. The emperor was furious. He suspected that the fake empress was the killer, and asked Judge Pao for his help in solving this mystery.

Pao did a quick observation, then told Emperor Renzong that there wasn't enough evidence. Judge Pao wanted to know the truth of the story, so he asked his bodyguard, Zhanzhao, to secretly investigate the dead empress's grave and skeleton.

That night, Zhanzhao went out to the real empress' grave and dug out the skeleton. Suddenly he felt a sharp pain in his back, and when he turned around, he saw that a man dressed in black had snuck an attack on him.

'How?! I didn't even hear footsteps! Could it be a ghost?' Zhanzhao quickly got up to his feet, drew his sword, and ran toward the man in black, ready to attack him. But as Zhanzhao sliced his opponent with his sword, he turned into a big boulder. How suspicious! Zhanzhao decided to ignore it for now and focus back on the job he was given.

He took the skeleton out of the grave and carried it back to Kaifeng. He also reported to Judge Pao about his findings and experience at the graveyard. Pao thought it was very strange. I mean, who could imagine themselves walking across the road and the man standing next to them turning into a boulder, in the blink of an eye? If it were me, I would've freaked out, and run away at the speed of a bullet! But Pao wasn't only curious, but he was also very cross. So, he ordered some of his men to capture the person dressed in black from the other night. After capturing them, Pao's men brought the person to Judge Pao.



Judge Pao and that person went into a room where they could talk privately. The same question was asked repeatedly,

“What do you know about the empress’ disappearance?”

Quite a while later, Pao finally came out of the room, looking like he had just come back from mars! Now that he got some more clues, he was ready to solve the mystery and end this huge mess.

It was midnight, and Judge Pao, Zhanzhao, and the rest of his men were at the gate of the emperor’s palace. Once they found the culprit’s chamber, they waited for everyone to fall asleep before they barge into his room. The duke was shocked to see them in his room, so much that he fell off the chair he was sitting on! XD

Pao told his men to wait outside, then he walked closer to the duke. The duke stepped back and out of nowhere, he sputtered,

“I—I didn’t kill the empress! It wasn’t me!”

“I didn’t even say anything yet! Are you admitting your wrongs already?” answered Pao. Immediately, the duke covered up his mouth before he could spill anything more.

But cheaters will get caught, one way or the other, with all the evidence and witness on the table, the duke had no choice but to plead guilty, and he was sentenced to death.

In front of the crowd of people, Judge Pao called out the Dragon’s head guillotine, and everyone in the court held their breath, thinking about whether or not Judge Pao dared to chop a member of the royal family’s head. The air was still and in the longest silence, with a blink of an eye, the emperor’s brother was long gone...

Well, you know what they say, “ When Judge Pao is around, justice is around!”

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Yeuk Kuk Darren – 9*

“Hello, Harold! I’ve got a brand new toy that I want to show you.” I told my best friend Harold.

“Wow! It has a lot of modern modifications.” Harold said.

“I don’t know a lot since it’s my first time playing with it, but I’m pretty sure this is the ‘start’ button.” Then I pressed the start button and in no time we got teleported into some blue mist.....

“Harold, what’s happened?” I asked.

“I think by pressing the start button, you got us teleported to this random place!”

Harold and I were still trying to figure out where we are when someone came towards us. He went closer and closer, and then we saw a dark-skinned man wearing traditional Chinese clothes. What amazed me the most was that he had a crescent moon on his forehead. He said: “Hello. Who are you? I’m Pao Kung, an investigative judge.”

“Do you have any cases right now?” Instead of answering Pao Kung, Harold asked, “By the way, can we call you Judge Pao?”

Judge Pao smiled and said: “Of course you can. I also happen to have a case right now. The King’s crown is stolen!”

I immediately got excited and asked: “Can we tag along? I bet we could help!”

Judge Pao seemed to be interested in the idea. “Why not? What could go wrong?”

While Judge Pao was saying this, I suddenly saw a man passing by and holding something like a crown in his hands. I screamed at once: “Look! I think he’s the thief! Let’s go and get him!”

Unfortunately, we did not quite match the pace of the thief and he disappeared in the fog. “He’s gone. We’ll have to look for other clues.” Harold said.

We were disappointed and then walked for some time until Judge Pao said: “My instinct tells me that the robber swung by not so long ago.” He then shone the ground around us with UV light that was supposed to be a modern technology. I guess I learned something new. Suddenly, Judge Pao said: “I found some footprints! Let’s follow them.” As we followed the footprints, we reached a traditional Chinese palace. As we were about to enter the palace, Judge Pao was ambushed and taken away suddenly. “Judge Pao is kidnapped! What are we going to do now? Without Judge Pao, we are in big trouble!” I screamed.

“We can’t give up! We can’t abandon our mission and just leave.” Harold said. I am convinced and then we trudged into the darkness.

It was very dark inside the palace and its corridors were narrow. It looked more like a dungeon than a palace. We soon found out there were guards lurking around at every corner. When we calmed down and our eyes adapted to the darkness, we tried to move forward but suddenly stepped on a trigger and fell into a hole.

We had a severely hard bump, but after we recovered, we noticed the mist was cleared. We saw a dark shadow, which to our surprise, belonged to Judge Pao. After we woke Judge Pao up, we searched around the room and soon discovered a brick that was uneven with the others. Judge Pao pushed the brick into place and then a door was revealed. The door led us back to the corridors of this dungeon. The dungeon was basically a maze, but with the lead of Judge Pao, we managed to find a big red door at the end of a corridor. We opened the door but all that we saw in the room was a note on a table! Judge Pao read it out: “Congratulations for reaching here! But I have gone to the Royal Palace to ridicule the King’s family already. Judge Pao exclaimed: “That’s the most forbidden sin in the entire country! This can’t go on!”

After learning this shocking news, we quickly searched for an exit and found a secret door, which is a shortcut out of the dungeon. After a long walk for almost a day, we finally arrived the Royal Palace. Judge Pao said: “This is the capital city of our dynasty and civilians are not supposed to enter. But in this case of extreme emergency, I believe we shouldn’t worry about the rules anymore!” Harold and I agreed: “We can’t just sit here and let the evil ridicules the royal family and takes over the country!”

We pushed open the big red door of the Royal Palace and went past numerous rooms. I got increasingly nervous as we went past rooms after rooms. Finally, we were standing in front of a door with the sign: Royal Throne Room. We held our breath and entered the room quietly. Just at the same moment, we heard the thief saying to the royal family: "Give me the throne or I will kill you all!" Out of natural reaction I shouted: "No! You can't! We won't let you steal the throne!" On the count of three, we all charged at the thief. We defeated him and returned the stolen crown to the King. The King said: "Thank you for returning the crown. For that, you three will be allowed to stay in the Palace at all times. Harold responded: "Sorry, we can't. Although it's a true honour, our parents are waiting for us to go home. The queen said: "It's OK. Family is the most important."

Just as the queen finished her words, we suddenly were caught in a mist again, except this time, it's a red mist. When we regained consciousness, we were already back in my bedroom. As we glanced at the clock, it was still 9:15 in the morning. Although no time seemed to have passed, I couldn't stop thinking: If the toy can bring us back to ancient China, then what other time and places could it also bring us to?

# *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Yik Hei Eron – 11*

The dogs were barking. The sky was gloomy and dim, and the wolves were howling. A loud rumbling sound could be heard coming from the graveyard. A bright light shone onto the graveyard, and suddenly a muddy hand reached out of the ground. Another dirty hand gripped the ground, and out came a dark-faced man with a white beard. A crescent moon glowed brightly on his forehead. It was the one and only, the legendary Judge Pao.

Fast forward to the present day, Judge Pao had risen from the dead. He was confused and didn't know what year it was. His clothes didn't look like other people's, and everyone stared at him. He felt out of place and just plain weird. When he tried to cross the road, he heard an almighty noise. Then he saw something very fast zooming by. It was a car! He was in shock. He had to know what year it was, so he asked someone. Luckily the person understood what he said, and he replied, "It's 2023."

Judge Pao was flabbergasted. Then the man said, "You better get some new clothes before embarrassing yourself even further."

"Where can I buy them?" asked Judge Pao.

"Right across the street," the man said confusedly. The man thought Judge Pao was strange and acting suspiciously, but he was too scared to ask.

Judge Pao was afraid to cross the street, but he did it anyways. He leapt over car after car until he reached the other side of the street. It was his greatest accomplishment yet! He walked into the store, and an old lady came to assist him. The old lady looked at his clothes doubtfully and asked, "Do you want to buy new clothes?"

"Yes," replied Judge Pao. He scoured through all the clothes until he found something that he liked. It was red and green.

"So, you want that?" asked the old lady.

"Yes," said Judge Pao.

"\$89 please," said the old lady. Judge Pao checked his pockets. They were empty. "No money?" asked the old lady.

"Sorry, I don't have any money," said Judge Pao.

"It's fine, you can have it," said the old lady kindly.

"Thank you! Thank you!" Judge Pao said gratefully.

“No problem,” said the old lady, and with that, Judge Pao left the shop.

The news of an unfamiliar old Chinese man who slept on the streets and asked people for food reached the government. They did some research and discovered that it was Judge Pao. The government reached out to his grandchildren, who were also judges and lived in Hong Kong, and asked them to take care of their ancestor who was sleeping on the streets. His grandchildren couldn't wait to be introduced to their famous ancestor. However, Judge Pao was not so excited to meet them. He didn't want to accept their help at first, but soon, he had no choice but to since no one else was willing to give him food anymore.

One year had passed, and Judge Pao was no longer unfamiliar with Hong Kong. One day, he turned on the television and watched the news. A building had been set on fire, many people were injured, and some even died. Judge Pao took an immediate interest in the case. It certainly seemed like one of the most challenging cases he had ever come across. He really wanted to help, but he wasn't a recognised judge in Hong Kong, and he didn't even have a university degree!

Fortunately, his grandson was involved in the case and wanted Judge Pao's help. When they went to the scene of the fire, Judge Pao saw many suspicious things. He found a lighter and saw many heavily burnt spots. But by far, the most suspicious item was the burnt-out toaster. Inside the toaster, there were black, sandy breadcrumbs! Judge Pao immediately came to the conclusion that the toaster had caused the fire. He gathered the occupants of the building and asked them several questions. One man said he had a slice of bread in the toaster when he had to leave his flat in a hurry. When he came back, the building was on fire. Judge Pao told the police everything, and they realised it was just an accident. No one was guilty! After that, Judge Pao became the Chief Judge of the High Court and helped Hong Kong with many cases.

## *The Amazing Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Yu Ting Liam – 11*

It was a beautiful sunny day in the city of Hefei, Anhui.

This is my home – a rural city in Northern China. Flowers are blooming, and we are surrounded by natural rivers and lakes. My family works very hard raising cattle and other animals. Life should be beautiful... but we all have an underlying fear that shadows us from above. The government is very corrupt and has made our life miserable, especially when there is a dispute. The rich and wealthy always win, even if they are guilty. This fear has finally become a reality, the beginning of my nightmare.

One day, I was feeding the animals when I noticed several of our biggest cows were missing. I spent a long time trying to look for them, combing every inch where they could have wandered off. I then realized that they probably got stolen since they were nowhere to be found, so I decided to go for a little adventure and went searching for the cattle. I eventually found them on the Lee family's farm.

The Lee family were the richest household apart from royalty. They had several bulky guards guarding the farm, making sure no trespassers entered the farm without permission. That didn't scare me, though, I was determined to get the cattle back for my family, so I snuck in and attempted to get the cattle back. Just as I thought I

had succeeded, I was swarmed by guards, and they immediately beat me up. When I got home that night, my family immediately noticed my bruises and scratches, and they demanded I tell them what had happened. I then told them about how our cattle got stolen and how the Lee family's guards beat me up with tears streaming down my face. I was so angry and frustrated that I decided to call the authorities for help. They told me to write a pleading before I could report my case! The problem was none of my family members had a proper education, so none of us knew how to write. Most of us just gave up on the case and decided to go on with our lives and breed more cattle.

I hadn't given up yet, though. I heard there was a new judge called Pao Zheng, and he allowed people with little education to make complaints orally without having to write a pleading. My family and I then approached him and complained about the Lee family. Miraculously, Judge Pao listened to every detail we had given him, and after his judgement, he decided to take action and summoned the Lee family to court. The Lee family tried to bribe him with money and jewellery, but Judge Pao was having none of it. The Lee family then realized that the judge couldn't be bribed, so they decided to pin the blame on my family, accusing us of trespassing and attempted theft. My family and I then explained that the cattle is ours, and they proved it to Judge Pao by showing a tag strapped to all the cattle on their front-left hooves that had our family's last name on it. The Lee family had been busted because of Judge Pao's reluctance to be corrupted. Judge Pao sentenced the Lee family to 10 years for theft and dishonesty. Moreover, they had to give us half of their family's riches as an apology.

We had been living in authority's shadow for years, and the peasants and poor people never had the power to accuse the rich and wealthy. We were lucky to have someone like Judge Pao, an incredible law enforcer because of his integrity and fairness. Since his arrival in town, the government had been influenced by his philosophy and had given true meaning to justice again. Pao is a real uncompromising judge, someone who hates corruption and "speaks truth to power", a symbol of justice.

# *The Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wu, Shengwen Sean – 12*

It was pouring with rain in the town of Kai Feng. Judge Pao was sitting in his seat, writing on his to-do list, feeling bored. While wondering what to have for lunch, he heard a series of knocks. He urgently called his men to find the person who kept knocking on the door of his grand mansion. It was the famous artist Wang Yu Xing, who had just returned from a trip to Luo Yang town. When he returned to his mansion, he realized his unfinished masterpiece, an extremely realistic temple drawing, had been ruined by a giant black splotch of paint. He pleaded with Judge Pao to investigate, and so Judge Pao headed toward the Wang Mansion. When he got there, he immediately locked his sights onto 4 suspects: Mr. Wang's assistant, bodyguard, wife, and babysitter – all of whom didn't know that the painting had been ruined yet.

After interviewing them, the results were as follows: The assistant said she was out with the babysitter, playing with the baby in the playground. The baby and babysitter confirmed this. The wife said she was at a birthday party at a friend's home, and the bodyguard said that although he was the only one at the mansion, there was never black paint in the mansion.

After a few seconds of thought, Judge Pao realized that the suspects didn't know that Mr. Wang's painting had been ruined yet, so there would've been no way for the bodyguard to know that it was ruined using black paint, unless he was the culprit himself.

Judge Pao ordered his men to arrest the bodyguard, but the bodyguard suddenly pulled out a sharp katana and threw a barrage of slashes and thrusts at Judge Pao. Luckily all these attacks were blocked by the defences of Judge Pao's men. They kept exchanging slashes, thrusts, shouts, and cries. In the end, the bodyguard was overwhelmed by Judge Pao's men and had no choice but to hold Mr. Wang and his baby hostage to temporarily protect himself from the sharp, smooth, and swift blades of Judge Pao's men. He challenged Judge Pao in his booming voice, "Hey, Kung Pao Chicken! If you answer this riddle correctly, I'll let these idiots go. If you don't answer, I'll kill them. But, if your answer is incorrect... I'll slaughter them and you must let me go anyway. Deal?" Judge Pao thought of ignoring him and making his men just grab Mr. Wang and his child away from the bodyguard, but he thought again: *'If I make my men go grab Mr. Wang and his child back the bodyguard might react quick enough to pull out his katana and slice them into sashimi, but if I'm lucky enough to answer the riddle, they'll be saved.'* So, he agreed.

The bodyguard gave out his riddle: "I am the beginning of eternity. I am the end of time and space. I am the start of every end, and I am the end of every place. Who or what am I?" After roughly 5 minutes of deep thought, Judge Pao replied, "Beginning of eternity? The start of every end? More like the start of dumb criminals. The answer is just the letter E."

After that, the shocked and scared bodyguard dropped Mr. Wang and his child and hopped out of a window and escaped. But he was soon captured by Judge Pao's men, and the Wang family's lives returned back to normal, all thanks to Judge Pao.

Later that day, Judge Pao returned to his mansion and, after hours of interviewing the bodyguard, finally figured out the reason why the bodyguard had destroyed Mr. Wang's masterpiece. It turns out, Mr. Wang had often mistreated the bodyguard and even lowered his salary whenever Mr. Wang thought he was a bit annoying. That anger had kept building up in the bodyguard's heart for a tough eight years, and he couldn't bear it anymore. So, he decided to wreck Mr. Wang's masterpiece as payback and revenge. After hearing this, Judge Pao returned to the Wang mansion and sued Mr. Wang for mistreating his bodyguard, but also made the bodyguard buy him another masterpiece from India in return for ruining his one. He sentenced the bodyguard to a few years in jail for keeping people hostage and endangering their lives.

Then, Judge Pao thought to himself, "Arggh, I forgot what I was planning to have for lunch! I guess I'll just go grab some food on the street and rest for a while..." He yawned.

After lunch, Judge Pao returned to his own mansion, only to see that it had been robbed! He was then notified by security that Mr Wang's bodyguard had escaped and had already murdered Mr. Wang and his family before leaving Kai Feng town in a chariot. Embedded on the chariot he was riding, was the logo of the Assassin Association, revealing that the bodyguard from Wang mansion was secretly a spy assassin sent to assassinate and

destroy Mr. Wang and his masterpieces! Before leaving, he even robbed Judge Pao's mansion as payback for arresting him! After hearing this, Judge Pao was enraged and ordered police and his men to search and hunt down members of the Assassin Association, especially the bodyguard from Wang mansion.

How will the big hunt against the Assassin Association turn out?

Will Judge Pao be defeated in a battle of wits and assassinated, or will it be the Assassin Association that will be demolished and broken apart?

We'll find out soon!



# *The Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yan, Hoi Yin Claire – 11*

## **Accident**

'Bye!' said Grandpa as mom drove off. She had to drop me off for her upcoming trip as she wasn't coming back for a while. As I entered his house, I marvelled at its size.

I decided to walk around and stumbled into an antique room; my eyes fixated on a diamond vial in a velvet pouch. I took the pouch out from the glass case and saw the crystal clear, well-preserved vial, with intricate carvings of flowers and plants. The cap was made of gold, and the liquid inside was orange.

I recalled reading about this in an ancient Chinese medicine book— It was made from a broken piece of a Time Machine, a Sundrop Flower essence for de-aging abilities, and 198 more ingredients. But the activating spells for them were unknown.

A BANG! brought me back to reality. I turned, startled by the sound. As I heard footsteps approaching, my hands started shaking. I accidentally dropped the vial and it shattered into a million pieces. A strong beam of light appeared. Before I realized, I had activated its time-traveling ability!

## **A different world**

A few moments later, I felt like falling through the sky. I landed in a village with houses of straw and wood. This looked like an ancient Chinese historical village during the Song Dynasty.

I strolled around, meticulously admiring my surroundings. Not long after, a sign caught my attention: Kai Feng Fu. A fair-skinned man came out of a building, he must be Judge Pao, I thought. I cautiously walked over to him. 'Hello?' I greeted. He turned over. "I know the language Western people speak." He nodded. 'Forgive me for my bad English.'

I introduced myself and explained all the prior events that led me here. He didn't seem too surprised and asked how I got the potion. His description matched my observation. Pao knew about the potion's abilities!

## **A Royal Plead**

I wanted to keep experimenting with the potion's magic. The Judge objected; 'The potion is with the royals,' he said.

I pleaded with the Judge, 'Please, Pao. Do you know that your cases are easier than the cases in the future? Let's travel forward to see how to prevent them.'

'The stakes are too high. We can't.'

We argued until he grudgingly agreed. He decided visit the royals the next morning.

At the Imperial Palace, Judge Pao knelt before the emperor. He appealed, 'Our kingdom's case numbers have been increasing recently, and I would like to propose an idea. We need to see future cases to prevent them.'

'I see you want the royal potion. You must understand it's a very dangerous idea you are proposing. However, I will grant it to you because I trust you have good judgment.'

## **Britain**

Judge Pao came back just before sunset with a triumphant face and the potion in his hand. The next morning, we splashed the potion on the floor and a beam of light penetrated through, we jumped into another space tunnel.

We saw blonde-haired people around us after landing. This must be Britain, I thought. We walked around and saw a man with a corn pipe and a man accompanying him. They must be Sherlock Holmes and Watson, his assistant.

We glanced around and observed the people in distress.

'What is happening?' asked Pao. I knew what to do. I squeezed Pao's hand and approached Holmes. 'Hi, I'm Celina, are you detective Holmes?'

The man replied with a frown, 'Yes, I am. What do you want from me?' The man looked around in confusion. I continued, 'It is all a case, waiting to be uncovered.'

He hesitatingly nodded. He said, 'We have to solve this case! Going to the library to research is always the best.'

## **Some Research**

We divided into teams and searched. In a great Western elixir book, I found a potion that brought the storybook characters to life. 'That's it!' I exclaimed, calling the others.

'I know the elixir belongs to the Alexander family.' Holmes stated.

'Let's go quickly.' Pao said.

Holmes and Watson lead us to an unlocked golden gate. We walked across and knocked on the door of the great mansion. A servant wearing duck feathers and a mink scarf came in. 'Please.' he said. We walked in and the servant introduced us to the young Lord Alexander.

'We are here for an important matter. Is your story elixir stolen?' Holmes inquired.

'Oh yes. It is.' He sighed. 'I suspect Alexandras stole it. They only wear goose feathers and silk dresses. Take a look.' He showed us some dyed violet goose feathers. 'This is the evidence I have.'

Pao suggested, 'Let's go to the Alexandras and find out.'

## **Evidence**

Next door, the Alexandras had a great mansion like the Alexanders, but of gold, it was hot pink. Lord Alexander knocked on the door, and a servant greeted us. 'Your Greatness, Lady Alexandra is inside.' she said in a tender voice.

We saw ourselves in. Lady Alexandra appeared stunning with the silk fan and her dress, talking in a melodic voice, 'May I know the reason of your visit?'

Lord Alexander filled her in and showed her the goose feathers. She inspected it and called, 'Cordelia! Come here now!'

'Yes, madam.'

'What did you do?' Alexandra showed her the feathers.

Cordelia's dumbfounded reaction said it all and as she stormed off into her room, I realized Pao and I started...glowing. I remembered we couldn't time travel for more than 3 days. We waved goodbye and found ourselves in the space tunnel.

## Not The Last Goodbye

We were back in the ancient China. Pao said, 'Thank you for accompanying me on this journey.' I knew this was our farewell. Before leaving, Pao gave me a bottle of intricate carvings with orange liquid. I was surprised.

A few minutes later, I was back in the antique room. As soon as I raised my head I saw Grandpa. 'I'm sorry, I used your potion without permission. Please forgive me!' I cried.

'It's okay, tell me your experience,' said Grandpa. I told him about my adventures with Pao, he interrupted me, and what he said left me speechless: Pao is our ancestor, that's why you are Celina Pao.

I smiled. We were not just friends, we were family.

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# Cow

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yao, Yao Wang Ethan – 12*

I bet you've heard stories and tales of superheroes, like Batman or Superman. They can be very interesting, but everyone knows that these people are not real and their stories are just make-believe. What if I told you that there was a story about a hero, which was just as interesting as the other stories, but was actually real? This is the story of Judge Cow.

You've probably heard of Judge Pao before, right? He was a Yama at the Department of Hell. Well, so was Judge Cow, and they both worked there in the same office.

Judge Cow was a Chinese person from 1000 years ago. Just like the other superheroes we've heard of, his job was simple: to fight crime, protect innocent people and guard the city.

During the day, he saved many lives, and many people admired him. But at night, he became the "Yama" at the Department of Hell, also known as "The Infernal Bureaucracy".

Although everyone knew Judge Pao, Judge Cow was not really recognised by anyone. But that never discouraged him. Judge Cow was a proud judge, sorting out the affairs of the people who he couldn't save during the day; a very brave man who stood for justice and equality to all, regardless of social status, gender, race, education, or age!

Now, not only was Judge Cow kind and fair, but he was also a very smart and diligent person. When he was a little kid, his family was poor and there was a limited amount of education he could receive. He understood that the education offered by the village school wasn't enough, but since they were very poor, there wasn't any other way to go to the city schools.

So, Judge Cow decided to teach himself. Every day, after finishing what he had to do, Judge Cow would spend his free time reading Chinese history books to understand more about his country, the system, the people and everything he needed to know.

When it was too dark to read, he would go over to his rich neighbor's house and sit outside their window to read beside the brightly-lit house. He slowly grew to enjoy reading books and it even became his hobby!

As he grew up, he became very smart. His friends and teachers simply called him a genius. He even got attention from the gods above, which was how he got his job as a "Yama" in the Department of Hell.

Judge Cow had a very big family. He was married and had many kids and grandchildren. He was living a very happy life.

One day, a doctor was killed in a chariot accident. The doctor was a very nice person, and he had saved thousands of lives. After looking at his background, Judge Cow decided that the doctor should not be taken away into hell, and the judge revived him. The doctor was very thankful and travelled around the world sharing the story of Judge Cow's greatness.

A local mayor started to pay attention to Judge Cow. The mayor worried that if Judge Cow kept getting people's recognition, news about his good deeds would spread to the Emperor. Then, maybe the Emperor would make Judge Cow the new mayor! That was too horrible for the mayor to think about. He would find a way to make Judge Cow disappear by sending the local police to arrest him.

As the police were passing the streets, all the villagers came out to stop them and defend Judge Cow. The police then retreated. The mayor was later fired by the emperor. Ever since then, Judge Cow decided to make seeking justice and fairness his life's mission.

A few years later, a village in China was getting targeted and attacked by other nearby countries. Villagers were

injured, houses were destroyed, and it seemed like the end of the world for the people living in that village. One of the villagers decided to seek help from Judge Pao. Sadly, Judge Pao had just left on a trip to another city.

Just when the villagers were feeling despair, another “Yama” —Judge Cow, from a different province, appeared. Judge Cow was a lot more powerful than Judge Pao in a mysterious way. Judge Cow had the power to punish people from other countries in the unusual world, and that was what he did. Judge Cow knew that the attackers were winning and that the village was far too remote to get help from the capital. So that’s when Judge Cow decided to use his special power.

He brought the attackers to the unusual world and punished them, letting them see the suffering faces of their own families and burning villages, making them understand the turmoil war brings, not only to the people who are attacked but also to their own families. These images were enough to make these attackers reconsider their actions and they decided to leave and never come back.

After the attackers left, Judge Cow used his power to resurrect the innocent villagers. They were very grateful and decided to build a temple to worship Judge Cow and remind others of the help they received from him.

Judge Cow passed on his beliefs and ideas to his family members. He taught them to be modest and focus on being righteous, fair and brave.

Judge Cow once told his grandsons that he wished to see his grandsons fight crime. So, Judge Cow’s grandsons started learning the laws, hoping to seek justice in the right way.

Over the years, Judge Cow’s family won many corruption–fighting awards. There was even a time when they stopped a bank robbery!

Judge Cow’s descendants became the famous ‘Fighting Four’ and went around the world to help the ones in need.

Until now, there are still many who admire Judge Cow, and worship his statue in temples around the world.

# *Judge Pao and The Evil VR Goggles*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yeung, Ka Yui Vivienne – 10*

Ni hao! I am Judge Pao; I am a detective and a judge. People always recognized me because I have a moon birth mark on my forehead. I have solved numerous cases since I was 28, when I became a qualified Imperial Scholar. But this time I got a troublesome case – it's just around the corner because we found my brother murdered! I must find the murderer!

I searched for clues at the murder scene for an estimated 3 hours, but I couldn't find any evidence at the crime scene, I only found blood in my brother's room. I called the FBI from America, and they arrived in less than 1 hour because they used jetpacks that can go 20,000km/hr. I also called the HK police to support me.

“SIR!!! I FOUND SOMETHING!” said an FBI agent.

“Let me see!” I said.

“Look, I found another dead body, a knife and a VR goggle.” He said.

“That guy looks like my neighbour...Let me take a closer look”, I said curiously.

“ACCHOOOOOO!” somebody sneezed.

“Close one, you almost scared me. I am a judge and detective, I am NEVER scared. Let's get back to the clues. Can one of you wear the VR goggles and hold a wooden spoon from the kitchen?” I yelled so that everybody could hear me.

“I will try,” said a brave FBI officer in a cold voice. He wore the VR goggles and suddenly jumped up and down, left and right, this way and that way!

“What is wrong with him?” I thought. He held the wooden spoon and began speaking nonsense.

“Shabooooom! You are dead! Capow!!! Swaggabagabang!!!” Also, immediately he started poking other people in the room.

“Put him outside! Put him outside! Oh, and take off the goggles before you leave him behind!” I roared. Six FBI agents and two HK Police officers carried him out and two officers took off the goggles.

“Power OFF modeeee....” The goggles sounded.

“Weird...the goggles can talk?” I said. “I don't think goggles can t..talk? I must be dreaming...”

“No sir!” the goggles can talk! Maybe something is controlling it sir!” said an officer.

“Can you shut the entire thing down, take out the batteries and give it to me please?” I asked. After they did their job I put it on myself and saw a “PREVIOUS” button. (They didn't really turn it off because there's no “OFF” button! Only “ON”.)

I used my hand to press “PREVIOUS” button and then I saw the whole entire murder scene:

The VR goggles were placed in a gift box outside my neighbour's house. He loves presents so he opened it and put it on so that he can play VR video games. But in one of the games, it was about the murder. He played it and didn't even know his sword in this game was a real sharp knife!

He ran to my house in order to kill a goblin to score points, but instead, he killed my brother thinking that it was a goblin! He saw another goblin on himself via the VR goggles and he again, tried to kill it. But instead, he killed himself.

“GREAT...(in a sad mood)”, I whispered. Now I know that it's the VR goggles that killed my brother, I will give these goggles to the science lab for them to study further so nobody will murder any innocent people anymore.

Stay tuned with me – I still have a lot of other mysteries to solve in the near future. One more thing: My mission is done, let's all go out for dinner!

## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yip, Hei Sen Evangelia – 9*

On one beautiful day, a hard-working personal secretary of Judge Pao—Matthew—saw a wealthy-looking man wearing a black business suit and holding a large box ran into his office. He looked like a cat on hot bricks. Once the marvellous man saw Matthew, he immediately told him he wanted to meet Judge Pao. A few minutes later, a man with an extremely long moustache and a moon-shaped birthmark on his forehead appeared in front of the man. He was Judge Pao! The businessman quickly ran to him and opened the gigantic box, and there was a colourful CD and a flower-scented perfume inside. Then, the man told Judge Pao a superbly rare pearl was stolen from him!

Judge Pao told the man to calm down. The mysterious man introduced himself to Judge Pao. His name was Mack, and he was running a global business. The Judge Pao told him everything. The stolen pearl was a family heirloom that cost trillions. Mack said the fantastic pearl will be given to the oldest son of the family once he turns 18. His son was now 17 and was always looking forward to having it. However, the precious pearl was not with him anymore. Mack then started to explain what happened on the day it was stolen.

It was a dark and stormy night. When my son and I were reading books in the family room, my daughter suddenly screamed when she noticed that the shimmering pearl was missing! We ran into the forbidden room to find the safe containing the minute pearl shattered into pieces! Just then, we all got so scared that our hearts skipped a beat. After we all calmed down, the shocked kids left the room. I left behind a colourful CD and a flower-scented perfume hidden behind the safe. I ran like the wind to the watchman who should have had CCTV footage recorded, but we found that the footage of that room had been deleted!

When Mack finished his detailed explanation, he just swallowed, as if there was a lump in his throat. He told Judge Pao the thief might be someone in his house, so he refused to call the police. Judge Pao agreed to help him and told him to go hit the hay to give him time to strategize. Mack told Judge Pao to break a leg in return. After Mack left the office, Judge Pao discussed the case with Matthew and tried to find any missing clues. Then, they visited Mack's house and interviewed everyone there. After the interview, Judge Pao concluded the list of suspicious people.

Mack's daughter – She had snuck out very early with her best friend to go shopping for new clothes with her saved allowance. When she came back and walked past the room, she realised the door to the forbidden room had been opened.

Mack's son – He went to the café and waited tables because there was a very expensive toy he wanted to buy.

The watchman – He was supposed to stay in the CCTV room for the whole day. He told Judge Pao that only the family members have the key to this room, and he claimed that he didn't know anything about the missing footage or the pearl. But when Judge Pao brought up Mack's son's conversation, he began to shiver uncontrollably, as if there was something hidden behind him.

The maid – She cleaned that part of the mansion every morning. Judge Pao asked her about the CD and the perfume, but unfortunately, she said it wasn't there in the morning. When Judge Pao brought up the subject of the suspicious son, she appeared to be concealing something.

Judge Pao and Matthew visited the mansion again the next day and looked for evidence. They snuck into the son's room and could smell a familiar scent. It was the flower-scented perfume! They saw a clean flowerpot with a half dead flower in it. They dug through the disgusting dirt and found the fabulous pearl! Turns out the son stole the white shining pearl, so he could sell it to buy the toy he eagerly wanted. Judge Pao finally realised that the watchman was threatened by the bratty son! The mysterious maid was the wife of the watchman, and the smart watchman told her to put the scented perfume and the CD in the room. As the CD was the clue to point out that Mack's son was the culprit. His name was Cyrus Donald!

When Judge Pao informed Mack that his selfish son had stolen the wanted pearl, he had a face like thunder and barged into his son's room! At last, Mack took away all his son's pocket money, grounded him for 5 months, made him clean his younger sister's messy room every day, and made him serve his younger sister for 5 months. His younger sister was next in line to receive the family pearl. The son was furious and tried to run away that same night, but the angry servants in his house caught him, and reported it to Mack. Now, he must serve his sister for 10 months. He didn't want to serve her any longer, so he tried to settle in and get used to it for a while.

Mack didn't know how to thank Judge Pao, so he decided to take him out for delicious ice cream and enjoy any flavour he liked. Judge Pao could then take a break and relax for once, but that wasn't all! Mack kind of spoiled Judge Pao a little and kept thanking him until he said it was enough. Judge Pao told him happily that it was his job and he enjoyed it a lot! Mack finally stopped spoiling him, but remained ever grateful to Judge Pao for his hard work.



## *New Tales of Judge Pao*

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Zhou, Kei Kwong Darren – 10*

It was a normal summer day, I was reading a book about Judge Pao in the library. I used to be a fan of Detective Conan, Sherlock... until I came across this book and realized China had a talented detective as well. I was totally drawn by the stories and didn't notice someone came and sat beside me. "This is an interesting book, isn't it?" "Yes, it is," I answered casually and flipped a glance when turning the page. I suddenly jumped up when I realized the person sitting beside me was Judge Pao! I rubbed my eyes, it truly was: a square dark face with the typical crescent shape between eyebrows. "Are you...are you.... Judge Pao?" A smile floated on his face and he said, "Alright Jamie, I suppose you know me now." He pointed at the book in my hand, "It is talking about me killing Chen Shi Mei." He gave me a look that meant *that ungrateful man deserved to die*.

"Well," I said. "Judge Pao, I admit that Chen is not a good man, nor is he a good husband and a father. But in Hong Kong these days, he would not be sentenced to death. "What? Do you mean I made a mistake? How is that even possible? Everyone compliments me and says I'm a fair judge!" shouted Judge Pao. "No, I'm not saying that. First, Hong Kong has abolished the death penalty since 1993 which was replaced with life imprisonment. So, even if Chen killed somebody he still won't get sentenced to death. Second, Chen's crime was bigamy, and he can get sentenced for up to 7 years in prison nowadays." "But I am the judge, the case should be dealt by me!" "That's another big difference now, we don't only listen to the judge, but get opinions from the jury as well". "What is a jury?" asked Judge Pao. "Not a jury, a jury!" I said. "It is a group of people that is present in the courtroom, and help the judge give a verdict on the case in question. And if he hasn't killed anyone, he will not be sentenced to death. Going to jail and paying a penalty are the most likely.

Oh, I see. Jail is too light a punishment for such a bad guy, but to think of him living in a dark, humid dungeon, eating and sleeping with mice and cockroaches is so satisfying!" said Judge Pao. "You are wrong again. Modern jails are very tidy and hygienic, there would be lessons to be taught, work to do and time to rest. "What! Why do you treat the criminals so kindly?" "Because we think every human being, even the bad ones, still have basic human rights. They will be reminded of discipline and respect in jail, they are more likely to turn out to be a better person when they finally get out." "I see." Judge Pao fell into thoughts and said, "Thanks Jamie, I have learned a lot today. I need to go back and maybe change my sentence for Chen. Goodbye!" "Wait, where I can find you again?" "Maybe next time when you are dreaming..."

Dreaming? Am I dreaming? Someone patted me on the shoulder, I opened eyes. It was the librarian. "We are closing now." I lifted my head, the sun outside window was setting on the horizon, with a yellow shadow across the sky. I looked around and I was the only person in the room. Packing up my books, I think to myself, was it really a dream? Judge Pao on the book cover seemed to smile at me...

# *The Hidden Secret of the Zhao Family*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, Choi, Yeonsoo Lucy – 10*

“Oh my, how could he *do* such a thing?”

“He’s going to pay for this!”

“I thought he was such a good person...”

Judge Pao pushed his way through the people. When he reached the notice board, he saw what all the commotion was about – a crumbled sheet of paper read, “People are suspecting that emperor Zhao Cheng’s most trusted servant, Ming Yang, was the murderer of him. While Ming Yang was Zhao Cheng’s most trusted servant, he was also jealous of emperor Zhao Cheng, and he wanted his throne, too.”

Judge Pao put his hand on his chin and nodded gently, while narrowing his eyes.

Later, Judge Pao walked to the palace to tell Zhao Cheng’s son, Zhao Li, about the suspect.

“Hello.” Zhao Li greeted Pao.

“Hello, your highness. There is a rumor going on outside that Ming Yang, your father’s most trusted servant, murdered him. I heard that he wanted your father’s throne, and I think that may be true.”

“Really?” Zhao Li gulped.

Judge Pao nodded and explained, “I plan to find Ming Yang, and then I’ll investigate him and settle the case.”

“Great!” exclaimed Zhao Li, “You should leave the palace now. It’s getting late.”

“Yes, your highness. Thank you for your time with me.” Judge Pao said and walked out of the palace.

“That was a quick conversation,” he thought.

“Pitter patter, pitter patter!” The rain started showering, and the wind became stronger and stronger. Judge Pao sat down on his old wooden chair to read a book about the Zhao family.

“The Zhao family was known for their enormous wealth.” Pao touched his long and grey goatee and kept reading, “But there was a hidden secret...” The page stopped there. The next page was ripped off. What happened?

“That’s weird...” Pao suddenly had so many questions, “What was the hidden secret? Why is this page ripped off? Is it something connected to Zhao Li and the servant?” His mind was racing.

The next day, Judge Pao went to the palace and instructed Ming Yang to sit on a chair, while Zhao Li was witnessing the investigation.

“Ok, here we go...” Judge Pao thought by himself.

“You are on the suspect list of murdering emperor Zhao Cheng.” Judge Pao said, “I’m going to ask you some questions.”

Ming Yang nodded. His body was trembling out of nervousness.

“At 12:00am on December 28th, what were you doing?”

“I, I was sleeping...”

Judge Pao nodded, but then something happened so fast that Pao hardly believed his eyes. Ming Yang glanced at Zhao Li and frowned. His lips were shuttering, which looked like he was talking to himself.

“I, uh...I have something to say...” Ming Yang announced, “I did murder the emperor.”

Gasps and whispers spread around the palace. Judge Pao looked at Ming Yang with a puzzled expression on his face.

“Is that so?”

“Y—yes...” Zhao Li looked at Ming Yang, looking very sad.

“My highness, do you agree that Ming Yang actually murdered your father?”

“I, I...” Zhao Li sighed, and he saw Ming Yang secretly nodding at him, “Yes...”

“Will you send him to the dungeon?” Judge Pao asked.

“Uh...Y—yes...”

“As you wish.”

Then, the guards grabbed Ming Yang by the arm.

“Ming Yang shall be beheaded tomorrow.” Judge Pao finished with a knock on the judging table.

The air froze. Judge Pao noticed that Zhao Li’s fist clutched. He saw a corner of an old, rusty paper sticking out of his fist. Touching his long, silky beard, Pao thought, “Would that be the ripped paper from the book?” Judge Pao went closer to Zhao Li.

“Excuse me, may I ask you something about the paper you're holding?”

“Umm...actually, this is confidential. Only the royal family can look at.” Zhao Li muttered.

Judge Pao narrowed his eyes. After a moment, he announced, “Ming Yang, you shall be sent to jail immediately and wait for your death!”

The guards squeezed Ming Yang’s arms and started pulling him towards the underground dungeon.

Suddenly, Zhao Li yelled, “NO! Don’t send Ming Yang to jail! I—I’m the one who murdered my father!”

The palace fell very quiet.

“The truth is...” Zhao Li started, “On the night before the murder case, my father told me to murder him on his bed while he was sleeping because... because... he was not actually my grandfather’s child! He was chosen as an emperor because my grandfather didn’t have any children. My grandfather had to get someone else with the same family name to cover this secret, and the child who got chosen was my father. My father found out this confidential document and tore it off from the book. He instructed me to kill him as soon as possible and burn the paper, so no one would ever know the secret. Ming Yang was just covering for me!”

No one spoke for a moment. While everyone else was standing in shock, Judge Pao remained calm.

“Thank you for your honesty.” Judge Pao broke the silence.

“I’m so sorry... I shouldn’t have lied...” Zhao Li’s tear dripped down his face.

“It’s ok.” Judge Pao said with a warm smile, “Everyone makes mistakes. Even me!”

“Really?”

“Yes, and you're still young. You have a lot to learn. You don’t need to act like a mature adult emperor. You can just be your true self.”

Judge Pao said with a pat on Zhao Li's head, "Your father would be very proud of you."

Zhao Li smiled. The guards released Ming Yang, and he came over to bow at Zhao Li.

"Ming Yang, thank you. Thank you so much!"

"No, no, it's fine. You did the right thing by telling the truth. I'm proud and honored to be serving you."

Now Judge Pao knew he had accomplished his wish. He made the town happier and more cheerful with one less secret lying in the palace. He did it by being himself. Nothing more.

## *Museum Mystery*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, He, Chengxuan Lucas – 9*

Startled, Judge Pao jumped up from his couch and rushed to the door to answer it after he heard a knocking sound on the steel door in his house. As he opened, someone immediately came bulging in. He wore a black jacket and black shorts. He looked as if his head was a waterfall.

The person was panting, “Hi, Judge Pao.” He spoke.

Pao recognized him immediately after he talked. He was the museum guard, Mr. Cheung. Pao knew something was wrong. So, he went to the kitchen and got two cups of tea and put it on a tray, then he took it to the table and then got the mysterious person on a chair.

“So, what’s wrong?” he asked the mysterious person dressed in black.

“I came here to tell you about a very recent case on a missing piece of jewelry in the museum.”

Pao was very surprised he hadn’t read anything in the newspaper. He was excited, since he hadn’t had a single crime for months.

Mr. Cheung told Pao this necklace was the most valuable and precious piece in the whole museum. After Mr. Cheung spent a whole 30 minutes talking and repeating the preciousness of the necklace, Pao took his magnifying glass and walked out with Mr. Cheung to the museum.

When they got there, Judge Pao discovered a trail of footsteps that led to what looked like a secret hatch. As he lifted the entrance to the hatch and walked down the spiral staircase, he walked down the stairs. He kept his guard up because he knew that if he didn’t, someone could ambush him easily. Down the staircase was a table that had a plan mapped out on a piece of parchment.

Judge Pao looked at it and said, “We have been tricked. Look at this map! It is clearly a plan for 3 people.”

He took the parchment with him and started to use a magnifying glass to look at the details. He didn’t want to miss a single piece of evidence. Suddenly, he found a hair on the ground. It seemed to be a short strand of hair.

That night when Pao went to sleep in his big pajamas. He dreamed of the criminal in a bar on Elm Street. Suddenly, Pao jumped up from his bed. He didn’t know what he saw or what happened, but he got the feeling that the bar should be the first place to check for the criminal just like in his dream.

Pao told the police to come with him to the bar on Elm Street. When they got to the bar, the first sound he heard was people’s laughter. But instead of Pao trying to find the criminal, someone came up to Pao. He tried to talk, but Pao pulled him up by his sleeve and the police cuffed his hands together. It was easy to notice Pao with the moon on his forehead. Everyone in the bar stared at him. While they took him to the police car, they put him in the back seat and drove away with the criminal. On the way there, the person muffled and tried to talk but the tape on his mouth was tighter than steel.

Back at the police headquarters, Peter the criminal was immediately cuffed to a chair and was interrogated by Pao. After a lot of questions, Peter admitted that he was a part of the plan. They had a deal to share the money, but instead he got scammed and the other two bailed on him. Peter also mentioned the names of the other two to them while he was talking. Peter wanted to work with Pao.

Now Pao thought of a plan. He wrote to a newspaper that they had found the names of the museum heist and were very close to solving it.

When the two robbers saw it, they were nervous and they thought, “We’re going to get caught anyway. There’s no point in trying to escape.”

So, they called Pao, "I know you're on to me, so how about we make a deal? I give you half of the money and you stop haunting me."

The person on the phone had a weird and mysterious voice. Pao was thinking, "This could be my chance to catch them."

Pao thought that he could ambush them and bring the police with him.

"You have a deal," Pao said, "but no sneaky stuff, ok?"

The mysterious voice said, "Sure, tomorrow at 2pm in the high mountain, so nobody sees us."

"I need to get there before 2pm, and I might need to take a gun in case they scam me." Pao thought.

He took the police with him and drove to the mountain with a large truck, but Pao had planned. He thought that he could say the barrels were filled with alcohol to celebrate, but it was filled with policemen. When he got there, he saw nothing but trees. He tried to find them, but they were nowhere to be found. In the end, he found them behind a large tree.

Without hesitation, Pao said, "Where's the money?"

The two took out a case of money. Pao pretended to be happy and went to open the barrel of "alcohol".

When Pao looked away, the two people whistled suddenly. More robbers came out of the woods, but the police could hear them talking and they cracked the barrels. The police came out of the barrel with weapons, and they outnumbered the criminals. Finally, the police caught every one of them and put them back into the barrels. Pao watched them getting brought away in the truck as the sunset brightened the sky.

# *The Mysterious Bloody Handprint*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, Ho, Yutong Charlotte – 10*

In the dungeon, there was a prisoner called Timothy. He has killed many people before. He has stayed in the dungeon for eight years, but he still didn't know what he did wrong.

A moment later, a little tiptoeing sound came from the gate. Timothy looked uncomfortable and squirmed on the floor. "Hi Bro, you don't have to be scared. I'm Kelvin", whispered a voice with echo sound. "I know you are angry about the one who made you here eight years ago. I can help you", said his brother Kelvin giving a little grin to Timothy. "Please honour your words", said Timothy. His brother gave him a big nod and left the dungeon in a second.

At midnight, Kelvin was staying so vigilant while walking towards John's house. "Where would John going to be?" he mumbled. Just then, he heard some boof-beat sound and quickly hid behind a tall tree. "Am I really going to kill John?", then Kelvin realized that he has already promised his brother Timothy. So, he ran straight to John who was on a white horse, pulled him down, grabbed his axe then chopped his head off. Kelvin didn't feel sorry for John. Then just a moment later, he picked up John's backpack.

"Mother, why father still not yet come back?" asked Johnny. "Just wait for a while, I think he will be back soon.", replied Lisa. An hour later, they saw only his father's white horse coming back. "Mother, why is there only the white horse but father is not here?" asked Johnny as he stared at his mom. Suddenly Johnny's mom screamed "Oh my God! Bloody hand print!" Lisa yelled again, Johnny was shocked and grasped at his mom's hand. "Is that father's blood? You see, this is a four-finger print!", asked Johnny gazing at the bloody hand print.

The next day, Lisa went to Judge Pao's court. On her way, she saw a guy holding an axe walking in the forest, she heard the man mumbled "if someone knows that I killed John, I will be in a big trouble" Lisa was shocked and followed the man to where he was going. As they arrived Kelvin's home, she stopped and waited Kelvin to go in, she peeped into the house, searching for signs of evidence. Lisa saw Kelvin sipping on a cup of tea, the next thing she needed to do was to wait Kelvin to leave his house.

The next day, there was a guard blocking the way of Lisa as she almost arrived Judge Pao's court, "I need to see Judge Pao, and this is an emergency!" Lisa yelled as she was looking at the humongous court. "Come in", Judge Pao said in an imposing way. The guard led Lisa into the court. At first Lisa was feeling really afraid of Judge Pao because of his extra tanned skin. There were many guards surrounding him as well. Lisa knelt down in front of Judge Pao and said, "it is a pleasure to meet you. And I really need your help." She said with a really nervous face. Lisa stared at Judge Pao. "Are you coming here without a reason?", shouted Judge Pao. "My husband promised to have dinner with us but we didn't see him, only his white horse came back, what I saw is a bloody four-finger hand print on the horse."

Lisa screamed and with tears dropping onto the floor. Judge Pao and Lisa gazed at each other for a second. "There is only a bloody hand print and you think that your husband is killed?", squealed Judge Pao. "It's actually not only the hand print, I followed a suspected guy to his house yesterday, and saw an axe with blood stained on it and my husband's backpack in his room!" screamed Lisa with tears. Lisa brought in the axe and the backpack she found in Kelvin's room. She handed them to Judge Pao. Judge Pao held that axe and closed his eyes. Lisa knelt down on the floor waiting for what Judge Pao say. "Show me the way to the man's house", Judge Pao demanded.

They knocked on the door, Kelvin opened the door with a shocked face. Judge Pao ordered, "Show me your hands." Kelvin didn't know what to say and kept quiet. Judge Pao ordered again, "Show me your hands." Kelvin didn't answer and ran away the house quickly. "Go chase him!", screamed Judge Pao to his guards and the guards chased after Kelvin. Lisa followed them. The guards really did catch him and Kelvin was forced to reveal his right hand – only with four fingers, for the middle finger lost a few years ago to an accident.

The guard brought Kelvin to the court and everyone was watching. Kelvin knelt down on floor in front of Judge Pao and Lisa stood next to him. All the evidence were in front of Kelvin, he looked really afraid. “Kelvin, you are charged with murdering John!”, shouted Judge Pao, “there is a blood-stained axe and John’s backpack found at your home, and you matched with the four-finger bloody handprint on John’s horse!”, shouted Judge Pao. Kelvin confessed finally as all the evidence are in front of him. “You are sentenced to death!” yelled Judge Pao. Lisa gulped, “take out the chopping machine!”, shouted Judge Pao.

And the guard took out the dog-head like chopping machine, some guards pushed Kelvin’s head on the machine, and “3, 2, 1 chop!” shouted Judge Pao giving order to them. Then the guards pushed the machine hard and Kelvin’s head was chopped off. Everyone left the court after watching except Lisa, “heartfelt thanks to you, Judge Pao!” said Lisa smiled at Judge Pao, and Judge Pao gave back a smile to her, “You are welcome.”



## *Judge Boas*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, Song, Emily – 9*

One day, Judge Bao has fallen asleep, and he dreamt of something. When Judge Bao opened his eyes, he was surprised! He saw that the place was not the same as the place that he had been living before! He time travelled. But he had no time to think. When he walked on the streets, he saw some people were staring at him. Judge Bao saw a crowd of people reading an announcement—Shall anyone catch the infamous Jack, HKD 100,000 will be awarded.

Judge Bao was happy to see it because he knew that if he caught Jack, he would have the HKD 100,000. First, Judge Bao had to find a picture of Jack. He wrote the details of Jack, such as, blue and green hair, slender had a happy face. Second, he went to the crime scene, he saw Jack's fingerprint. He decided to examine the print. But he found out that they did not match. It was not the same people! Judge Bao said to himself, "How can this fingerprint not be Jack's?" He continued, "I know! Jack is using other people's fingerprint!" But Judge Bao had no evidence so he couldn't not prove it at all.

Meanwhile, he went back to the crime scene and saw the footprint was Jack's! Now, he was sure that it is Jack's. But now he got a big question, and that was, "How to catch Jack?" He decided to ask people if they had seen Jack before. Most of the people said No. And when he went to another house and a little kid said, "I have seen Jack." Judge Bao asked, "where is he?" The little kid said, "I see him at the store at the front." "Thank you", said Judge Bao. Just as Judge Bao went into the store, he saw two Jacks! One must be the one he needed to catch. But just as Judge Bao wanted to catch the Jacks, they ran away! He followed them into an alley, but there was only one Jack. He must have been hiding somewhere. He took Jack to the police office and said, "I find Jack, but there are two Jacks and the other one ran away when I was chasing this Jack and he hid in some place. There must be one that is the one you have to catch." The police said, "Ok, but we need to find the other Jack to see which one is the real one. If all of them are not Jack and you are lying, I will catch you and you will be in the jail."

Judge Bao said, "Ok, but if one of them is the one you need to catch, you need to give me the money." The police said, "Ok, I won't forget." They arrived the alley, Judge Bao ran to find the other Jack. First, he asked the two Jack, "What is your name?" They all replied "Jack." And the police asked, "how old are you?" The first one said, "35." The second said, "35." "How tall are you?" The first one said, "1.71m." The second one said, "1.71m." This would be hard for the police to know who the real Jack was and who was not. And he was thinking about how to find the real Jack. Just then, a boy said, "You can asked Judge Bao, he must know how to find the real Jack!" the police said, "That maybe will be a good idea." First, he found Judge Bao and asked "Do you have an idea to find the real Jack?" Judge Bao said, "Yes, I have a good idea but I don't know if it will work." The police asked, "Ok, I will think it". Judge Bao told him his plan and walked away.

The police thought that Judge Bao's plan was a good one. And the police asked for the people that wanted to be in Judge Bao's plan and a lot of people said Yes. They talked about the plan and agreed. They first found Jack's Mom and demanded, "You need to come with us". And Jack's Mom asked, "Why? Why I need to come with you?" And the police said, "Come with me and you shall know". When Jack's Mom exclaimed, "My son!" They asked "Who is your son?" Jack's Mom said, "The one that have the black dot on is hand is my son". And the police said, "Open your hand". They revealed. One had a black dot while the other had not. Now he knew who the real Jack was. The real Jack wanted to run but the police caught him. And the police found Judge Bao and gave him the money. Just as Judge Bao got the money, he woke up. It was just a dream.

## *Judge Pao and the Big Save*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, Yeung, Tse Ying Hailey – 10*

It is 9:00pm, I was supposed to call my aunt. But when I started to call her, Judge Pao showed up instead. After two seconds, Judge Pao said, “Hailey, I’m calling you because the children from my village have been asked to go to a wonderland but they never came back. I would like you to come to my place to investigate with your powers.” I nodded and asked, “Judge Pao, what happened to my aunt?” Judge Pao said, “I facetimed your aunt and told her that you are busy.”

Judge Pao sent me a storybook and left the call. I quickly went to epic to read this book, but when I started to read the book, I saw a portal in the book and it started to suck me in. After a few twirls in the portal, it dropped me back to Song Dynasty. I looked around the place for a bit. When I was walking, there was a letter on the ground. It said, “come to the office”. I did what the letter says. A few minutes later, I found it. I politely opened the door. Judge Pao greeted me and asked me to sit down. I sat down with a thump, Judge Pao said, “At our mission to stop the kidnapper, you can take this note to drop notes what is the kidnapper did. if you’re done taking notes, you can teleport it back and I will teach the kidnapper a lesson. But remember, you should also free the children and the real wonderland officers.” I nodded. I took the note and teleport away without forgetting to say bye to Judge Pao.

I arrived at the wonderland. The wonderland is like a landfill house. Children are sewing clothes for money. I was a bit terrified of what I saw. The kidnapper saw me writing notes. The kidnapper said: “Hahahaha, you want to save these pesky kids?” I nodded. “If you want to save them, take this!” shouted the kidnapper. He jumped down the roof while unleashing a tackle with his full body. But luckily, I dodged it by teleporting away. The kidnapper hit the ground. It was powerful enough to have smoke around him. It also left a hole on the ground. When the smoke clears, the kidnapper was unconscious. I thought it was the best time to free the kids and the officers of the wonderland.

I started to sneak into the junk landfill, it’s smell really terrible. When I arrived at the sewing room. I freed all the kids and the officers. But when I was about to free the last kid, the kidnapper came with a wooden bat. He hit my back head and I fell unconscious.

Just when kidnapper was about to end my life, the kids pulled the kidnapper’s clothes. A kid yelled, “You are not ending her life.” Another kid shouted, “Yeah, and it is now our time to help her out because she saved us.” The officers cheered the kids. Finally, I woke up and said, “Now, let’s teach him a lesson.” The kids brought a string. I tied the kidnapper up. The officers destroyed the kidnapper’s land. I teleported the note pad away with the kids.

After a few minutes, Judge Pao and his henchman came. Judge Pao said to the kidnapper, “You are arrested for kidnapping kids.” The henchman pulled the kidnapper and locked him up at Judge Pao’s office. Judge Pao said, “Well done Hailey. You can go back to your place, but before you go back, take this. This is a special phone, you can call me with this.” I thanked Judge Pao and waved goodbye. I twirled around the portal for a few minutes. After that, I arrived home and it landed me on the bed. I happily slept in the bed with a smile.

A few months later, Judge Pao called me, “Hailey, please come to my place and go to the wonderland. It is safe now.” I nodded and closed the phone. I opened the book and twirled through the portal. When I went back to Song Dynasty, my aunt waved at me. She was standing right in front of the wonderland! We went in had a lot of fun in there. I liked the remodelled wonderland more than the junky one. Me and my aunt happily played in the wonderland and went back to our place. The kidnapper is forever locked up and I became Judge Pao’s partner. We cracked a few more case together!

# *A Swarming Mystery*

*Stanford American School Hong Kong, Yun, Eunje – 10*

“Knock, knock, knock”

“Who is it?” Judge Pao asked clearly.

From the other side, he heard a voice trembling urgently, “Judge, I am called Farmer Li. I have come from a nearby village to speak to you.”

Judge Pao summoned Farmer Li inside his big hut. Farmer Li was a shrubby man. Farming had tired him out, so he looked older than he was. As Farmer Li stumbled in, Judge Pao sighed and shook his head.

Farmer Li, still trembling, looked up slowly.

“Please speak.” Judge Pao said warmly, pouring jasmine tea into 2 chipped dragon teacups.

The poor farmer lifted his head and stared with awe at the wise detective.

“Our crop... millions of insects have invaded it.” stammered Farmer Li.

Judge Pao placed the warm teacup onto the farmer’s hand and steadied him to sit on his porch. He handed a fruit cake to the farmer.

“Tell me more about it.” Judge Pao said.

Farmer Li looked up to the judge and swallowed, “In a nearby village, there is my farm, and it is the biggest one of all...”

Judge Pao nodded at Farmer Li while sipping his tea.

“As I was saying, the farm was wonderful and everything was in bloom, all the time. Then insects came and ruined it suddenly.” Farmer Li shrank down into the seat, with his small, tired eyes.

Judge Pao nodded, “I understand, but to help you, I must see for myself.”

So that day, at dawn, Judge Pao and Farmer Li set off to the south on a rickety wooden carriage. It was morning when they were almost at their destination.

“Oh, finally!”

“Please be quick!”

“He’s here! He’s here!”

Judge Pao was hurriedly led to the location of the bug invasion as soon as he arrived. It was a disaster. Locusts were ruining the whole plantation as quickly as a wildfire could fly.

Judge Pao took one look at the ruined crops and cringed. While he carefully tiptoed along the field, avoiding the swarm, he stated, “We must do something, but what could have caused something like this?!”

He walked along a bit more and found a certain area that had particularly more bugs crawling rapidly around it. It made him suspicious.

Suddenly, Judge Pao’s eyes spotted something, a rake. “Maybe...” he thought.

Then, Judge Pao said urgently, “Listen up! Let’s rake the soil down now!”

“Are you sure we can find clues by digging the farm?” Farmer Li asked.

"I'm not sure, but we may find something useful..." Pao answered, raking some soil in the corner. Judge Pao and Farmer Li were exhausted from raking the soil and were beginning to lose hope. Judge Pao walked around the farmland, observing the bugs and scraping plants. It was just then when Farmer Li yelled, "I found something!"

Judge Pao ran over to see a large blue bottle of liquid and a straw hat.

"Is this your hat?" Judge Pao asked Farmer Li. Farmer Li shook his head.

It was the next morning when Judge Pao was knocking on doors to find the owner of the hat who was quite likely to be the culprit.

"No..."

"Sorry, no."

"Hmm, it doesn't look familiar to me."

Judge Pao had already knocked 16 doors, and no one had said yes.

At that moment, Judge Pao knocked on a rusty wooden door. A young-looking bald man opened it, arms crossed and with a gigantic pout on his face.

"What do you want?!" He complained, with an even bigger frown.

"Are these yours?" Judge Pao asked, waving the hat in one hand and the blue bottle in the other.

"NO!" He said quickly, without a hint of nervousness.

Judge Pao frowned in thought. Quickly, he jammed the straw hat onto the man. It fit perfectly! This made the man speechless.

"Now, what is this?" Judge Pao asked calmly, waving the blue bottle in front of the person.

"Are you the one that did this?" Judge Pao asked.

Suddenly, the person fell to his knees, begging for forgiveness. Farmer Li ran over and gasped when he saw the man.

"Why? Why would you do this?" Farmer Li said, shaking his head with great force.

"Because..." the man, whose name was Zheng, "that's fair." He said blankly.

"You ruined our plants, and you think it's FAIR?!" Farmer Li shouted, losing his temper.

"If you don't agree, then come." Zheng said bitterly, snatching his hat out of Judge Pao's hand and motioning them roughly to follow him.

Zheng brought Judge Pao and Farmer Li to an abandoned dark field, "This is MY farm."

Farmer Li's jaw dropped, "This was a farm?"

"Yes, this is my farm. This area itself didn't get enough sunlight, because I got the worst land of you all. If my land fails, others' must fail too..." Zheng said angrily.

"You would never listen to my problem. But now, with the bugs, it's all fair now." Zheng cackled.

Judge Pao smiled secretly. All this questioning had helped reveal the truth. But now, after finding the culprit, it was time to save the farm.

Back at the farm, everyone followed Judge Pao's orders and dug out every single blue bottle. Immediately after that, the bug swarm started to repel.

"I knew it had something to do with the blue liquid attracting the bugs!" Judge Pao said quietly to himself.

Later, the culprit was sent to speak to Judge Pao. Even though he did something bad, the man was forgiven. Judge Pao explained that jealousy was natural but doing something like that was not acceptable and would lead to a penalty.

# *The Kidnapped Girl*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Cao, Chloe – 9*

Do you know who Judge Pao is? He is a famous detective and judge from China. He lived long ago and was very good at solving crimes. Even as a child, he was intelligent and solved mysteries.

When he was a child, he was in the same class as Grace and me. We were all friends. One day, I asked Grace for a sleepover at my house because it was Christmas. She was very pleased and said she could come next Friday.

The following Friday was Christmas Eve. We first played a bunch of games, then we had pizza and s'mores for dinner. At last, we felt exhausted, so we decided to go to bed. Grace slept in the guest bedroom, and I slept in my room.

The next morning, when I woke up, I knocked on Grace's door, because it was time for breakfast. But she didn't answer. I was shocked the moment I went in. It was a huge mess, and Grace was not anywhere!

I immediately ran downstairs and told mom what had happened, but she also didn't know what to do. So, I grabbed her phone and called Judge Pao. With no surprise, Judge Pao said, "I'll be here in ten minutes!"

When Judge Pao came, he told me, "I'm pretty sure that someone kidnapped Grace." I agreed. So we started to look for clues in the guest bedroom. When we went in, I saw something odd. Grace's window was open. Judge Pao saw it, too, and he said, "I think that is a very important clue." So he took out his notepad that he carried all the time and wrote it down. Then, we looked over the rest of Grace's room. Unfortunately, there were no other clues.

So I suggested, "Let's go downstairs and look for other clues." But there were also no clues in the living room or dining hall.

Then, Judge Pao thought of this great idea, he said, "Of course! Why haven't we thought about that? You do remember about the window, don't you?"

"Yes," I said.

"The kidnapper must have climbed out of the window! Let's go look in the backyard for footprints!" As soon as he said that, we ran outside into the snow.

At last, I saw it. "This is it!" I exclaimed. "This tree! Look, its branch is sticking from the open window into the guest bedroom! So the kidnapper must have taken Grace and climbed out the window. Then, climbed down the tree and took her somewhere else!" Right away, we started looking for footprints at the bottom of the tree.

Fortunately, we found many footprints, leading us to a restaurant named Happy Kids near my house. The restaurant was closed for a week because of a lot of snow. There were many big wooden boxes in front of the restaurant. Judge Pao and I immediately knew that one of the boxes contained Grace. We eyed each other, then started opening the boxes at the same time.

Finally, I saw Grace in the tenth box that I opened. Her whole body was tied together with string, and her mouth was covered with a cloth, so that she couldn't talk. Judge Pao and I instantly untied her, and I took away the cloth on her mouth. She could finally move and talk!

Then, Grace told us about the whole thing. How the man tied her up, carried her down the tree, put her in the box, and left the box outside Happy Kids.

When we got home, Judge Pao and I still wanted to find out who the kidnapper was. Because then we could tell the police and send him or her to jail. I thought of an idea. I said, "We can look at the CCTV in the guest bedroom!" So we sprinted up the stairs and watched the CCTV replay. It showed that the kidnapper was a man dressed all in black, and because of his torch, we saw his shirt read Happy Kids!

We frantically ran to the police station and told the chief of police about the kidnapping. After he heard about the whole story, he went to Happy Kids and found the man. The kidnapper's name was Nick. Nick planned to hold

Grace for ransom, so he could get money from her wealthy parents, who were famous singers in our city. But he insisted that he had no idea about the kidnapping and was only dressed in black because it was his favorite color. Luckily, Judge Pao stepped up and said we all saw him on the CCTV and recognized him by his hair, face and clothes.

Finally, Nick knew he couldn't cover up his lies anymore, so he came up with another plan. He knelt on both knees and pleaded for Judge Pao to let him go. He even offered to give half of his ransom money to Judge Pao and said, "You will become a very rich person now!" But Judge Pao still wouldn't let him go. That's why Judge Pao was my best friend. He always used the facts we already know and never lets a bad guy go, even if they offer him a lot of money.

Since Judge Pao and I acted fast and solved the mystery, Nick was never able to put his plan into action. Instead, the police sent him immediately to jail. After that, we all went back to the police station. The chief said Judge Pao and I were very clever in finding the clues. We both blushed and said thank you. So the chief gave us each a lollipop to take home. "Yay!" we cheered.

From that day on, Judge Pao and I solved a lot of mysteries together. Now that Judge Pao has grown up, he is a very famous detective in China. I am very happy for him, and still his best friend.

## *Silver Knife*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Cen, Yang Victoria – 11*

The door creaked open. A shadow crept into the room, the only light source being the gleaming knife in his hands. Walking over to the bed, he raised the knife and struck. He laughed as he crammed the body into a leather sack, blood covering the blade and his hand. The knife fell to the ground with a clang in the darkness, with one word engraved: revenge.

Ahhhhhh! Yongnian woke to a distant scream and a pool of blood on the floor.

"Where's Mother?" He asked, barely awake. "Guys, this isn't funny."

"Yongnian, she was murdered!" His sister cried.

Yongnian looked around for her, but when his search failed, he started sweating. Yongnian picked up the silver knife lying on the ground and slipped it into his pocket. His mother had perished at the tip of this blade.

"Yongnian, your mother was killed, and all the murderer left behind was a silver knife. We've captured Chengyan, the criminal. He owns the same knife, and he wasn't on good terms with your mother when she was alive, thus he's arrested." Yongnian's father concluded.

The police had come to his house, and they spent an hour talking to his father. He could also see a man in a yellow and black robe with a long beard—the legendary Judge Pao, known around Bai Ning as the Master of Justice; no criminal could escape his watchful presence. Yongnian recalled what had happened—the pool of red blood; the creaking sound he heard at night—but something was wrong. He could tell from Judge Pao's hard, cold stare; the feeling of the silver knife; and how it was nearly about to cut through his pocket. Chengyan was innocent.

"They have no evidence that it is Chengyan. Anyone can own the same knife as the criminal! Besides, I know Chengyan isn't the type to have killed someone he argued with." Yongnian exclaimed angrily, to himself. He was sure Mother would never allow an innocent man to be sentenced to death, he had to do something.

"I know. However, we have no evidence to prove him innocent. Tell me when you get some evidence, I'll be doing some investigations of my own." Judge Pao replied, calmly.

Yongnian sighed, Judge Pao was right, he'd need to be patient.

Yongnian stared at his mother's bloody corpse. It was midnight, and he'd snuck into the cemetery, dug out his mother's grave, and was now looking for evidence. He tried to find evidence for the entire week but found nothing useful. Tomorrow, they would trial Chengyan, and he would most likely be guilty if Yongnian couldn't find evidence. He saw one deep, bloody scar on his mother's body, but nothing else. That was weird. His mother definitely would've put up a fight, but there was only one scar. Besides, she argued with Chengyan the day before, and they hadn't seen each other since. Mother would have been on high alert for an attack, making it difficult to murder her. The pieces clicked together, and Yongnian left the cemetery, feeling accomplished.

"Anyone has any evidence that Chengyan is innocent?" The judge, Cai Boqin asked. It's your turn now, Yongnian thought to himself. He stood up, legs shaking, and raised his hand. The judge nodded, allowing him to proceed.

Yongnian felt as if everyone was looking at him, but he saw Chengyan's pleading look and began. "There was one deep scar on my mother's body, with no sign of struggle. However, she would've put up a fight if someone tried to murder her. Also, she had an argument with Chengyan just days before the murder, and she would've been on alert for some attack. It wouldn't have been so easy to murder her. The most likely suspect would've been Cai Boqin, as he ate with my mother the night before, and our house keys were missing right after he left."

"How dare you! Would you believe a mere child, or a well respected member of the community? He is lying!" The judge's face went red, as he yelled angrily. The crowd erupted into chatter, everyone believed Boqin. Just when Yongnian thought everything was hopeless, the door crashed open. The crowd gasped, as Judge Pao stormed in, and stood next to Yongnian. Even the jury was shocked, everyone stared at Judge Pao as he spoke.



“Yongnian is right. I’ve asked the knife seller, and he said he sold the exact same knife to Chengyan five years ago and to Boqin the day of the murder. Furthermore, the drug store owner has told me he sold sleeping pills to Boqin on the day of the murder. I have searched Boqin’s house, and we found this.” At this, he held up a familiar key. “Our house keys!” Yongnian’s father shouted. “Capture Boqin!” the crowd shouted. Suddenly, the room went dark. There was a banging sound, as the door opened, a single gunshot, and a scream. Then, everything was silent.

Yongnian took out the silver knife that had committed this massacre, studying it carefully. It was days after the trial, and he couldn’t help thinking that something was still missing. After looking closely, Yongnian saw the word revenge carved onto the knife. He understood everything now. Boqin used to be poor; he just wanted to kill all the rich people because nobody sympathized with him.

Yongnian remembered something. When he was younger, he recalled his mother pointing at a poor man and saying, “He’s a thief for sure; don’t help him, Yongnian.” That man was Boqin. Yongnian hurried to the graveyard. He took out the silver knife and placed it carefully on the icy-cold gravestone. There was a clanging noise, similar to when the silver knife first dropped and started the mystery.

The silver knife rested on the gravestone, waiting for another person to pick it up and ignite another offense. The word: revenge gleamed in the dark graveyard. Revenge.

# Love and Loathing

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Chan, Tin Hang Ethan – 12*

## **Prologue:**

That day, snow blanketed the landscape, the land, once lush and green with plants, was now barren and lifeless, and the harsh winter cold gnawed into the roots of the great tree which stood mightily in the centre of the city square. A man sat in his melancholy shed, as he plotted vengeance for one who he loved so greatly, and to exterminate one who he had a cold and bitter hatred for, as cold and bitter as the winter day itself. Exactly one year later, his wish has been fulfilled .....

## **The Death:**

A metal dagger whizzed through the air, pinning the man's hand to the wall behind him, then another dagger was briskly aimed at the man's other hand, fully pinning him to the ground. "Who are thou?" The man's words tumbled out unevenly, and his lips shivered as he spoke. "Why do thou need to know?" A figure emerged from the shadows, revealing a well-built, robust figure with a fair face. "My name is not to be given to dishonourable fiends and murderers like thee." He did a gleeful jig in the darkness as he launched a dagger at the man, sending him to his demise.

He stepped forward to taunt his victim and to hear his last words. "Death is only the beginning, I will haunt thou to the end of thy life." As the man died and was sent on his way from the comforts of the living realm into the underworld, the figure dipped his finger into the victim's blood and smeared the walls with the words "Li min" in his Kaifung dialect "no one could read it, and I would probably get an alibi" he thought, and briskly left the room.

## **The Arrival of the God of detection:**

Waitress Ye was weary. She woke up at first light for attendance, and had to serve breakfast to their hotel guests "ere first hint of dawn" as her senior said, because their guests are all "light sleepers". She was assigned to the toughest pleaser: Zhao Yan, uncle of the king and magistrate of the Yinchuan, where the Miao tribe established a settlement.

Drowsy and longing for a tranquil corner to sleep and rejuvenate her eyes, she knocked on Zhao Yan's door to realise it was open. "Most peculiar thing, I thought Master Zhao always valued his privacy. "Huh, who knows, the people who come to the Hefei hotel are always peculiar." She pushed open the magistrate's door to reveal the body of the dead magistrate.

As they sent for a detective, a figure stepped from the crowd of audiences. "I will solve this case."

The hotel manager smirked and desperately attempted to hide his prejudice towards peasants in a lower social class than he is. "What is thy name?" He asked politely.

"It is I, Bao Qing Tian, High judge of the royal court of justice."

The manager's disdain turned into admiration, and he frantically sent him to a private room to talk.

### The evidence:

"May I survey the crime scene, good sir, I have many worthy assistants to help me. You are of wonderful service, dear manager."

Bao turned to the manager, and unhesitatingly the manager left.

"What do thou think of him?" Bao turned to his advisor, Gong Sun Ce.

"Almost impossible to be the criminal." The advisor replied to his senior. "As you, good master, can see, there are characters smeared onto the walls of the room, most likely to be in blood, irreversible damage to the wall. How, would a hotel manager destroy the walls of a hotel he paid so dearly to build?"

"It shall be as thou say." Judge Bao made a final search for anything suspicious in the room and noticed the knives that pinned Zhao Yan to the wall.

They were Butcher's knives, something one only with a butcher's license would possess. "Awaken every client, tell them to cut each a strand of pork for dinner, each three inches wide."

Gong Sun Ce obeyed, but he turned to face his master before he went out. "Wouldn't the murderer have already escaped?" Bao shook his head unhesitatingly, and the advisor left. Bao was about to leave when he caught the words smeared in blood in the corner of his eye. It was written not in traditional Chinese, but in his mother tongue. It wrote: *Li Min*.

Moments later, Bao arrived at the kitchen to inspect the investigation being conducted. Before anyone starts, he beckoned his armed and flawlessly trained bodyguard Zhan Chao to be stationed at the entrance. The investigation commenced, one by one, clients were called up to cut the pork three inches wide, and cooks examined them. The fourth client cut the meat into exactly 3 inch pieces, and Bao beckoned him to come with him. "How did thee ....."

Bao felt a searing pain his leg as the client launched a knife at him, and sped to the entrance, only to be stopped by Zhan Chao. The client, seeing no hope, resigned, and followed Bao into his compartment.

### The Confession:

"Tell me," the client said, breaking the silence, "how did thee know it was me?"

"It's simple." Bao explained. "The knives thee used to kill Zhao Yan were Butcher's knives. Only butchers would have them, because of the recent disarmament policy. Therefore, the one with the best knife—work is the killer."

"How do thee know it's not one of the chefs?"

"We have checked all the knives and none are missing." Bao's tone softened to a soothing, charming voice. "Now, why did you kill Zhao Yan?"

"I killed him to avenge....." the client began.

"Yes, Li Min."

"How did thee know?"

"I was from Kaifeng."

“Okay, Now, here it goes. My name is Yan Ming Li Min was my Fiancé. She was loving and charismatic, and I was promised her hand after I saved her and her father’s lives by fending off bandits who were attacking them. It was all so blissful until Zhao Yan came and threatened death to her and her father if she wasn’t promised to him. Desperate to save her daughter, her father agreed. A few days before the wedding, they were both killed by Zhao Yan, who left in pursuit of another maiden.

Later, my village doctor diagnosed me with blood poisoning, and there were reports saying Zhao Yan snuck into my room the day he left. I had two years to live. I killed Zhao Yan to avenge Li Min, her father and myself. After all the sins he had committed, isn’t he the one who deserved being punished?”

Bao hesitated before replying. “God has his sympathies for thee. I shall present the case to the royal court, and secure a verdict for you, and I would have the honor to retire from the case.....”

# *Blood Blossom*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Huang, Qinlan – 11*

"Run..."

A feeble voice alarmed Xi Wo. A high-pitched scream broke the silence in the abandoned mineshaft. Footsteps echoed in the dim tunnels and increased rapidly. Xi Wo broke into a sprint, her heart pounding aggressively against her chest. As she progressed further and deeper into the unknown, the footsteps faded away. Was she safe? She stopped her footsteps and checked her surroundings. Just as she sat down against a rusty minecart. "Thud!" It was too late...

"The victim died at exactly 4:44 pm in the abandoned mineshaft. There were no traces of anyone, other than the victim inside the mineshaft." Wu Long, an Officer, reported while smoking a cigarette to Judge Bao. "This was the same clue the murderer left when killing his family 45 years ago." He pondered and stared at the empty hole dug in the dirt ceiling, a desk fell from this hole, but no one had been in the mineshaft other than herself.

"Detective! I think you should take a look at this..." Officer Wu interrupted his thoughts, as he slowly approached the wall three meters away, he saw a blood-drawn blossom. Judge Bao was deep in thought when he noticed a glimmering ore in a half-opened drawer on the desk. He picked up the ore and put it in a bag for further investigation.

After Judge Bao returned to his office, he took the glimmering ore from the sealed bag. It looked similar to metal, yet so different. The ore had a silver surface and soft texture, which most metals did not have. After a few hours of investigating, Judge Bao determined it was a rare type of metal — Erbium. This was a metal found in the inner-Mongolian mines of China. But they were currently in Sichuan, far away from Mongolia. So the only possibility of this ore being here is that an inner Mongolian must have brought it in from inner Mongolia.

Judge Bao immediately went with Officer Wu to knock on Xiao Li's door. Mr. Li seemed to calm however when Officer Wu introduced why they came there, Mr. Li was distressed.

Mr. Li stuttered as he opened the door wider to the officer's request. As Judge Bao and Officer Wu stepped into the house, they started investigating. But, they found no evidence whatsoever. Officer Wu, while smoking a cigarette, gave the news to Mr. Li. He sighed in relief and rolled up his sleeves. Judge Bao then noticed a blood blossom tattoo on Mr. Li's right wrist. Officer Wu had discovered this too, then forcefully dragged Mr. Li, into the police car.

The next morning, Officer Wu called in sick that day, so Judge Bao was going to transfer Mr. Li to Iron Heights prison himself. But there was this feeling inside of him. Telling him this was not the end. While Judge Bao was strolling through the police station, he noticed a rusty white van with a blood blossom drawn on it in a grim alleyway nearby. It was the same drawing from the mineshaft. He sprinted and took a glance at the car window. Police uniform, green eyes, black luscious hair, it was Officer Wu! Judge Bao was in awe. The person they have been looking for was his partner this whole time? The van stopped, they knew he was compromised.

"Hello.." The maniacal killer beamed and at his arrival.

"Remember me?" Demented snickering filled the air. Judge Bao stood there frozen. He remembered that night clear as water. That night he was just 7 years old. The dark sky mourned as gusts of wind blew into his window. Young Judge Bao remembered what his father said to him. "No matter what happens stay inside." He had touched the cold brass doorknob but resisted the urge to open it. Ignoring the shrieks and cries for help outside, he squeezed his eyes shut, wishing it all to end. When it did, Young Bao rolled out of his hiding spot. He opened the door to see a bloody massacre. It was smeared all over the checked wallpaper as a blood blossom. Young Bao recognized the corpses' faces. He saw his mother and father lying dead in the living room. A bloody silver knife. Young Bao was traumatized. As police sirens entered his ear in the distance, He did not want to face reality. At least not yet. So he ran away until a kind couple adopted him and made him the way he was now.

Judge Bao stood there; he was still tasting the little bits of sorrow in his memories. The killer hurled shards of glass, awakening Judge Bao from his nostalgic moment and directly blinding him. He screamed in agony, while blood splattered onto the nearby wall. Darkness engulfed the world surrounding Judge Bao. He was covered in a cold sweat as he crawled up cautiously, shivering. Judge Bao rubbed his head and eyes, but he was blind. He couldn't see. He was lost.

The deranged serial killer clutched his silver dagger made out of erbium. Although Judge Bao could still move, he could not see. Judge Bao was panicking. The blade was inching closer and closer by the second. Judge Bao reached his nose out to smell. "sniff~sniff~". Cigarettes. The murderer. He reached into the concrete floor for a weapon, but there were only shards of broken glass. Judge Bao snatched the glass from the concrete floor and thrust with all his might. "Thud!" the hysterical assassin dropped to the ground unconscious.

Soon after, his eyesight returned to normal vision. Judge Bao ventured inside the van. Inside reeked of rotten flesh, where there lay a navy blue body bag. He unzipped the bag. It was his own mutilated corpse! Even Judge Bao himself could not believe it. He looks up to see the vicious homicidal maniac leering evilly at him.

Judge Bao realizes that the psychotic slayer murdered him along with his family and that his ghost is now becoming aware of the horrifying reality.

# *Crystal Deception*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Hui, Jay Carson – 12*

“You can never outrun karma.”

As he muttered his last words, a jaded dagger cruised through the air with quick succession, releasing an uncanny cry that engulfed the crimson warehouse. The sun shone on what once was a lush city square, full of life with a blossoming plum tree which towered over a simplistic yet rustic village. Now a barren wasteland ravaged by war and the elements, the same plum tree still bloomed as a beacon of hope and peace.

“Clickety clack,” the sound of horses trotting through the town roads hung in the air. Bystanders gazed in disgust at the affluent entourage which entered the once tranquil village. Inside the carriages sat General Han and his five most prominent and courageous soldiers, all who felt a sense of sympathy for the decimated village. The entourage rode past countless sombre scenes, the most wistful being young men playing a melancholy tune on the flute.

“We’re here,” the driver croaked. As the retinue stepped out of their carriages, unbeknownst to them, they were playing right into his hand.

“Stand at attention!” screamed General Han whilst his five soldiers fell into formation. “All of you have been selected in accordance with your tremendous courage and intuition you have shown on the battlefield. Now you shall be rewarded.”

General Han marched up to the formation with five Jaded daggers in his hand, handing out the pristine blades to the awed soldiers, all of which had a striking resemblance to Han’s own dagger which he carried in his belt. “Henceforth, you all shall be known as the five brothers!”

The next day, the soldiers woke up to an astonishing surprise; rumours were spreading around the barracks that the renowned Judge Pao was coming to visit the brothers. Judge Pao was a crusading detective with a passion to fight crime like no other. The five brothers were especially ecstatic and thought of him as an idol. Despite this, General Han had a concerned face which he quickly masqueraded with a wry smile.

As he finished touring the barracks, a member of Judge Pao's attache, Jax Xi, approached him with a frightening look of distress. "We've had another victim, Judge. He was murdered in the woods outside of the barracks. He was a prominent soldier, a rival of this unit, General Kuo. The only connection between the two victims was that they both had multiple missing limbs and they shared the same sister. Their sister died in the bombing of Hong Kong," he whispered.

Judge Pao retorted, "Anyone missing from these barracks yesterday?"

Jax quickly responded, "Only the five brothers."

Just hours after the visit, Judge Pao and General Han gathered the five brothers for interrogation. "Where were you yesterday night during the murder of General Kuo?" Judge Pao queried in a stern voice.

The first and second brother's alibi was that they were in the mess hall. At least ten of the catering staff there supported this claim. The third and fourth brothers claimed they were both training platoons of judicial forces, this was also confirmed by the regiment's platoon leaders. The fifth brother claimed he was hunting game in the woods with General Han. He also stated that the General disappeared for an hour and then suddenly reappeared back at the base when he returned from his trip.

"Outrageous! I never went hunting with you!" General Han adamantly denied.

Throughout the conversation, Judge Pao noticed that the fifth brother's eyes kept darting from the direction of the woods to the direction of his room.

"Thank you for your cooperation, you are all free to go." Judge Pao hurriedly dismissed them. He then motioned to a squad of soldiers standing nearby to bring a UV light and follow him. As the party arrived in the fifth brother's room, they started scanning the room for any sign of dried blood. Soon enough, they found a trail of blood from the door leading into the closet. Inside the closet was a dismembered hand.

"Creak....." The door flung open, and the fifth brother charged in, gun cocked.

"You had me startled for a moment, I thought there was an intruder," said the fifth brother in a worried tone. His eyes slowly started to wander to the opened closet and gasped.

"Drop your weapon! In the name of the Chinese government, you are under arrest for the murder of Xu Lee and General Kuo, soldiers, detain him!" Judge Pao cried.

As the soldiers exited the barracks with a cuffed fifth brother in hand, many soldiers looked on in disgust. "Do not worry, you will have a fair trial." uttered Judge Pao sarcastically.

Three days later, the trial commenced. General Han began by grilling the defendant. "Was there any motive for your actions? Why would you slaughter and torture innocent people, the very citizens we sworn to protect?" Despite this, the fifth brother stood quiet for the duration of the trial. His ardent eyes only met General Han's with a murderous gaze.

"Very well then, has the jury reached a verdict?" Judge Pao asserted.

"We have your honour," replied the jury.

"With murder in the first degree, you are sentenced to execution via guillotine, effective immediately," the judge stated.

"Serves you right, filthy traitor, you're getting what you deserve after using the very knife I gave you to murder. " General Han snickered.

Judge Pao let out a gasp of epiphany, "let go of the fifth brother this instant," he declared, "General Han, how would you know that the victim died of knife wounds, when we never told the court the cause of death?" At this point, General Han knew that the gig was up.

Simultaneously, two soldiers barged into the room, showing the gory scene of many human body parts stitched together, creating a woman with striking resemblance to the victims' sister.

"At first I was madly in love with Ju Kuo, but as time went on, she started seeing me for who I was, a psychotic monster. When she died during the bombings of Hong Kong, I couldn't live without her, it drove me mad. I started mindlessly killing, taking body parts from each of my victims, sewing it up so I would never have to live without Ju ever again." the General confessed.

"Execute him!" The judge exclaimed.

As General Han was brought to the guillotine, he looked into the eyes of the victim's loved ones one last time.

"Any last words," croaked the executioner.

"Out of the eight billion hearts on earth, I fell for the one that didn't beat for me."

And with a thwack, it was all over.



# *Time Travel Adventure*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Hui, Kaylee – 11*

Judge Pao was having a very good day. He had handled three cases already, and it wasn't even lunchtime yet. He solved a case of someone robbing a baby, a case of shoes in a shoe shop going missing, and finally, he unravelled the mystery of who stole his favourite hat, which turned out to be found in the cabinet.

965 years later, Katie Huang was also having a good day too. But she didn't have much appetite, so she went to the supermarket and got an apple. Not just any apple, it was a magical apple! Meanwhile, 965 years earlier, Judge Pao also had a magical apple in hand... Crunch! His apple was crunchy and juicy! He smiled with pleasure and he thoughtfully munched away. Crunch! Katie's apple was crunchy and juicy! Katie grinned with pleasure and she thoughtfully munched away. Judge Pao closed his eyes in satisfaction and chewed some more. When he opened them, he didn't know where he was! He also saw a 12-year-old girl dressed very strangely in front of him.

That's when Judge Pao found himself in modern-day Hong Kong.

Judge Pao looked around, his surroundings looked so questionable and fascinating. He gave the girl another blank stare, she frowned, then finally said " Who are you? Why do you look so weird?"

Judge Pao's face showed a perplexed expression, he replied, "Who are YOU? Where am I? I've always dressed like this." Judge Pao turned to leave and suddenly saw something on the wall like a magical window. He walked up to it and thought: This is way too bright! Let's close this odd-looking window! He reached out to the side of the "window" and slapped it hard, attempting to close the "blinds."

Katie ran over and shook her head back and forth, she grabbed Judge Pao and asked "Uhm, why are you slapping the TV screen?"

Instead of answering, Judge Pao asked a different question, "What's a TV? Why won't this window close?"

Suddenly, the TV broadcaster said "BREAKING NEWS, the Mona Lisa, on loan from the Louvre has been stolen from the Hong Kong Palace Museum. If the painting has been discovered, please contact the number 5381 1182."

Judge Pao's eyes lit up, he turned to Katie and squealed, "WOW! A new case for me to solve!"

Katie looked unamused. "Are you crazy?! How could a man that doesn't know what a TV is solve this complicated case?!"

Judge Pao smiled, "Follow me and you'll find out."

Reluctantly, Katie hailed a taxi and they both went off to the Palace Museum.

In the Palace Museum, there were ancient pots everywhere, there were ones that looked like marbles, ones that looked like seesaws, and even ones that looked like peppermint candy! Judge Pao walked over to the security guard and asked, "Where is the Moona Lisa?"

The guard frowned, then started fidgeting with his pants. "Y-You m-m-mean the Moona, shoot, Mona Lisa? Yeah, the Mona Lisa..."

Judge Pao chuckled. "Right, the Mona Lisa."

Then both Katie and Judge Pao followed the guard to the Mona Lisa glass display, Judge Pao leaned forward and stared at the blank wall. Then he finally spoke: "Ah I see. The thief broke the glass and swiped the picture." Katie glanced

over to the security guard's arm, there were a few glass pieces on it! She tapped Judge Pao's shoulder lightly, and whispered, "Look! Is he the thief?"

Judge Pao shook his head. "I don't think we should jump to conclusions."

When Judge Pao picked up the pieces of glass, the guard saw him and jumped in fear. He eyed Judge Pao nervously and ran away. As he ran, something fell off his suit. Katie picked it up. It was a printed logo of the Palace Museum! She immediately ran to Judge Pao and reported her peculiar findings.

Judge Pao studied the clues and recalled earlier how the guard was fidgeting with his pants and stammering. Then, it came to him. He nodded and told Katie, "We have everything we need to solve this mystery. The main clue is the printed symbol, the guard must be in disguise. If he was truly a guard of this museum, he would have a proper uniform with badges sewn on, not stuck on."

Katie called the police. Meanwhile, Judge Pao pursued the suspicious security guard and followed him to an underground tunnel. He heard a person growl, "Get ready to ship the Mona Lisa!" Judge Pao peeked through the door and saw the same guard ready to run away, the Mona Lisa in his hands. Judge Pao sped over and snatched the painting at the speed of light. He pinned the guard to the ground. He then heard footsteps approaching him; suddenly he was surrounded by a gang of criminals ready to pounce.

Just then, a shrill voice shouted, "STOP!" Everyone whipped their heads around and were stunned to see Katie and dozens of police. Within seconds, the police grabbed all the thieves and put them in handcuffs. Katie was so shocked that Judge Pao had managed to retrieve the Mona Lisa that she leaped and jumped in excitement!

Judge Pao looked at her, then he looked back at the painting of the beautiful Mona Lisa. He gazed into her charming hazel eyes and sighed, "So this is what the Mona Lisa looks like..." He smiled and felt a patch of dizziness, so he closed his eyes.

As he opened his eyes, he felt like he was in a very familiar environment. He looked around and saw his favourite hat laid on his desk with lots of old scrolls and papers stacked on the side of it. He realized he was back in his own home! But that didn't seem to matter much now, what mattered was that he had made a new friend, Katie, as well as found the missing Mona Lisa. He chuckled to himself, "Well, that's another case solved!"

# *The Stolen Burner*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Lu, Qinqi Kiki – 11*

The palace hall resonated with shrill hisses from the Three–Gold–Snakes as their heads fell to the ground. The palace Crafter WuYe was performing the making of the burial object for emperor Zhen Zong’s funeral. WuYe was the most skilled Crafter in Song dynasty and he could perform crafts better than anyone. Today, WuYe was making the burial object dragon burner with the blood of the Three–Gold–Snakes.

The Three–Gold–Snakes, Ze, He and Le, were believed to have spirituality. Emperor Zhen Zhong had wanted the blood of the three snakes to be in his burial object.

Mist swirled into the air from the boiling hot pot of liquid gold. Slowly, WuYe dripped the snake blood into the melted gold. At last, the burial object ‘Jade Cloud and Dragon Burner’ was finished. Tomorrow, it will be presented at the grand ceremony of Zhen Zong’s funeral and go into the grave along with the emperor’s coffin.

No one thought that anything would go wrong until the morning of the funeral ceremony. The ‘Jade Cloud and Dragon Burner’ went missing from the royal treasury. Everyone was awoken in the early morning and there was a frantic search. Without it, the funeral wouldn't happen!

A worried Zhang Heng ran to alarm the palace detective, Pao QingTian, and soon after, Judge Pao had come to the scene. After investigations, it was suspected that a maid, MeiYi, had stolen it. She was immediately sent to the palace court.

With every whip of the lash, MeiYi pleaded again and again. Every whip left a scar on her back and she knew that as a palace maid, she was powerless, powerless like an ant under an elephant hoof.

“Please, I swear with my soul that it wasn’t me. I never had the Dragon Burner with me.” She wailed.

“Enough! I declare the execution of MeiYi to be held in the afternoon.” Bellowed Judge Pao.

However, one young princess witnessing the scene, ZiYu, was the most tense person of all. She calculated the time in her head, it was already 11 in the morning! A wave of anger and fear washed over her.

*This is unbelievable, how could Judge Pao believe it was her?* She thought to herself.

She was the only person to fully witness the scene of the dragon Burner being stolen. She had seen the process of how WuYe, the maker of the dragon burner, had made the poor maid MeiYi go into the royal treasury, then stole the Dragon Burner for himself through an open window. However, this was the problem, no one would believe her when she told the scene. After all, Crafter Wu was the most trusted palace craftsman. She had to find a way to find the Dragon Burner before execution, and prove to everyone that Crafter Wu was the real thief.

But there is a big problem, how? She couldn’t solve the case by herself, but with the help of others, it might just seem like a possibility! ZiYu decided to meet the goldsmith, Feng.

She told Feng all about her witnesses.

“Well, I see a possible way to solve the case,” Feng said with excitement.

ZiYu listened eagerly.

“In one way or another, Crafter Wu must touch the dragon Burner to steal it. If I’m not mistaken, I was the nearest person to him while he was putting the blood of the Three Golden Snakes into the boiling gold. I saw snake blood on his left thumb. Snake blood will stick and leave a permanent mark on gold once cooled. If he only touched the dragon burner while making it, the blood would still be removable. However, if he touched gold after it cools down, which is about a few hours later during yesterday night, the blood would leave an orange stain permanently. Not only would there be an orange stain on the dragon burner, his left thumb will also have gold dust on it since gold dust sticks to blood. Gold dust would only be removable at least three days later,” Feng explained with detail.

“You could tell this to judge Pao!” exclaimed ZiYu.

Feng and ZiYu rushed to Judge Pao and told him Feng’s idea.

“Worth trying,” said Judge Pao.

Immediately, everyone was summoned to the palace hall.

“Stand in a line and show your left thumbs!” Judge Pao gave out his orders.

ZiYu stood beside Judge Pao and looked tensely at Crafter Wu.

Earlier, she had already told the palace guards instructions on what to do when Crafter Wu was found guilty. She had told the guards to tie him in ropes and give him whips.

Not sure of what was going on, everybody showed their left thumbs, confused. Only Crafter Wu refused to do so. His face was pale and he was trembling terribly.

“What about Wu?” said Feng with bravery in his tone of voice.

Everyone had their eyes on crafter Wu and a second later, he started to sprint towards the open palace doors. The guards were ready and caught him just outside the steps.

“Show your thumb!” said the tallest guards.

“For a chance to live!” added the other guards.

Wearily, crafter Wu showed his gold-dust covered left thumb.

There were shrieks and gasps of disbelief. He was the most trusted crafter in the palace and the emperor’s favourite. There was plain disgust on everyone’s face.

“I declare you to hand over the dragon burner in this instant and MeiYi will be spared from the execution this afternoon. ” said Judge Pao calmly.

The tears of anger in Mei Yi’s eyes turned into tears of joy.

That afternoon, the ‘Jade Cloud and Dragon burner’ returned and the funeral happened as planned. Crafter Wu never appeared at the funeral. The next morning, he was missing from his chamber. No one knew where he went but all knew why.

Good actions receive good outcomes in return, and evil actions receive evil outcomes in return. The good is always rewarded and the bad is always punished.

# *An Underworld Hero*

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Sun, Brandon – 8*

Heroes do something extraordinary that makes the world see them in an entirely different light. I respect them because they always fight against evil, proudly follow a virtuous path, and can clearly separate right from wrong. However, not all heroes wear capes! My worthy protagonist who captures this attitude is Judge Pao, better known as Bao Zheng, an intelligent Chinese crime fighter who existed over a millennium ago during the Northern Song Dynasty. He was a gifted student from a young age, and as he rose up in the ranks, people respected him for his commitment to justice and always standing up for his beliefs. To make his legacy even more interesting, he did not only operate during the day! His instincts were so powerful that he also became an underground deity with the ability to judge wrongdoers floating hopelessly in purgatory.

Bao Zheng was born with a cocky attitude although used his wisdom for good, and believed that anybody could make mistakes, as long as they were willing to improve their faults and push forward from the lesson learned. As a judge, he constantly encountered criminals and misfits who felt remorse for their previous actions. After hearing their story, he gave them good advice and told them that anybody could become a better human by accepting their flaws, asking for forgiveness, and becoming more aware in the future to avoid any unnecessary crimes. His reason for the triumph of good over evil came from his pure intuition, and he was forced to follow the right path, or else he would feel physically sick to his stomach. If he did not listen to his gut feeling, it would be impossible to return to his normal self. This was the driving force behind his actions and it led him towards great success!

His iconic reputation became well known all over the globe, and soon, Hades, the Lord of the Afterlife, decided that Bao Zheng deserved a more important position that engaged with the supernatural world. One night fell, Bao Zheng descended into darkness and became the official guardian for the hellish Afterlife. This was not a place for weak minded people, and he earned the right to judge criminals purely because of his bravery and responsibility. Hades gifted him with two important companions during his nightshift. The first was Cyberus, a loyal watchdog with a blue glow emitting from his eyes who could deliver a devastating bite. He became Bao's shadow, monitoring every movement and never leaving his side, not even for a moment. Secondly, a tree branch infused with magic called Cxyculus helped Bao analyze the underworld text for every new case, with the mythical power to send souls straight to Heaven or Hell. Both Cyberus and Cxyculus were crucial pillars towards his duty to judge the Afterlife with a final verdict.

The most genuine act of Bao Zheng's empathy was shown during the case of Benjamin Yufu, a poor man who had died in an unfortunate car crash. Deep down in the underworld at the moment of this man's Judgment Day, Bao noticed something strange about Cxyculus when the mysterious figure knelt before them. Normally, the branch would create a visual hologram which showed a full background study about the man's life. To Bao's surprise, Cxyculus did not react to the text and had no background about the man, so his study of good and bad deeds did not appear as usual, without a clear decision on where Benjamin would end up. Bao then took it upon himself to personally go back in time to investigate and question Benjamin's friends and relatives. He had to count all of Benjamin's good and bad deeds in the past; if he had completed over seventeen good deeds in his lifetime, then he would be sent to Heaven. However, if he had sinned over seventeen bad deeds, then he would immediately go straight to Hell.

As he set forth on this difficult task during a dark and cold November, Bao entered the portal that took him back in time with Cyberus and Cxyculus. Disguised as an old man with crutches, he slyly questioned the Yufu family on their crumbling balcony. Bao asked: What has Benjamin done as a good person? He learned that at the tender age of four, Benjamin already insisted on carrying his mother's handbag for her. And then just two months later, he rushed towards people who had fallen down to help them stand up again. These wonderful stories of his acts of kindness continued, as Bao counted them effortlessly. Aged fourteen, Benjamin saved his junior troop at Scout Camp from a grizzly bear attack during a camping trip in the wild. Two days before his unfortunate demise at age twenty-eight, he had made sandwiches for the most impoverished homeless people on the streets. By this point, Bao had reached eighteen deeds and Benjamin's verdict was obvious – he had earned the right of an angel in Heaven. Most judges would never have taken the time to dig deeper into the truth, but Bao's honesty and determination set him apart from the rest.

Clearly, Bao Zheng was an admirable historical figure who we can all look up to as an ancient Chinese hero. We can keep asking the question of what drove him to practice goodness throughout his life, and how we can apply this wisdom to our own daily decisions. He never assigned his work to others and made it his duty to improve his skills and insight as a high-powered judge. He felt pride in his position and never let his guard down so that others could not take advantage of him. Personally, in reminiscing about Bao's achievements, I feel compelled to follow the same values in my own lifetime. I hope that you, the reader, feel this way too.

## *Judged for Disconsolate*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Cheng, Ashley – 10*

Judge Pao, a Chinese legend, was a man for no match.

You may seek a question, “Legends are fake, so there is no Judge Pao.”

But that isn’t the question you should ask, you shouldn’t be asking any questions at all! What you really should know is, Judge Pao isn’t a legend, he existed, he really did.

Yes, yes. There were many detectives that lived their lives, but Judge Pao is different. He is a figure with a passionate heart to fight crime and clean up the land for others.

Judge Pao lived more than a millennium before any of the others above rang the bell worldwide, there were books and movies inspired by such an amazing living legend, his bell rang the most.

This legend lived, like I said. His fame spread all over the land, the world. But his fame also spread when he was alive, with people saying that he shared justice before the sun sets.

But when the moon brightly rises above our heads, he becomes the immortal Yama of the Department of Hell. Known as “the Infernal Bureaucracy” and works as a supernatural judge sorting the incidents of the Afterlives.

“Where did you last see your bag, ma’am?” Pao asked, as he patiently waited for her answer.

“B—before the figure s—stole it...” She shattered, her arms moving up and down, tears beginning to form in the corner of her sapphire eyes.

“I see...” Pao lightly stroked his chin, “I’ll get it for you by tomorrow, ma’am.” He insisted.

“Really?” Her eyes glowed, tears swallowed back inside, he nodded as she immediately bowed. Pao chuckled, waving his hand as a signal for her to be not so formal.

She looked up, “Thank you, I will be waiting.” She answered.

Pao’s laughter slowly floated away as he turned around. He looked down on his watch, carved by wood with Lady herself, with romanian numbers on it. ‘IV’ displayed next to the yellow moon. He smiled, thinking about his wife, who passed away a day after she finished making this lovely watch, for Judge Pao.

“Alrighty.” He said as he setted off to find the missing bag. He looked almost everywhere until dusk came in the sky. No sign of the bag. He has never found something for this long, it took him 4 hours.

“Tsk, where is it?” He was frustrated, why? He was always so perfect, which is why he is so moody today.

He took a breath as the sun went down, his mind wandered somewhere else, and there was only one place he could think of, the Department of Hell.

*‘Mister Haru died because of a car crash...’*

*‘Miss Jin Ming’s death caused a murderer...’*

*‘Mister Nikolai died because of cancer...’*

*'Mister Kim Jung-Hoon died because of sadness? [not confirmed]'*

Pao furrowed his brow, he looked through the stack of papers given by his boss. Being a Yama is hard, looking through pieces of paper every night is monotonous.

Until he stopped, his eyes travelled down to *her* face.

*'Miss Pao Yue Ke died because of'—...'*

Instantly, a single tear rolled down his cheek as he remembered his wife, singing a song, cooking for him and their children, her laughter.

He shook his head as he looked outside the window, the sun rising up. 'Something isn't right... What is it... Wait—Madam's bag!' He hit his fist into his palm as he instantly got up, and vanished into thin air.

Pao ran and ran, he knew where the bag was, precisely where it was placed. He found a box, that said “包的榮耀” Or “Pao's Glory”. There it was, where the bag was hidden.

Why, why didn't he know?

*Why didn't he know the bag was there the whole time?*

*Why would Lady, herself hide it there?*

*Is there some sort of connection between the Lady and the woman?*

Queries kept appearing inside Pao's head, he took this and that all out of the gigantic rose box, until his eyes caught a black bag no bigger than his hand.

He grabbed the bag, what was inside isn't necessary now, he needs to give it back to the woman.

“This is your bag, I suppose?” He questioned, making sure he got the right bag.

The woman gasped, and carefully took the bag out of Pao's hands.

“May I?” She asked.

“Of course, it's yours after all.” He answered.

She put the bag to her forehead as she mumbled something. Then, she opened the tiny bag, her sapphire eyes glowed, tears flowing already flowing down her cheeks. She covered her mouth with a handkerchief, and coughed.

“Ma'am? Are you alright?” He asked with a worried tone, she gestured her hands. “May I ask what your name is?” He asked once again, this time in a polite voice.

“Pao Yue Ke.”

*How did he not remember his own wife?*

Shocked, Pao dropped on the floor, “W—what?” He stuttered, she smiled, “*Judge Pao*, I'm still alive, you know.” She chuckled, so sweet like honey.



And what was inside the bag? A watch, made by Lady herself, and for herself too. In Romanian numbers, the hand displayed 'XI', an orange sun carved by wood; this masterpiece was finished on the same day as her birthday.

Now, what was interesting about him is his connection with Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a bustling place full of chatter, laughter and wondrous people. Judge Pao's descent has been carefully recorded, and the Pao family was famous. Known for the elder Sir Y.K. Pao, or just Judge Pao.

Hong Kong was home and heart to his family, especially his grandchildren, who regularly wins awards in global indexes for having a world-class legal system and one of the planet's best bribery-fighting actions.

Winning awards and being famous is one thing you could always change, but being honest, caring and truthful is a thing you cannot change inside your heart.

And of course, Judge Pao would be proud of his family, holding such power, such power in all their hearts to come.

# *The Crisis of Fan Qie Jiang*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Cheng, Henry – 10*

“My son disappeared mysteriously,” said an old woman mournfully. “Yesterday, he went into the forest for a bear hunt and did not come back.”

“My husband went into the woods with some friends to go fishing,” cried a young wife whose eyes were red and hair disheveled, “but, no one came back.”

Sighing heavily, the provincial Governor, Fan Qie Jiang, in the courtroom continued to play chess with his friends. “Tell the irksome people to leave and say that we will start an investigation once everyone goes back to their home”, he told his servant, who looked skeptical as he knew his master too well; his master would just turn a blind eye to the complaints.

Two days later, an overwhelming number of people occupied the courtroom with groans from all sides because another six people had left no trace. One of them was an old, sagacious teacher, three of them were teenagers and the remaining two were physically strong young men. The missing people’s visibly distraught families were shouting and urging the official to investigate at once.

Annoyed by the crowds, Fan Qie Jiang came out and announced that a team of investigators went into the woods, and found tracks shaped like an arrowhead on the ground. “I suspect that a vicious creature hiding in the forest might have taken away the people for dinner.” Instantly, people shrieked with fear. Unfortunately for the official, his smirk gave it away because in the crowd stood the bright, old Pao, who was suspicious of the look and decided to mount a case against the official secretly.

First, he decided to visit his friend Fu Yang Zhi. “I heard internally that the governor had recently taken a bribe of one hundred kilograms of pure gold,” whispered Fu Yang Zhi, who was risking his life for his steadfast and just friend. “Unfortunately, I couldn’t find out the person, or group, behind this bribery.” After gathering all the details his dauntless friend said, Pao decided to spy on activities in the forest alone.

At midnight, he slyly climbed up a tree to observe in the dark. He had prepared a rope trap to capture anyone suspicious. He waited for hours but no one, not even a stray dog, was in sight. As soon as dawn came, some crunching sounded like a group of animals walking in his direction broke the silence. Worrying that what Fan Qie Jiang said about the wild creature was real, his heart nearly parachuted out of his chest. Then, there were some voices in human language!

“The grand lady and her family live in the most lucrative place on the earth!” chuckled one with a red patch covering his left eye. “I wonder whether that palace at the outskirts of this village raised the green-eyed monster of the emperor! ”

“Of course!” shouted the man with a saber that had a jade-made handle with a precious gem-encrusted on it.

“Can’t you guys be quiet? We may cause attention to us!” cried the person with a cape made of tiger fur.

The judge smiled to himself, thinking that they had already caught the attention of someone. He set up the trap, and as soon as the trio walked onto the trap.....THwarp! They were captured. Pao dragged the criminals to his interrogation room, which was a dark room illuminated only by a candle, with four isolated wooden chairs and one table.

As soon as the captives woke up from unconsciousness, the interrogation by Judge Pao began.

“You have been found in the forest armed,” Pao said slowly. “What do you think you were doing?”

“We were searching for the creature!” cried the trio at the same time.

“You sure?” asked Pao, noticing the markings and the sophisticated inscription on the blade of their lances. “You brought a weapon that costs a fortune to kill a wild animal. Why don’t you just hire someone to do it for you?” As he was talking, he handed them each a cup of tea which the trio sipped suspiciously.

"Maybe your master hired you to help the village by killing the monster.", Pao continued, slowly as if he was drinking half a pint of beer.

"We are honest," muttered the leader, shuffling his feet. The nervous fidgeting was noticed by Judge Pao who is experienced in detecting deception. He unsheathed the sword, which caused the trio to flinch, and inspected the blade: there were cherry red blood stains on it.

"How many creatures have you guys killed?" Pao questioned.

"We didn't kill—OW!" said the person with the tiger cape before getting kicked in the shin.

"So," concluded clever old Pao, " the missing people were kidnapped by you! You killed and murdered whatever people coming your way. Right?"

"Ne—"

"Don't interrupt!"

"We were paid to do that. Our master, the richest woman in town, is inventing a medicine to become immortal and she needs people to experiment," confessed the trio in unison after realizing that there was no hope of talking their way out.

"That is enough. Guards, seize the trio and take them to prison!" ordered the emperor, who had been in the dark corner of the room with five other guards throughout the interrogation. After the three guards were taken, he ordered another guard to take over a group of people to arrest the grand lady on the outskirts and also Fan Qie Jiang who had been covering up the truth.

"You have done well, my friend," the emperor spoke proudly before leaving the room. Surprised that a grand friend who was higher in place than him would ever congratulate him, Judge Pao froze on the spot. When he stepped out of the room, he turned to face the blue full moon, which reminded him of her parents who told him that unparalleled honesty, integrity, and fairness were worth more than anything and these precious attributes were what made him the respected Judge Pao.

# *The Sudden Disappearance of Zhan Zhao*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Huang, Bruce – 9*

A Thursday at Song dynasty in Kaifeng fu Yamen, Judge Pan was in his seat, like usual. But his investigation partner Zhan Zhao isn't here at work yet.

Hours passed, and Zhan Zhao didn't come, not even at the critical meeting that day. The emperor got extremely mad, and after the long and meaningful discussion, he called some of his soldiers to find Zhan Zhou. Unfortunately, after hours of searching, the soldiers still didn't see him.

Having no other choice, the emperor had to send a great detective to investigate the case, and then he knew that the greatest detective who ever lived was Judge Pan.

Judge Pan started investigating as soon as he received the case. Like most of the detectives, he first interviewed Zhan Zhao's family members. His family mentioned that Zhan Zhao had came home late in the past few days, and he did leave home to work that morning.

After the interview, he reported the discussion to the emperor. The next day, Judge Pan was missing too. Since there is no other detective in town, the mystery is still unsolved today.

# *The Case Of The Stolen Money*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Huang, Peter – 10*

John and Joe were brothers, they were bun sellers.

John and Joe learned how to make buns at 8 years old, they could make buns with many different ingredients, so the buns that they made smelled very good.

One day, the governor said, "There will be a food competition for 50 competitors. They will each make one dish for me to eat and I will pick a winner. The winner will get 1 thousand dollars of gold."

After John and Joe read the message in the newspaper, Joe got an idea and said, "I think we should work together and win the competition."

Then John said, "Great, let's do it."

When they registered for the competition, they promised each other if they won, they would split the prize in half.

After the competition the governor announced, "The food competition has ENDED! Now I will announce the winner, it is JOHN AND JOE!!!"

When John and Joe saw this notice, they were very happy. They jumped up and down and shouted, "YES, WE WON AND WE WILL GET 1 THOUSAND DOLLARS OF GOLD !"

John Wang is a famous bun seller, who won the food competition for the past few years. He was very envious and he decided to kill John to get the gold back.

At eleven o'clock the next evening, Wang was wearing all black and he was quietly breaking into John's house. At the same moment, John was getting out of bed to use the toilet. In the dark, he saw a shadow opening his money box and was starting to get the gold out. He thought that was Joe because John Wang's appearance was very similar to Joe's. Then he screamed, "Don't take my gold, Joe!"

Then Wang used his knife to cut one of John's hands off. Wang put some poisonous food into John's mouth and tried to kill him, but he never killed anyone before so the poison was not that heavy. When Wang grabbed his knife he accidentally dropped his belt in John's house. Then Wang took all the money and ran away. At that same time Judge Pao's guard Peter was walking back to work, and he saw that Wang was running out of John's house. Wang was running too fast and Peter heard somebody was screaming, so he decided to rescue the person who was screaming first.

When John screamed so loud in the moment that his arm had been cut, his neighbour Ben, who is a doctor, also ran to John's house and rescued him. After half an hour of being rescued John was a lot better and Peter had to go back and tell Judge Pao.

After that night, when John's wound was better, John and Ben ran to Judge Pao's office and he bowed. He wrote down what happened last night, and Ben told Judge Pao how John's wound was now, and John showed his wound to Pao. Pao already knew what happened last night so he believed what they said. Judge Pao told them to stay in his office until the case was solved.

Because Peter did not see how Wang looked, Judge Pao told Peter, "Go to the city, and ask the neighbour what they saw that night, and tell Joe to come here, also try and find some clues in John's house!"

Few minutes later Joe came in, then Judge Pao interrogated him.

Joe knelt down and said, "It was not me, that night I was in my bed sleeping, if you do not believe me then try and find a belt inside John's house the belt is the thief's."

Then Judge Pao said, "I believe you, can you help us find out who it is?"

Joe answered, "yes, of course."

Joe also stayed at Judge Pao's office, when Peter came back, he said, "I heard that in the past few years there was a person named John Wang and he won the food competition but this year he didn't. Also, one of their neighbours said that night he saw a person wearing all black going into John's house. I also found a belt and some poisonous food inside John's house. On the belt it said John Wang."

When Judge Pao heard this, he said, "this is a very important clue."

The next morning, John went to see Judge Pao and wrote, "Are there any clues?"

Judge Pao said, "The thief is not Joe, it is a person named Wang."

Then John continued writing, "then where is Wang now, and also can I see Joe?"

Judge Pao answered, "Now I already told my guards and soldiers to catch him."

Then judge Pao said, "tell Joe to come here and see John."

Only a while Joe came and looked at John.

Joe is very surprised when he saw what John looked like.

Joe said surprisingly, "Who made you like this?"

Then Judge Pao answered, "A thief named Wang."

Suddenly Peter came and reported, "Criminal Wang was caught."

Pao said, "Great, bring him up."

When Wang was brought up, Pao interrogated him.

Judge Pao slammed a block on the table and said, "You also entered the food competition but you did not win this year, so you stole five million dollars of gold and you cut John's arm and tried to kill him with poison. Now everyone knows the truth, why don't you confess?"

Then Wang said confidently, "It is not me, it is John's brother!"

Then Joe said, still bowing down, "How is it me, I was sleeping that night!"

Then Ben added, "If that night me and Peter did not rescue John, he was already dead."

Wang continued talking, "Those are all fake, none of them are real."

Judge Pao slammed a block on the table and said, "Oh really look at this!"

Judge Pao took the belt and the poisonous food out and said, "Those are all real none of them are fake, you use the poisonous food to try and poison John, and you accidentally left your belt in John's house."

Wang looked down and he knew that he couldn't continue lying so he confessed.

Then Pao said, "take him to jail!"

Pao continued, "It is great that you confess, but you have to be in jail ever."

After Wang had been killed, Pao told John and Joe to not be scared, Wang had been killed and I told my guard to return everything back to you guys.

After this, John spent a bit of money to hire a worker because he lost his left hand. After all, John and Joe lived happily ever after.

# *The Rebirth*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Jin, Louie – 10*

There once lived a girl in ancient China. She was neither shorter, taller, smarter, dumber, uglier, or prettier than any of the children in town. And for as long as she could remember, her nation had been under the rule of many horrible leaders. Her community only allowed men to get an education while girls had to stay at home. People often teased her for being so skinny, but to her, it was an advantage. She could slip through narrow alleyways without being caught. It was awfully necessary, as her family had to steal food to survive through the scorching heat of summer and the numbing cold of winter. Until one final day...

News spread about the young man that arrived in town. People called him a curse, a monster even. His skin was as black as it could ever be, and if you ever saw him in the dead of night, it would be like he merged with the dark. There was a crescent moon carved on his forehead, and he looked unnaturally intimidating. The boy was named Zheng Pao. Even though he was a rule breaker, the girl could never pry her eyes off him. She could feel, know, that there was something special pulsing through the veins of a boy whose father abandoned. Yet she never lifted a finger to help when the emperor's soldiers hit him every time he fought back against the injustice of the emperor using up all the resources and leaving them to suffer and die. Until, of course, the war began to rage across China.

Families were broken apart, and the cries and weeps sliced through the air. The girl tried to hold her tears back as she watched others yell and scream at the soldiers, but helpless against the military forces. But then, she saw Zheng watching from afar, motionless. She spun around to face him, but with a huge metal *Clunk*, he fell to the floor.

"What happened next? What happened, next mama?" Leo Charlton said excitedly, bobbing up and down. He sat under the cozy duvets with a sparkle in his eyes.

"It's just getting to the good part. We've got to continue, no?" Mama looked down on her child with a smile that would make even the sun melt.

"Yes! Yes! You're the best!" Leo practically jumped up from the covers and danced in exuberance.

"Instinctively, the girl ran after Zheng as fast as her skinny legs could take her. Two men in black were dragging his unconscious body into a pitch-black alleyway. She yelled and yelled at the men to stop, but they didn't listen. When she got close enough, out of rage and hatred, she threw her fist at one of the men's eyes. He staggered back and fell to the floor. The other man speeded up and carried Zheng's body, and ran into the alley. The girl managed to grab Zheng's leg, she mustered all the energy she had deep inside and yanked. He fell headfirst to the floor. The girl picked up his body and disappeared into a nearby bar. The bar was empty, as it was already past the hours. The girl fell to the floor and slumped against a wall. She eyed Zheng and wondered why she had gone through so much trouble to save a scrawny boy who she didn't talk too much. She carried Zheng home when she saw that he still wasn't stirring, turning back every once and then, just in case the men came back. When they arrived, the girl lay Zheng's body on the bed as she attempted to rub the sleep out of her eyes. After a few minutes, the girl had fallen asleep on the edge of the bed. Zheng stirred a little then snapped his eyes open and shot up from the bed.

"Ueghh...What? Finally, you're awake. Can you explain why?" The girl rose too, due to the sudden movement of Zheng.

"Why what? And...where am I and who are you?" Zheng stared into the girl's eyes with a mind full of confusion.

"Are you for real? Why are you stupid and decided to talk back against the soldier? No doubt those were the ones who attempted to assassinate you! Also did you not ever notice that every time you get in trouble, I'm there at the scene?"



And you're at my house. Do you realize how much trouble you have caused?! You should be lucky enough to be alive right now because I saved you from the assassins!" She stood and glared at Zheng with fury rising in her stomach.

"I never asked to be saved! If you don't mind, I'll be taking my leave. Thank you very much." Zheng threw a mocking smile at her and stormed to the door.

"There's 99% there' countless soldiers waiting for you to be alone and defenseless. So, if you don't want to die, I suggest you stay here." The girl said, with sarcasm. Zheng stopped short and considered it for a moment.

"Hm... I think I'll take my chances." He shrugged and slammed the door. A blinding light lit up and everything went black. The end."

"That's the worst ending of the century! Tell me what really happened!" Leo crossed his arms and scrunched his eyebrows with a frown painted on his face.

"That is really what happened." Mama tried to keep a straight face. She rose and proceeded to close the lights.

"HMPH! You're lying about the end! You're only doing that to make me go to bed early. If you promise to tell me—" Leo began, but midway through the sentence, Mama closed the lights and left the room.

In truth, mama wasn't even halfway lying. She just didn't tell the whole story. Mama thought about it.

The blinding light had happened, only when it did, it went black for the girl only. She disappeared from the house quickly. She had woken up in a hospital as a baby. Her surroundings were completely different. Futuristic. She had somehow been rebirthed in 1977. She played along and finally grew up to have a husband and a child.

A child named Leo Charlton.

## *Judge Bao's Message*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Liu, Sofia – 9*

I opened my office door and locked it behind me. I put the parcel in my hands down on the table and sat down. I slowly untied the string. It was not a package I was excited about. I took out the results and laid them on the table. The strands of hair left at the site. The shoeprints in the soft gravel. Fingerprints on the car. It was all from somebody I know. Very well.

It was a week ago now. A masked figure had crashed a car into a person, then ran away. Their fingerprints were on the car. Their hair was on the ground. Their shoeprints were in the ground. And it was all someone I knew. The strands of hair contained his DNA, and the fingerprints pointed clearly at him. The shoeprints were identical. And the judging was tomorrow.

I didn't think that it was possible. How did the policemen and detectives find this out so quickly? Is it accurate? This couldn't be true. Technology just isn't reliable. A moment later, I heard this weird voice. "Did I just hear you say that you didn't trust technology?" A nanosecond later, I saw this weird man in front of me. Everything about him was super bright. Light blonde hair, a black judge's robe with white trim, white glasses, white shoes, and even white gloves. "How dare you! Technology is one of the most accurate ways of proving something. DNA tests, fingerprint tests, blood tests, you name it!" The person said. "Um... hello? Who are you and why are you in my office?" I asked grouchy. "Not important. The thing is, you've gotta trust tech. See how much info you've got here. Would you be able to tell with only your pure eyes?" The man asked. I shook my head. "So there you've got it! Technology for the win!" He shouted. I covered my ears and opened the door. "Get out of this place!" I ordered. "Alright, alright. A little surprise for you. I am FBZ. Future Bao..." The man started. But he was gone. "Aha. Future Bao... Zheng!" I exclaimed. I looked over the evidence once more. It pointed at Jay.

Jay McDri was my law teacher. He taught me a lot about how to judge fairly, and not let bias overtake me. I sat there, and let the memories flood me. Once he gave me a pen that read 'Law & Justice'. It's still my best pen today. He gave me quite a few books about law, that I use even today. The memory reel stopped. "He couldn't have crashed that car on purpose! Maybe he just tried to park but that person was getting in the way. Or maybe his eyesight isn't so good anymore. That's all possible." I thought to myself.

How could he? Thoughts started taking over my head. "Should I punish Jay? Or should I offer sympathy to him?" That question played like a loop through my head. "Hello, welcome to my world." A voice said. "Future Bao Zheng?" I asked. But he was gone. A man appeared, but this time there was no doubt. He was wearing a judge's futou hat and had a crescent moon on his forehead. It was Bao Zheng! "What are you doing in my office, great judge Bao Zheng?" I asked. "I am here to help you with that decision of yours. And please, call me Judge Bao." Judge Bao answered. "I think justice is all about fairness. Sympathy is another thing." Judge Bao started. "Well, nowadays some people call you the Iron-Faced Judge. How did you earn that title?" I asked. Judge Bao almost cracked a smile, but he didn't. "From my time, lots of people believed in Confucianism. Confucius once said that the father won't tell on the son and the son won't tell on the father. I think that idea is wrong." He explained. "That idea is debatable in the present too." I replied. "I'd say you should choose to be fair, but it's not me doing the judging. It's you. But justice is about fairness, and we want to be fair." Judge Bao finished, glancing at me. He started to fade. And then he was nothing.

My brain started up again. Future Bao Zheng, and Judge Bao, they were all with me, and they always will be. They will assist me by giving me suggestions. Their suggestions were very useful too. Now I knew the answer to the riddle that people had put in front of me.

It was around midnight. I pushed open the heavy wooden door. The Lady Justice statue smiled at me from Central, and I smiled back at her as the lonely city lights shone down onto the sidewalk.

# *New Tales Of Judge Pao*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Pao, Riley – 10*

## Chapter 1

I have a close connection with Judge Pao, we are in the same family tree! On March 5th, 999, a legend was born... He was a very famous detective. This case started when a person called Chan Bong Bong was murdered! Chan Bong Bong went to find Judge Pao, and told him to find out how he had died... So Judge Pao and Jin Chiu packed up, and headed to find out what happened. Judge Pao asked Chan Bong Bong if he remembered anything, Chan Bong Bong said "I remember! I was in my house, then suddenly a whole crew broke in, they had knives, a lot of sharp knives" Judge Pao answered with the word INTERESTING. Judge Pao then asked Chan Bong Bong where he lived, Chan Bong Bong told Judge Pao that he lived in Mountain bing, then Judge Pao went there with Jin Chiu and Chan Bong Bong. They saw a trail of water. They followed it, day and night, up and down, left and right, and they finally arrived...

## Chapter 2

Judge Pao and Chan Bong Bong arrived, while Jin Chiu protected the other citizens. Judge Pao saw the crew of bad guys, he spied on them, suddenly a knife flew past their faces, they found Judge Pao... Judge Pao tried to run, but the bad guys had stabbed him, it was too late... He saw light, a very bright light... He went up to heaven. "Where am I?" asked Judge Pao, a voice from behind answered him, "Your time isn't up yet, you still have so many crimes to solve, please let me bring you back to your body" Then, Judge Pao went back to his body. Chan Bong Bong screamed "HOW DID YOU COME BACK TO LIFE??? THE LAST TIME I CHECKED, YOU WERE DEAD!" Judge Pao said "It doesn't matter"

## Chapter 3

Back in Jin Chiu's village, the village was getting attacked!!! Everyone panicked, Jin Chiu tried to fight them off, but he couldn't... He needed support, that's when a person came from behind and said "I will help you..." The person is called GongSun Ce, he told Jin Chiu that he was very wise. A lot of citizens were injured, some broke their legs, some got blood everywhere, it seems that the bad guys are only aiming for the citizens... They were very suspicious. Suddenly, the floor was shaking rapidly, they were all screaming. It was a very serious earthquake.

## Chapter 4

Chan Bong Bong told Judge Pao that his family is still out there. He told Judge Pao to say hi, so Judge Pao did. Judge Pao then asked Mrs.Chan what happened the day Chan Bong Bong died. His wife said that Chan Bong Bong had died due to suicide on the field.

## Chapter 5

That night Judge Pao went home with Chan Bong Bong, Judge Pao shouted at him angrily "Tell me the truth!" He said "I did!" But Judge Pao didn't trust him, Judge Pao did some more investigating... The next morning Judge Pao decided to go to the farm that Chan Bong Bong worked on, Judge Pao asked his colleague what happened the day Chan Bong Bong died, the colleague seemed nervous... Acting a little bit suspicious but alright. The colleague said "He died when it was lunch time" But Chan Bong Bong's wife said he died on the field... So it wouldn't be lunch time... There are way too many possibilities.

## Chapter 6

The most suspicious one right now is Mrs.Chan, she somehow knew that Chan Bong Bong died on the field? How did she know Chan Bong Bong died and how did she know Chan Bong Bong committed suicide? After that, Judge Pao went to the field.

## Chapter 7

Judge Pao heard a conversation between two mens, they were talking about a woman here this morning. Judge Pao asked them who the woman was, they said “She has brown eyes, she has a pink dress with red stain on it?” “oh no...” said Judge Pao... They said “The women went to the pond.” Judge Pao was shocked by what they said...

## Chapter 8

Judge Pao went home and saw a note under his bed, it said “Hello there Judge Pao, if you are reading this, you are in trouble, i have seen what you did, you found out it was me... So, again if you are reading this, watch out, cause i can be here any second!!! Yes I killed my husband. I swear I removed all evidence...” Judge Pao immediately wrote a note and replied. “I found out by first knowing you were gone the whole morning, then you somehow knew Chan Bong Bong was dead, you didn't tell me how you knew, so I knew something was wrong. Then, I went to his colleague's crime scene and saw two people talking, they said there was a woman with a pink dress. I instantly knew it was you! Do NOT try to trick me, you will never succeed with your silliness” Judge Pao then went to sleep.

## Chapter 9

After Mrs.Chan received the note, she knew she had to attack. Meanwhile, Gongsun Ce became friends with Judge Pao. When Mrs.Chan arrived and threw knives, Gongsun Ce somehow surprisingly saved Judge Pao's life.

## Chapter 10, The start of a friendship

They hid in a cave and then Judge Pao said “You, you saved my life, but why?” GongSun Ce replied, “You were my hero, you saved my life once, you just didn't notice... I owe you one!” Judge Pao had a flashback and remembered the first crime he solved... It was about a racoon invading a poor village, and he had to know who held control of the racoon, and before the racoon could attack GongSun Ce, Judge Pao saved GongSun Ce... They then became friends and formed a trio... A few weeks had passed, and they were planning on something big...

## Chapter 11

The day has come. They went to find Mrs.Chan, she had knives, waiting to attack them, she was so evil, she held big knives. They fought, they stunned Mrs.Chan with a rock launcher GongSun Ce had invented, they caught Mrs.Chan in a rope, and brought her to a cell, the cell was also built by GongSun Ce, “I told you GongSun Ce was very wise!” Said Jin Chiu. GongSun Ce took care of Mrs.Chan and built extra security just in case...

# *New Tales Of Judge Pao – Yama Now And Then*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Qin, Winston – 10*

People called me Joe. My family was small. We lived in an average house and led a simple life. I went to an average school. Likewise, my grades were mostly average. My life was ordinary until that extraordinary day.

There has been a lot of injustice in our town, it was inequality between the rich and the poor. For example, rich people can evade their criminal sentence with money in lieu of imprisonment. The poor people have no choice but to go to jail. I had been bullied by a group of senior boys due to my appearance and size. Two boys initiated a fight today and I was trying to defend myself. As a result, I was given the same punishment as the other two bullies. This was my first experience of injustice.

One day at home, as I was working on my history project the other day when there was a knock on the door. I opened the door and saw my best friend, Fred. He had always been hooked on the paradox of science and history. He was carrying a suitcase which was sleek and black with the mark, “Pao”, engraved on it.

We sat down at the dining table. Fred lit up a classic mad scientist grin and said, “Check this out!” Then he pressed a button on the suitcase. The suitcase expanded, and what came out, in the end, was a machine the size of a car. I was amazed. The machine was void—black, with a large window at the front. Fred told me its name, “MK117 Hawk of Time”.

“How did you do that?” I asked him. I think this was the most advanced machine I have ever seen.

Fred grinned, then he said, “It’s nanotech, like it?” I nodded. “They are small nano—particles called nanites. They can fit into very tiny spaces, and they also can also build up onto each other in an impressive amount of time.” Fred had been into technology too. I did not know that.

Fred opened a flap of the machine and disappeared into the machine. ”Hop into the machine,” he said.

I hesitated. I think that this was a really magnificent piece, but I do not necessarily think that it was safe enough for me to get in the machine. Despite all of that, Fred was my friend. I did not want to make him upset so I opened the flap and got in the machine.

Inside the machine were a lot of buttons and levers. Fred pressed a large button and pushed three levers. We looked through the window in front of the control panel. A wormhole started growing. Then the machine started shaking. At the speed of light, we zoomed through the wormhole followed by a complete whiteout.

When my vision cleared, I saw a golden room filled with people wearing strange robes and strange hats. At the end of the corridor sat a large, black-faced man in glorious golden robes which seemed to glow with the sun shining in, and a golden cap. There was a crescent moon—shaped scar on his forehead. I instantly realized that he was Judge Pao. He was a really skilled detective in solving crimes in ancient China. He and the imperial guards were currently standing in a solemn hall with round golden pillars and high walls decorated with silver sculptures of dragons, lions, and other fierce Chinese mythical creatures. I realized that we had traveled back in time to the ancient Song Dynasty of China.

Suddenly, Judge Pao rose up from the throne. He raised his golden cane and yelled in Chinese, “I now order fair and peace among all citizens of my province. Rich and poor, everyone must pile up all their goods on a mountain. Then we will split the money equally among all citizens of my province. From now on, there will be no more injustice among my citizens, and soon, anyone in the world will be treated equally and fairly!”

I am stunned by his speech. I think that we should act like Judge Pao, trying to restore justice to every single human being or organism, if you count that humans are animals. However, for now, there is still injustice. We need to work hard together to restore the justice needed for the economy. Whenever there is injustice, there is justice.

# *The Mysterious Detective*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Saunders, Alicia – 10*

Before there was a batman, before there was detective pikachu, before there was even a sherlock holmes there was a mysterious detective , he worked in the shadows no one knew who he was, no one knew where he was from and he was not gonna tell anyone.

Some people tried to guess who he was but when they started to guess and decide on one person then went to interview them and get them to say that they were the mysterious detective ,they always got the wrong person so eventually they gave up , the townspeople eventually thought he did not exist and stopped doing anything dangerous . Soon the town became a boring lifeless town. The skating parks were shut , so were the trampoline park , rock climbing centre and the roller blading , water parks and basically anything fun that was ever there the only things that were there were ... the sandpit , trees , ice cream shop , farms , supermarkets , and the playground , it was as safe as safe could be maybe more every corner sharp , slightly round , dented even just round there was protection there in other words it was a huge baby paradise .

Well that was before .....

It was a sunny day and kids were playing suddenly they heard glass breaking and window smashing then they heard glass bottles breaking and people screaming , but what they were confused about was why all this was coming from ms. murfys house , normally she was such a kind ,caring , gentle woman !

So they tried to climb over the fence but were stopped when 4 black cloaked figures ran out the back door ,as trained they ducked into the bushes and listened for the footsteps of someone they were about to come out then suddenly they heard voices and immediately ducked back into the bushes they didn't come out until they heard their parents voices after that they immediately bursted into the house and found ms. murphy in a clump on the floor sobbing , they asked her what happened then she blurted out everything from the start of the sunny day to the kidnapping of her son pedro they reported it to the police but even after a week the police couldn't find anything but on sunday afternoon a note arrived at her door with her son in a blanket sleeping ,she was overwhelmed with joy she started crying everyone was so happy for her but wondered the police already gave up on the search so who figured it out ?

But she was too grateful for having her son back that she pushed that thought to the back of her head and celebrated , but the next day she really did want to find out what happened so she decided to set a trap ( a fake crime ) ,sure enough a note at their door telling the culprit but they came prepared a really smart machine to put a tracker on him without him noticing ! They followed the tracker and found their way up to heaven ! so the detective was a god ! That explained everything . they threw a thank you party for the god on earth they became friends with the god and all lived happily ever after!

# *Kaifeng Never Sleeps*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Tsao, Joshua – 10*

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Judge Pao thundered, 'Someone is outside requesting assistance!' As the doors opened, Judge Pao saw his guards escorting an overweight old man dressed in old grey farmer clothes, bawling as he entered the Kaifeng courtroom.

'Great Judge Pao, my name is Gao, and my neighbour Bing stole my sheep. I saw some of my sheep in her front yard with pink collars, which is how I identify them! Her dogs have been attacking my sheep ferociously, and she has stolen them this time! She has gone too far! The sheep are what I live on. Without them, I will go broke. Please help me!' Gao cried.

'Very well,' assured Judge Pao, 'I will send someone to investigate. ZHAN!' summoned Judge Pao. A man in a red robe rushed in with a sword on his waist. 'Help this man find his sheep and get to the bottom of this.'  
'Yes, Judge Pao,' Zhan answered.

After hours of riding his carriage, Zhan arrived at Bing's house. He knocked, and a frail old lady dressed in tattered robes opened the door. The woman recognising Zhan in his red robe knew he must be from Judge Pao's office and said, 'Thank goodness you're here! My name is Bing. Just now, I found two of my neighbour Gao's sheep on my farm, and he accused me of stealing all his sheep. Please help me!'

Zhan was shocked. 'I am investigating this very case! You are accused of stealing Gao's sheep. Please answer questions truthfully to aid the investigation.' Zhan demanded.

'No! No! I didn't do anything! I am innocent!' Bing wailed in fear.

'I will get to the bottom of this' Zhan said.

Next, Zhan walked to Gao's barn to find more evidence. This case is becoming more complex by the second; every piece of evidence throws no light on it, and no signs of the missing sheep, thought Zhan. He began to look around the empty barn. Looking around thoroughly, he noticed some tracks that led outside. He kneeled at them and saw they were sheep tracks. Some tracks headed toward Bing's farm and the rest were headed to the woods. This is very suspicious, mused Zhan. He followed the sheep tracks warily that led to the woods, ensuring that he didn't lose the path.

After four hours, the tracks finally stopped in front of a deserted barn. Why did the sheep tracks stop here? Are these the real sheep thieves? Zhan pondered. Fearing there may be criminals inside the barn, he moved stealthily and leaned against the wall of the barn. He slowly and gingerly peeped through the first window and, as expected, saw lots of sheep with pink collars, but why were they here?

He crept to the second window and noticed a pale man dressed in tattered robes speaking with Gao. 'This is very strange. Why is Gao here? Why is he talking to this man?' Zhan muttered.

I must arrest them and take them to Judge Pao, Zhan thought. He swiftly moved to the back door, took a deep breath, and gripped the hilt of his sword tightly till his knuckles turned white. In one swift action, he leapt up into the air, drew his gleaming blade, and sliced through the wooden door. The men inside were stunned and immediately started to run.

'Halt!' Zhan cried.

Zhan ran after them, leapt up, flipped in the air, and landed in front of Gao and the pale man. 'Where do you think you're going?' Zhan asked coolly, with his sword pointing at the pale man's throat, 'Who are you? Why are you here with Gao's sheep?' Zhan questioned.

'I am—am Cai, and Gao paid me two silver yuanbao to watch these sheep for a week. I didn't do anything wrong,' Cai stuttered.



'Okay, Cai, you are an important witness to this crime, I must take you to Judge Pao. As for Gao, you are the mastermind of this plot, so you need to come with me.' Zhan said. Then, he snatched a nearby rope and tied up Cai, and Gao.

'Wait, Zhan, I can explain all this. I will give you all my sheep but please don't tell the truth...' Gao said in despair. Zhan paused, smiled and nodded, which relieved Gao. Then, Zhan dragged them to his carriage and drove back to Kaifeng.

With everyone in the courtroom, Judge Pao banged his gavel onto his desk loudly and bellowed, 'I now call this trial to order.' 'Zhan, please state your findings.'

Zhan reported what he saw at Bing's farm, the tracks from Gao's farm to Cai's warehouse, and how Gao tried to bribe an official to escape.

Judge Pao exploded. Spittle flew from his mouth. 'Your crimes were already horrible! Furthermore, you endeavour to evade punishment to help you get off your crimes! That's unforgivable!

As Judge Pao was yelling furiously, a breeze blew off the tarp on the guillotines, and the shiny blades of the three guillotines decorated with animal heads gleamed in the sunlight. Gao remembered how Judge Pao hated bribery and was afraid of being sentenced to death by guillotine, so he confessed to his crime.

Gao shivered and started whimpering. 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean it, I only did it because Bing's dogs have been hurting my sheep, so I devised this plan to teach her a lesson... Please forgive me!' cried Gao.

'Nonsense, that's no reason for concocting an evil plot to incriminate your neighbour Bing, you should always resolve differences with neighbours peacefully. Since you have confessed, I would spare you the death sentence by guillotine, but for being the mastermind of an evil plot, lying to the court, and attempting to bribe a court official, you are sentenced to jail for 5 years. Gao, remember to be kind to others and be kind to yourself. Case closed!' lectured Judge Pao.

Thump! Thump! Thump! 'Zhan! Another person is outside requesting assistance!' Judge Pao thundered!

# *The 25-year-old Mystery*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wang, Benjamin – 9*

One early morning, Judge Pao was strolling in Kaifeng Mansion with his legal executive partner Mr. Gongsun and his fourth-rank guard Zhan Zhao.

Just then, A soldier approached Judge Pao hurriedly and reported that a precious jade amulet had disappeared without a trace or footprints in the study. Judge Pao Gasped in horror as the amulet was awarded by Emperor Chenzong as a recognition of his intelligence. Who could have possibly stolen it?

The soldier led Judge Pao to the study. Judge Pao noticed a ray of light as they walked in the study. He also noticed a piece of paper written with blood on the smooth floor. The paper said:

“Emperor Chenzong holds the key to the amulet.”

Judge Pao was petrified. He recognized the handwriting but could not remember who wrote it. He remembered he had seen something similar to the handwriting when he had just become a judge of Emperor Chenzong.

To unveil who wrote the message, Judge Pao went to the palace to investigate since he heard rumours that most of the people that had gone there were people that were injured. They inspected the palace room by room until they came to the Emperor's bedroom. They looked around carefully, until Zhan Zhao found a blood stain on the floor. Mr.Gongsun softly touched it. It was still wet.Mr. Gongsun told Judge Pao the man was still here. Judge Pao ordered Zhan Zhao to lead some of the soldiers in the palace to chase him. A few minutes later, a soldier came back carrying an old man, he placed him on a bed and let Mr.Gongsun inspect his body which had a large scar on his left arm. Judge Pao looked at the man and recognized him immediately. Judge Pao asked “Are you Liu Guo?” Everybody stared at Liu as he served Emperor Chenzong just when Judge Pao had become a judge. He was well known for his bravery and loyalty. Judge Pao asked Liu: “Why are you here?” “Did you steal the amulet?” Yes, I never meant to deny it, in fact, I’m here to tell you what happened. It’s a long story. Everything began 25 years ago.” Liu Guo replied calmly.

“It all began when I was stabbed in the arm – which means I did not injure myself. An assassin attempted to kill Emperor Chenzong and I dashed in front of the Majesty to protect him. The dagger landed on my chest. I was rescued by the guards, but from then on, I felt a lot of pain after that. Your legal executive Gongsun Ce is an able physician, and I trust that he can cure me.”

“Is this the mere reason for you to steal the amulet?” Judge Pao asked.

Liu Guo smiled bitterly, “I’m afraid not. I stole the amulet to lead you out of Kaifeng Mansion, and I’d like you to come to the palace.

“What do you want to show me?” Judge Pao asked.

“Emperor Chenzong was killed by Empress Li.” Liu Guo replied gloomily.

“Liu Guo! Do you know what you are saying? You have offended the Majesty and the Empress! ” Judge Pao roared fiercely.

“I have not lied. Empress Li had always wanted to manipulate Emperor Chenzong. When she realised that Emperor Chenzong disobeyed her, and was trusting Consort Liu more, she decided to plan an assassin and kill Emperor Chenzong. The amulet was evidence because there was a secret message hidden in the amulet. Just break it and you will know.” Liu Guo said unhurriedly.

“The jade amulet was awarded by His Majesty. Breaking it does not comply with my veneration to the Majesty!” Judge Pao roared.

Liu Guo insisted that Judge Pao look inside the jade. “If breaking it allows you to reveal the secret, the Majesty will be pleased.”

Judge Pao pondered in silence. He studied the amulet and saw a tiny piece of paper strip inside. He ordered Zhan Zhao to throw the amulet onto the floor. He smashed it into pieces. In the midst of the broken shards of jade was a piece of paper that says:

“Empress Li planned the assassin after against Emperor Chenzong. I swear to God with my life this is the truth.”

Everyone was astounded.

Liu Guo composed himself and uttered weakly, “The amulet was a gift from Consort Liu to Emperor Chenzong. Originally Consort Liu wanted to congratulate the Majesty at his coronation. She later discovered the evil plan of Empress Li, but was already monitored by spies and could not say anything. She therefore scribbled the words and hid the message in the amulet.

Unfortunately, it was too late. Before Consort Liu could say a word, she was murdered by Empress Li’s most-trusted spy. Empress Li’s next target was His Majesty. It was a close call. Thankfully I was able to save the Majesty from the assassin.

After the incident, I hid in the cold palace as I knew Empress Li was outraged at me. I have been waiting for this day for 25 years to reveal this secret.”

Judge Pao brought the case to the Emperor, together with Liu Guo and the broken jade amulet. He patiently told the Emperor what had happened.

Emperor Chenzong was heartbroken, but he trusted Judge Pao and Liu Guo. Most important of all, he recognized Consort Liu’s handwriting.

Finally, Empress Li was sent to the Cold Palace. She was never visited by the Emperor. Emperor Chenzong praised Judge Pao’s intelligence and Liu Guo’s bravery. Still, he was sad to see his wife, once his most-loved wife, in the Cold Palace.

# *Catching Up With The Dead*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wu, Chloe – 9*

The moon looked down at an old well in the dark forest, wind blew around softly, giving a slight chill. Birds were chirping quietly, communicating in a way humans didn't know about. Something came and broke the silence of the dark forest.

Heavy footsteps were approaching the old well. It had once been a magical place, now the stones which made the well were covered in moss, bits of it had disappeared to unknown places. It just wasn't the best place to be in the night.

However, someone stood beside the well tonight, Judge Pao.

Judge Pao was a powerful man, his name may ring bells nationwide. Being powerful was only one of the many reasons he was famous. Judge Pao solved cases, and punished those who had committed crimes. At night, he became the Judge of the Underworld, solving cases between the two worlds. Exactly what he was doing now.

Two days ago, Narcissus, a young girl from a village, came to Judge Pao's palace. It was a cold day and clouds showed no pardon for her.

"Excuse me, Masters." Narcissus said politely to the guards, her coal black eyes stared up at them. "May I speak to Judge Pao?"

"Sorry, Judge Pao is in...a bit of a mood." The guard's robotic voice replied, their red capes flew in the air, strong arms were completely opposite, stuck at their owner's sides.

Narcissus bit her lips, her fingers were crossed and started to sweat behind her back. "I promise what I have to say is very important, you won't regret letting me in." She bravely said.

Judge Pao's guards stared at the young girl, her long raven black hair in a neat bun, attractive drooping blood red earrings with red silk dress and black boots.

"If he is in a temper and rejects you, don't blame us." The guards' stated in robotic voices again and moved out of the way.

"Thank You, truly." Narcissus put a foot forward and entered Judge Pao's palace.

Huge tapestries decorated the walls of the palace, Narcissus had never seen this before. Her eyes swivelled around the room, heart beating.

Narcissus went up the stairs with golden bannisters and blood red steps, starting to bite her lips, all she had to do was get Judge Pao to help her.

In front of Narcissus, was a door, which was different from others. Narcissus tried to calm down and convince herself as she gulped and turned the doorknob.

It was Judge Pao's private chambers. Pictures of famous sites in China hang on the beige coloured walls, ancient looking furniture had been placed in the corners, except Judge Pao's famous rocking chair. And there was him, the Judge Pao, sitting in it.

His black face and a crescent moon on the forehead seemed so recognizable. His black eyes that seemed like they could see other's souls, stared into space.

"Um, Judge Pao?" Narcissus said quietly, her voice was almost impossible to hear. Judge Pao looked at the girl, eyes were still blank.

"Could I...uh..." This was harder than Narcissus had thought.

"Speak up." Judge Pao spoke softly.

“Um...could you...help me...” Narcissus stuttered, she bit her lips, hard.

“Spit it out!” Judge Pao looked seriously and glanced at his ancient clock.

“My family...has all died, in their sleep.” Narcissus sobbed but tried to look brave. “Every morning there’s one...when I go to get help... I hear a blood curdling voice.” Narcissus shivered terribly. “I rushed to whichever family member. However, her...his body...has...gone.”

Now, this was what Judge Pao needed, a new case, he had been practically dying of boredom.

“Death.” Judge Pao murmured, just loud enough for Narcissus to hear. “What exactly do you want from me?”

Judge Pao seemed like he was calm and kind, so Narcissus looked Judge Pao in the eye and spoke clearly.

“I want to bring my relatives back, and I know they may not really return forever, perhaps you could figure out why they have been taken.”

Judge Pao took a deep breath. “Of course I can. I am Judge Pao, the Judge Pao.” He said in an emotionless voice, staring at Narcissus.

Now, Judge Pao was staring at the well.

“Something tells me this is the key to solve this case.” Judge Pao said to himself while circling the crumbling well.

Cold air blew around the dark forest, sending goosebumps to Judge Pao. He shivered, but kept his eyes on the well. His brain was muddled up, he clung to the side of the well, staring down into the empty darkness.

“Judge Pao, how wonderful to see you here. Don’t waste your time here any longer, you won’t be helping anyone after this.” A blood curdling voice just like Narcissus mentioned entered Judge Pao’s ears.

“I know who you are!” Cried Judge Pao, a bell rang in his head. His eyes grew large, fist curled up. “You are the thief I caught last month, Jacob Wang!”

“True, so ever true. You shall pay for killing me with those things of yours!” The fugitive’s blood curdling voice was there, again. A cold air swooped out of the well and suddenly, Judge Pao’s jacket didn’t seem to work anymore.

“You Devil, give me back Narcissus’s family. Whatever made you take them?! ” Cried Judge Pao, his hands froze, an anger he didn’t know existed ran out of him.

“I needed company, do you understand how painful this month has been for me?” Jacob Wang’s voice grew louder, scaring the birds who were nearby.

“Jacob, give me back Narcissus’s family. I mean it. You know how painful both worlds could be, you wouldn’t want to cause a little girl this pain.” Judge Pao tried to reason with the villain. He would risk his life to help Narcissus, as he had promised from the depths of his heart.

After moments of frosty silence, Narcissus’s family flew out of the well landing on the grass around it.

Judge Pao smiled, satisfied.

# *Judge Pao's Secret*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Zhang, Sean – 10*

*2022, May*

“Wow! Look what I found!” Zheng exclaimed. He and some other archaeologists were at Judge Pao’s Birthplace, Hefei, because he had dedicated his life to spreading the knowledge of Judge Pao to the world and researching Judge Pao’s life. After the dirt in an area near a hill was cleared, Zheng found a giant hunk of burned metal near Judge Pao’s supposed home. It was black in several spots and had indications that it was over 1000 years old, around the same time when Judge Pao was alive. As Zheng reached to touch it, it was as rough as a chipped rock.

“ This doesn’t add up...metal THIS old and so close to the Judge’s house?”He ran to his friends.

“ I have to do some up—close research, Jin, you can come with me. I found a piece of burnt metal from around when Judge Pao was alive.” He announced.

“How would you do close—up research?” His good friend, Jin, who also loved Judge Pao, joked “ Like ASK Judge Pao? He died 1000 years ago!”

“Well, we’ll use this new tech I got just in case we needed it: A time machine!”

Everyone gasped in awe as Zheng proudly yanked down the cloth covering what they thought were ancient artifacts but instead was a brand new, shiny time machine.

Everyone cheered as Jin and Zheng got in the machine. “ Wind flaps...Check. Fluxel calibrators...Check. Chrono Machuzigy...What’s a Machuzigy? Whatever... Check.” Recorded Jin. As the cockpit of the time machine suddenly vibrated like crazy, there was a sudden feeling that they were getting pulled, pulled, and PULLED away, Far into time...CRASH!

*998 AD, February 6th*

As Zheng and Jin emerged from their now smoking machine, they immediately realized something was wrong with his time machine. A giant hunk of the side wall flew straight off and into the ground, and promptly burst into flames

“ Oh no,” said Zheng, desperately fumbling around with the controls “ Our machine has gotten damaged, and that wasn’t supposed to happen...I don’t know if we can ever go home”

“ That means I’m STUCK here?!” exclaimed Jin.

“ Yes, maybe,” Zheng remarked, looking at the broken time machine “ We will have to pretend to be normal people now, at least until someone comes and takes us home.”

“ Wow! What a busy place!” Jin exclaimed, as the smell of cooked pork filled the air. Several people were shouting out what they were selling “ Roasted Chestnuts! Diced pork! Raw chicken!”

“ Yeah, right?” Zheng replied “ The past doesn’t suck THAT much” Jin and Zheng were walking amongst the streets of the little town they had landed in. Suddenly, They heard sobbing coming from a house. Zheng, being as kind—hearted as he was, rushed over to see what was happening.

“ What’s wrong?” he asked the sobbing man.

The man told them his story “ I was a farmer and had one ox to plow my fields. Without it, my family and I would go hungry. Today, I found out that my ox’s tongue was cut and will die soon and I will go to jail for the death of my ox. Please help me find out who killed my ox and bring him to justice.” Just then, Zheng’s phone started to ring.

“Wait for a second,” He told the very confused farmer and answered the call “ who’s there? ...Oh? We can go home? Yeah..ok..right now? No sorry, we can’t. Ok bye.” “ Our fellow researchers had just called and they said we can go home but—” He started to tell Jin

“ YAY! WE CAN GO HOME!” Jin whooped

“ BUT,” Zheng told him “ BUT we can’t just leave this farmer. So I told them no, we are not going home YET.” “Aw....”

“ Sorry for the inconvenience,” Zheng told the farmer apologetically “ So did you have any known enemies of yours that might want you to go to jail?”

“Not that I know of...”

“Were there any footprints or fingerprints on the property?”

“You can see for yourself,” The farmer told them and led them into his farm. Near where the ox was dying, Jin found some blood fingerprints. Zheng took out his Finger detector app from his phone and scanned the print. “ The print is safe now,” Zheng told the farmer.”Now I have a plan on how to find your ox slayer. First, you need to kill the ox and sell it. The killer will try to accuse you of treason and I can confirm that it's him with this fingerprint I got. That's how we catch him.” And so, the farmer did what Zheng told him and killed the ox for meat, then sold it. Soon after, a man came to Zheng and Jin and told them to arrest the farmer for killing a sacred ox. All the evidence met up. The fingerprint test was positive and the farmer knew this guy as they had been bickering over the price of an object two days ago. Zheng had his culprit. After introducing him to a place called ‘Jail’ and thus the case was closed. Jin and Zheng got famous after that case and were asked to solve case after case. Zheng was even given a nickname: Justice Pao. He even got someone to write a biography about him!

*2002, July*

*Thump! Thump! Thump!*

“Stop jumping around, or you’ll break something!” Eight-year-old Zheng was jumping around his house, ignoring his mom's calls. *CRACK!* Suddenly, one of his floorboards cracked.

*What’s this? WOAH! Is that a scroll?!* He wondered as he gently picked up the bamboo scroll. Slowly, He unrolled the scroll. *What does this say? Judge Pao was a Judge in the Song dynasty of China and solved many cases. He was also given the nickname Justice Pao. He also...* Zheng soon found out that this scroll was a biography of this person: Judge Pao.

# *The Baby Pillow Mystery*

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Zhao, Roy – 9*

There it was! I shouldered my way through the crowd at the newly opened museum to steal a peek at it: a crystal white, shining porcelain artwork descended from a thousand years ago. Not in the familiar shape of a vase or a plate, it came in the shape of a plump baby boy lying on his belly. With folding arms to support his little head, his smooth crouching back seemed so comfortable to rest your head on. Wow! A porcelain baby pillow, a rare treasure indeed.

I gazed at every curve, every line, every flower, and every cloud. Where did it come from? Who could have made it? ... My thoughts drowned me. I felt sleepy, ready for slumber.

And I did.....

I opened my eyes, still surrounded by a huge crowd. But the people around me were not modern-day museum visitors, but those in plain cotton long gowns, looking simple and natural.

“Hush! Judge Pao is going to hear a new case!” a man nearby could hardly conceal the excitement in his whisper.

Judge Pao?

Every Chinese must have heard of him, the legendary detective judge of the Northern Song dynasty known for his unparalleled wisdom, uprightness, and integrity. He stood there, facing the crowd, straight and solemn as a fir tree. Dressed in a black and gold official robe, his hat looked quite strange: it was a black square hat with one long flap on each side—long enough to hit anyone within one metre from him. His pitch-black skin could make a criminal shudder in fear. Yet anyone who believed in justice would be naturally drawn to him, looking up to him as a bright moon in the dark night, just like the little crescent birthmark on his forehead.

In front of the god-like judge were two men on their knees. “Please do me justice, Judge Pao,” the thinner man of the two sobbed. “My name is Lee Ming. Two days ago, I made a porcelain artwork for His Majesty’s kiln. But my neighbour Chan Tim stole it and claimed it to be his work!” Pointing to the fat man beside him, Lee’s eyes were fiery with anger.

“This is an outrageous lie, your honour,” said the fat man in a brown silk gown. “It is true that we are neighbours. But I didn’t steal anything from him. I made the pillow myself.” He pointed to a small piece between him and Lee.

There it was! The rare treasure, the baby pillow, was lying quietly before Judge Pao. Just as vivid and exquisite as I remembered, but somehow seemed different...

Pondering for a moment, the wise judge raised his eyebrows, “Since both of you claimed to have made this porcelain piece, you should be very familiar with it. Therefore, I will ask you three questions. My final ruling will be based on your answers to them.”

Both men nodded in agreement.

“Here is my first question: why do you make this piece of porcelain in the shape of a baby?” the judge sounded serious but kind.

Hesitated for a second, Lee said timidly: “I... I made it in a shape of a baby as a blessing for... for a happy family with many children.”

“Your honour, we Chinese love big families, so I made the pillow to bring good fortune to His Majesty’s rule.” Chan bowed with a sly smile.

Judge Pao frowned but didn’t say anything.

“All right. Now here is my second question: which one of you can explain the process of how you made this porcelain?”



Chan caught the chance to start talking first: "First I got some clay and mould it into the shape of the baby pillow. Then I put it in the stove to dry. Then I... I..."

"I also trimmed and smoothed the mould before drying." Lee added in a low voice.

The crescent on the Judge's forehead became thinner. The crowd started whispering.

I looked at the porcelain baby pillow. It looked familiar but somehow different. The one in my memory was a shiny white treasure. But the one before me was of a slurry, greyish colour...

With a courage coming out of nowhere, I took a step forward.

"Judge Pao, may I ask the third question?" I heard myself speaking.

Every gaze was on me now.

The kind judge seemed surprised for a second but soon smiled: "Yes you may, young judge."

I stepped forward and spoke at the top of my voice: "Uncle Lee and Uncle Chan, what is the colour of the pillow when it is finished?"

Dead silence swept through the hall. You can hear a pin falling on the floor.

Chan stammered, "Your honour, the pillow is grey, as you can see."

"No, that's not true," said Lee timidly. "The pillow is grey at this stage because it is not finished. In the final stage, I will dip it in glaze and burn it again. When it is finished, it will be shiny white."

I bowed, "Judge Pao, Uncle Lee is the real maker of the baby pillow."

"How do you know this, little boy?" Judge Pao asked with a smile.

"This is because I've seen the baby pillow, from a thousand years later!"

"Really? Then thank you, young judge, for coming to help me from a thousand years later." Judge Pao smiled, the crescent on his forehead became wider and brighter, almost like a full moon.

I opened my eyes again. There it was! The shiny porcelain pillow descending from a thousand year ago was right there, glazing with time, bearing the legends of a bygone age.