



Fiction  
Group 1

## The New Tales of the Great Wall

Theo Cheng, 6, Clearwater Bay School

Long ago there was a gigantic, blue and gold dragon who lived in China. His body was as long as a country. His scales were shiny like silver, but soft like ribbon. His teeth were sharp as a knight's sword. He had huge wings, like a bat.

Every day the dragon took care of the people in the village. He protected them, and made rain for drinking and growing plants.

After a thousand years the dragon felt tired and wanted to sleep. But when he tried, the people in the village always came to bother him. So he decided to look for somewhere nice to sleep.

He flew high into the sky and all the way to the jungle. The jungle was green wet and hot. It was quiet until a bunch of monkeys started shouting and jumping up and down. The dragon said "It's too noisy! I can't sleep here!" so he flew to another place.

The dragon found a hot, dry desert and saw a viper crawling in the sand. The viper had sharp teeth and a strange tongue. "Is it comfortable here?" said the dragon. The viper said "yessssssssssssssss." "Ok," said the dragon. But after 2 hours a bunch of camels rushed past and the sun was too hot so the dragon said, "It's too hot here." And flew away to find a new place to sleep.

Next, the dragon flew north to the arctic. It was quiet and beautiful. Everything was white and nothing moved. The dragon said "It's so peaceful here." But after 3 hours he was cold. He asked a polar bear "is it cold here all the time?" "Yes," said the polar bear. So the dragon said "It's too cold here. I can't sleep." And he flew away.

The dragon flew to the sky and said to a bird, "Is it comfortable here?" The bird said "Yes it is so beautiful. You can see the whole world down there." So the dragon slept there for 4 hours. But suddenly a storm came and the dragon woke up. Thunder flashed brightly and lightning boomed loudly. "It's too loud, I don't want to sleep here!" he said, so he flew away.

Finally the dragon flew to the mountains. It was quiet and cool. He lay down across the hills and fell asleep. His soft skin became hard grey stones and his body stayed on the mountains up and down across China. And that's where the Great Wall came from. So when you visit the Great Wall, be quiet - the dragon is still sleeping!

## New Tales of the Great Wall

Joanne Zi Qing Lo, 11, Holy Family Canossian School

In the legend, there was a dragon who lived in an old palace. He was one hundred metres long and his body was shiny with golden scales. People called him "Golden Dragon". Nobody ever saw him. Some people claimed that he had great power which could save China but some people disagreed saying that he will give bad luck to China.

Near the old palace, there was a tiny village where a pair of twins called Ming and Mei lived. Ming was smart and creative. He had a lot of ideas and also could solve any problems easily. He had special powers that could read people's minds. He was good at Kung Fu. His twin sister, Mei was kind and helpful. She also had special powers like Ming. She could run as fast as lightning and could walk through any object. She also was good at Kung Fu too. They both admired the Golden Dragon and really wanted to meet him one day. In the village, they were the only ones who wanted to see him because most of the villagers felt that he was very dangerous and fierce. People might not come back safely after meeting him. The other villagers always said, "Forget it!" Don't go to see him. He will destroy our village and give bad luck to China." Even though the villagers said such bad comments about the Golden Dragon, the twins didn't give up looking for him. So this is the start of the tale of the Great Wall.

When the twins were eighteen years old, they ran out of the village looking for the Golden Dragon. They walked for a couple of hours towards the palace. There was a restaurant. They wanted to take a rest so they went. Once they sat down, they both realised that it was very strange as there was only one woman for serving and no other customers. They ordered some buns and tea. The buns were so tasty, they ate them all. Soon they felt sleepy and fell asleep onto the table.

When they woke up they found themselves locked in a metal cage. The woman said, "How tasty you are! You are going to be my lunch!" Then suddenly the woman turned into a scorpion. Ming was frightened but he calmed down. Mei used her special powers to go through the metal cage and start fighting the scorpion. However, Ming was still trapped. Finally Mei killed the scorpion and got Ming out of the cage. They continued their journey.

The sky turned dark and luckily they found an old inn to stay in overnight. While they were sleeping, they floated on the air to the Golden Dragon's palace. When they woke up, they saw the Golden Dragon smiling at them. They were surprised but suspicious.

The dragon said, "Don't be afraid, I won't hurt you. I want to tell you something about me. Once I was only a little seahorse. Accidentally, I ate a piece of purple leaf and I flew out of the water. Then I become a dragon. As I am huge, everyone misunderstands, thinking I am dangerous and fierce. They all stay away from me. I am so lonely and I really want to make friends with others. What could I do?" The twins were very surprised that the dragon asked them for help.

They lived in the Golden Dragon's palace for a few days and found that the Golden Dragon was very kind and peaceful which is totally different to what the people said. They taught him Kung Fu and told him about people's lives in the village. He was pleased and he promised he would do his best to help the people in need.

Time flew. The twins had stayed with the Golden Dragon for a month and today was the Golden Dragon's 99th birthday. The Golden Dragon was depressed and wanted to share a secret with them.

"This is my last birthday as I will die when I turn one hundred years old. Then, I wouldn't be able to fly as my body will turn into metal automatically. What a pity!" said the dragon, sobbing.

Ming thought about trying to find a way to bring youth back to the dragon by finding a solution in books and history. Luckily, Ming found a book called "Facts about Dragons" and it mentioned that there was a "Youth Pearl" which could help. The "Youth Pearl" was kept by a cruel dinosaur at the dinosaur's palace and you needed a sword to be punched into the dinosaur's heart in order to kill it. Since the twins were good at Kung Fu, they took a sword with them to find the dinosaur.

The twins arrived at the dinosaur's palace and found it was sleeping. They tiptoed inside and tried to get the pearl. Suddenly the dinosaur woke up. It shouted, "Guards! Catch them!" The guards came quickly and tried to catch the twins. Mei ran fast like lightning and the guards couldn't catch her. Ming tried to attract the guards' attention. Mei ran closer to the dinosaur. Finally she used the sword to punch its heart. Ming defeated the guards and the dinosaur died. Their mission was successful. They got the "Youth Pearl" and planned to give it to the Golden Dragon on his 100th birthday.

One day, they heard that there was a war. All the army from China was injured badly and now in critical circumstances. The twins decided to help the army and the Golden Dragon decided he would go with them. He changed himself into a soldier and joined the army with the twins. The war continued. The army could not find any way to defeat the enemies so most of them got injured. The Golden Dragon could not witness this situation anymore, so he changed himself into his original appearance. The enemies were frightened and put down their weapons and tried to escape. The Golden Dragon cured an injured soldier which gave the Chinese army more power and confidence. The army carried on fighting their enemies while the dragon made a huge fire and a cyclone to drive them out.

Finally China won. Unfortunately, the Golden Dragon lost all his power and became very weak. The twins tried to use the "Youth Pearl" to save him but it was too late. The Golden Dragon died and his body changed to meal, becoming longer and longer from east-to-west across the northern borders of China. His fins and scales became bricks and stones to build up a great wall. The twins named it "Dragon Wall" to commemorate his contribution. Later, people renamed it the "Great Wall". So this is the end of the tale of the Great Wall.

## New Tales of the Great Wall

Bonnie Pang, 6, Harrow International School Hong Kong

One day, I was playing happily in the park, I believed I saw the Great Wall of China grow out of the bushes. I shook my head. Maybe I was dreaming. My mother and father hugged me. I ran to the entrance of the Great Wall. Suddenly, the Great wall turned into a wall of marshmallows. I saw the towers were made of blue, green, red and pink lollipops. The wall was decorated with sweet icing of every colour of the rainbow. Last but not least, there were colourful marshmallows, which were cut into beautiful jewels like rubies, sapphires, emeralds and topazes.

When I was walking along the soft, colourful path, I saw tiny spots in the clear, blue sky. I thought they were buzzing bees looking for some honey. Suddenly, I saw huge cracks in the sky. A large, scary monster named Jack Frost flew down from the sky on a thunderbolt. He was followed by a big group of green goblins. Jack Frost waved his magic wand and arrows of fire shot down at the Great Wall. I quickly pulled out my warm water pistol from my pocket and shot a huge squirt of water at him. He gave out a loud scream and his magical powers were lost immediately. The arrows of fire became twinkling fairy dust. At the same time, the bees changed into some cute fairies. They whizzed down and said,

"You are a good girl. You have been very brave in saving the Great Wall. Let us go together to get your reward."

I was excited and followed the fairies happily for an adventure.

There was a magical, pink, heart-shaped locket kept at the fairies' palace. It had special powers to take the child who was wearing it to Fairyland. The fairies showed me the way out of the Great Wall towards the palace.

On the way, there was a puzzle of a map of the Great Wall. There were two hundred puzzle pieces so I found it very difficult to put them together. Suddenly, the Great Wall changed into a friendly dragon who flew to help us. When I fitted the last piece of the puzzle into its correct space, a purple cloud decorated with glittering jewels floated towards us. I stepped onto the magical cloud and was whizzed to the palace.

After a tour of the gigantic palace, I met the king and queen of Fairyland in the throne room. They gave me the precious locket for my courage in saving the Great Wall. When I opened the locket, some golden fairy dust dropped on me. Poof! I was home.

I was curled up in my cosy bed, still holding my shimmering locket in my hand. My parents came into my room and told me that the Great Wall is the longest man-made structure ever built. I wish there is a resort hotel at the Great Wall where we can ski down the sloping walls. Then, I fell into a deep sleep.

# The Heart of the Great Wall

Gordon Wu, 9, Sha Tin Junior School

It was a cold stormy night, the wind blew harder and harder, until the rain stopped. Finally as the sunrise came only puddles of water were left on the floor. Until a young boy stepped on it, his name was Peter. Peter was fearless and he had a heart of adventure which led him to a big quest...

## Chapter 1: The Vacation

Peter tapped his finger on the hotel window. He just travelled from Pennsylvania to Beijing, he wished he was home. Until a voice broke into his thoughts, "Peter! Get dressed!" yelled Peter's mother. "Alright mom!" he shouted.

"Oh no!" thought Peter, tours were extremely boring but little did he know that this tour was different. Very different! The tour this time was around the Great Wall, they walked miles and miles but they were all exhausted. Finally the tour guide pointed to some benches nearby, and he said: "Have a rest while I explain where we're going today." As the tour guide was talking, Peter spotted something on the floor, it looked like a mirror, it was red and decorated with golden dragon shapes, and looked ancient. So Peter decided to keep it as a souvenir. It looked dirty, so Peter washed it with some water, the things around him smelled weird. As he looked up, he was amazed. Simply amazed!

## Chapter 2 Ming

He time-travelled back to the past! When he looked into his mirror, he saw his past in reverse order, except every creature surrounding him stood still. But he never realised what had happened. Then suddenly Peter felt something on his back, then a voice said "Hello." Peter said "Hello." Then Peter pulled out his English to Chinese dictionary and began talking to the boy who said hello. At one point Peter asked: "What's your name?" "Ming." replied the boy.

"Where are we?" Asked Peter "We are in China" said Ming, "your clothes look dirty." Peter looked at his clothes. He was surprised. He was wearing ancient Chinese clothing. He thought: "There's only one reason, I time-travelled back to ancient China!"

## Chapter 3

### The Core of China

Ming saw the mirror in Peter's hands. He gasped. "Peter, you're holding...the key to Beijing's core." Peter stared at the mirror. "So Ming, tell me more about this Beijing's core." said Peter. "The mirror owns the power to free Beijing's core, and give life back to the great wall's heart of peace." Ming said. "You are Beijing's only hope." "So, where is the core?" said Peter. "Nobody knows, the mirror contains the map," Ming said.

He looked at his map. Suddenly, a burst of light came out of the mirror. Ming and Peter were shocked. They saw, the map.

## Chapter 4

### Ming's House

Peter carefully traced the map, he saw a marking in the map. "WOW!" thought Peter, "it's Beijing's core". "But before we go on the quest, we must gather supplies." said Peter. "YOU MEAN YOU'RE TAKING ME!?" whispered Ming "yes, I am taking you." replied Peter. "We will need food, map and the Mirror" said Peter. "First, let's get some food." said Peter. "Let's go to my house." said Ming while he began walking. So Peter followed him.

## Chapter 5

### Supplies

When they reached Ming's house, Ming began gathering the food, fruit, bread, and vegetables. Peter started putting the supplies into his bag.

They sat down on the floor. Ming got some water and Peter stretched his legs and began reading his guide book.

"What's that?" asked Ming. "It's from the future, and it's called a book." replied Peter. "Cool," said Ming.

"Let's see the map." said Peter. For minutes, they read the map. Finally, Peter said, "First we have to cross the forest of a hundred creatures," "where's that?" "Just a few minutes away from my house," replied Ming.

## Chapter 6

### The Forest of A Thousand Creatures

Together they began walking towards the forest. They were both very nervous, but each had courage. Finally, after a long walk, they reached the forest. And Peter took a step. They charged through vines, they leaped over ponds and encountered animals. It was getting dark, and they had to build shelter. Peter found a river, they decided to set up their camp near the river. They used stones to make the walls, and used sand to support it. They used big sticks for shelter, and used sand to support it again. Finally, Ming made a small hole for the water to enter. Ming also found fresh apples on the ground while Peter went fishing. Finally they began talking while they were grilling fish. "Ming, you're a really nice friend." said Peter. "Thank you." replied Ming. They ate some fish and apples and drifted off to sleep.

## Chapter 7

### Stone soldiers

Peter woke up he walked out of the entrance. He saw Ming outside "HI!" said Peter "Good morning!" replied Ming "let's go!" said Ming as he handed Peter a bun. Later after they crossed the forest...

"Whew!" "That was a long walk!" said Peter. "You said it!" replied Ming.

"Look," said Peter. Ming turned around. His jaw dropped. Behind him were a million stone soldiers, they all stood still. Peter saw an entrance to a temple coloured red and gold. "Ming!" whispered Peter. "Yes?" replied Ming. "I think the entrance is there! And China's core is also there too!" said Peter. "Let's go!" replied Ming. Peter began walking on a cobble stone path. Then, Ming stepped on a stone slightly higher than the others. Suddenly all the stone soldiers turned alive. "RUN!" said Peter, Ming quickly closed the gates. "Whew!" they said. "Look," said Peter, he saw a crystal ball with a hole.

#### Chapter 8

#### Peace

Peter carefully placed the mirror into the hole, and an instant flash of light covered the temple and they were teleported back to the Great Wall. But Peter returned to the present. Peter smiled.



Fiction  
Group 2



# Great Wall Story

Gayathri Basker, 12, Singapore International School

Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered the construction of the Great Wall. Its main purpose was to keep enemies out, but what about non-existent people that wreaked havoc?

It was the year 1318. Yan Long was a young man who lived with his family in a small village. He had bravery beyond measure.

Strange things were happening. The guards patrolling along the Great Wall during the night had thrown themselves at the feet of the emperor, faces white with terror, and claimed to have seen ghosts. These ghosts had horrifying forms. The emperor didn't believe a single word.

However, it didn't stop there. A guard got bitten by a strange green-eyed lizard. He had several frightening seizures before dying. Another guard caught an incurable disease. The disease made his flesh rot from the inside out. His skin became blackened and wounds festered and maggots crawled over him. He died after two weeks.

Many terrible incidents occurred. The guards died one by one. The emperor was helpless. But it came as a shock when his eldest daughter died. A potent venom had been slipped into her tea. She died within minutes.

The emperor grieved over the loss of his daughter. Meanwhile, the army general consulted him.

"What should we do, your Majesty?"

"I don't know. I don't know what is happening."

"Your Majesty...we should investigate. We must find out if the guards were truthful. Lately, what with all these strange events..." The general's voice trailed off. The emperor didn't need him to finish the sentence; if this continued, they would all die.

"But who would be brave enough to do this?" asked the emperor miserably. "Our bravest guards have died, and the rest won't even go near the Great Wall anymore."

"That is true," mused the general. "But what if we were to find a commoner instead? They might possess bravery or wisdom we don't."

The emperor considered the plan. On one hand, it was humiliating to ask for a commoner's help. But on the other, everyone might die if this did not stop.

"Go ahead," said the emperor wearily. "And may luck be with you." The general bowed and departed.

"Hear! Hear!" shouted one of the emperor's ministers. The villagers, including Yan Long's family, gathered around him.

"The emperor wants some courageous beings to investigate what is happening at the Great Wall! Our safety hangs in the balance! We need your help urgently!"

"I will go," said Yan Long. People around him whispered and cast him furtive glances. He ignored them and strode up to the minister.

"Wonderful!" gabbled the minister. "Arrive at the Imperial Palace by nightfall!" Then, he mounted his horse and galloped away at top speed.

Yan Long's family was horrified at his choice. His father raged. His mother sobbed. His younger sister pleaded with him not to go. But he was unwavering in his choice. At the minister's orders, he reached the Imperial Palace at nightfall.

Two other young men had arrived at the Palace as well. The emperor scrutinised the three of them and said, "We hope you can solve this problem. If you succeed, you'll be rewarded with gold aplenty." The trio was armed with a sword each and escorted onto the Great Wall.

They patrolled along the Great Wall, keeping their eyes open for unusual signs. Then, an icy wind blew, chilling them to the bone. The leaves rustled loudly, like a warning.

A woman glided in front of them. Dark hair veiled her face. A tense silence followed. Then, she threw back her head and gave a bloodcurdling shriek. She faced the trio. Her hair was unruly and matted, her eyes wild and blood trickled from her lips. She snarled, revealing long, white fangs.

Just then, another creature came to stand before them. It was a hooded figure. Slowly, it turned to face the trio and threw back its hood.

The hood and cloak hid a skeleton, with no flesh or blood. The eyes were hollow sockets and the mouth stretched into a gruesome grin. It reached out towards them with long fingers. The tips brushed Yan Long's shoulder; it felt like spiders crawling over him.

The other two boys screamed like little girls and fled. However, Yan Long just took a deep breath and turned to face the two ghosts.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "Why are you frightening people?" The two ghosts exchanged glances. Then, they morphed into a beautiful lady and a clever-looking man dressed in minister's robes.

"How are you not scared?" asked the man pointedly. When Yan Long didn't answer, the man continued, "I was Li Cheng, advisor to Qin Shi Huang, the emperor who ordered the construction of this wall. And this is Leng Li, first wife of Qin Shi Huang. I was the best advisor in the court, and gave my king good advice. But others spoke ill of me in his presence. So I was killed."

The woman, Leng Li, added bitterly, "The emperor accused me of conspiring with his enemies in the North. But I was merely helping the poor and sick there. We were both executed, and so we started scaring people, and laid a curse upon the royal family and their servants."

Yan Long was quiet for a while, and then inquired, "So what can I do to appease you?" The two ghosts answered in unison, "Please send a monk who can rid us of this misery so we can go to Heaven."

Yan Long nodded and returned to the Palace. The emperor was overjoyed and acceded to his request. A monk was summoned and did the appropriate rituals. Yan Long watched as both the ghosts' forms dissolved in the wind.

Yan Long got his reward of gold. He distributed the gold equally among all the people in his village. When he went to the backyard of his house, he found flower petals on the ground, spelling out these words.

Thank you, Yan Long.

Li Cheng and Leng Li

## The Widow Tower

Kylie Chong, 9, Canadian International School

“Lotus Hua, a widow, groaned as she lifted a stone for the Great Wall’s Widow Tower. Her husband had been attacked with eleven other men who died during the construction of the Great Wall. Their hearts were broken. So, the twelve widows, including Lotus, were building the Widow Tower as a memorial for their husbands. But there was one person who didn’t feel sorry for them, Chan Ma, an enemy and former friend of Lotus’ husband, Shun Hua.

Chan Ma snickered when he learned about the Widow Tower from his butler, Hu Chan. “Must be a joke, Hu. Don’t even bother to flirt with that graceful and pretty young woman who is like a lotus. Ha!” He laughed his head off when he knew Lotus was building the Great Wall.

Back at the future Widow’s Tower, Lotus directed the other widows. “That log goes there and those bricks go here. Don’t be a slow poke, Ping Min. I think Chan Ma will be coming now, so we’d better hurry up. He says if we don’t finish this part of the wall today, he’ll forbid us from building the Widow Tower at all.”

“So?” remarked Ping Min. “He’s not the director of the Great Wall.”

“But Chan Ma’s half brother is,” piped in Ching Su. “And even though Chan Ma’s half brother doesn’t like him, Chan Ma can still convince him since he’s the richest man in Beijing.”

Lotus looked proudly over their section of wall that belonged to the future 8,850 kilometre (5,500 mile) Great Wall. She then saw a figure walking towards them. “It’s Chan Ma,” she whispered. “Start working!”

Chan Ma arrived with a dozen armed men. “Stop working right now!” he demanded.

“We will never stop!” replied Lotus. “Keep building, widows!”

Chan Ma and his men grabbed a screaming Lotus and dragged her away, threatening the other widows if they tried to save her. As he left with Lotus, he shouted, “When you figure out why I’m taking only her and decide to be on my side, I’ll free her.” He knew they would never figure it out.

Chan Ma raced down the Great Wall and into his mansion’s dungeon. He dumped the unconscious Lotus inside and slammed the door shut. “I should kill Lotus before any of those widows try to save her.” For some reason, he was remembering how heartbroken she had been when Shun Hua had been murdered.

When Lotus woke up the next day, she was scared. At first, she couldn’t remember what had happened and she thought she had been attacked by China’s enemies.

“Good morning,” greeted Chan Ma as he opened the dungeon door and threw in a piece of poisoned bread with some poisoned water. “I hope you’re starving because I spent a lot of time cooking delicious food for you.”

“No thank you, sir,” Lotus said politely, knowing better than to make him angry. “I’d like to have some porridge at home instead.”

“No. But you may request one thing before you die,” Chan Ma offered.

Lotus thought carefully. “Then I’d like to watch you eat the bread and water.”

Chan Ma shook his head and laughed, “Oh, no! I don’t like bread and I ...”

“... don’t drink water?” suggested Lotus who chuckled dryly.

Chan Ma realised that sounded silly. “Fine. I’ll drink two drops of water and eat one big bite of bread.” He took the cup of poisoned water and the piece of bread. He turned around and slyly dumped out the water and crumbled the bread before turning around again. “Yum!” he exclaimed, rubbing his empty stomach.

“You didn’t eat it! You must have dumped the poisoned food out the window.” Lotus pointed simply at the plate where not even a crumb of bread was left. “When anyone eats bread, they always leave bread.”

“Be quiet, pest!” snarled Chan Ma. “I want to kill you, and that’s the truth. Be quiet before your stupid ...”

But he was too late.

The widows rushed in. “Free her now,” they chorused. “We know why you stole only her!”

“What? Why?” snapped Chan Ma.

“Why, you’re in love, of course! She’s beautiful,” Ching Su said, smiling. “Love means hate and hate means love. You pretend to hate her now, as everyone can see, so that means you love her!”

“Ladies, don’t be silly,” Lotus said, frowning. “He doesn’t love me.”

Chan Ma shouted, “GUARDS! Arrest them!”

The widows each took out a bow. “We killed all the guards,” Ching Su explained. “They can’t save you now. We’re going to kill you too!” She took out an arrow while Ping Min rushed for the cannon. They fired but their aim was terrible. Soon, all the gun powder and arrows ran out.

Chan Ma laughed. “Ha! Stupid pests!”

However, while some of the widows were fighting, others had freed Lotus. All of them had escaped the dungeon while Chan Ma was hiding in the smoke of the cannon. When he tried to move, his feet wouldn’t budge. He looked down and saw that his feet and his hands were tied to a piece of board.

“Help! I’m going to die!” Chan Ma cried to the empty room.

“No you won’t,” said a familiar voice. It was Hu!

“I thought you were killed, my good friend,” Chan Ma said happily. “You can free me!”

“I can’t free you,” Hu began. “I promised the widows I wouldn’t free you. They had us trapped, but none of the officers and guards died. We just had to stay quiet. Chun Ma, my friend, we all think the widows are doing a good job building the Tower. Perhaps you should agree.” He left Chun Ma alone.

Outside, the widows were deciding on their next step. “Let’s hike the Great Wall,” Lotus decided finally. “We should let Chan Ma reflect and we should finish building the memorial tower for our husbands and our country.”

And that was how the Widow Tower of the Great Wall was built.

## The Great Wall

Lok Ping Fong, 10, Independent Schools Foundation Academy

Once a jewel had been buried by the king of China called Puyi, in the Great Wall of China. Soon two teams were trying to find the precious jewel, but soon, this hunt for the jewel killed great amounts of people because the two teams showed no mercy to anyone or anything that stood in their way. The two teams were the Blizzard team and the Titanium team. But the Blizzard team was full of greed and fury, taking everything they wanted. On the other hand, the Titanium team played fair, never asking anything more they could not handle...

The Titanium Team was on thin ice, the Great Wall was worn down. Paths had been cracked because of the wars centuries ago. Tom, the team leader found it hard to reach the other side of the mountain because parts of the Great Wall were nothing but piles of rubble. Every few minutes, Sean would protest “I’m too tired, let’s have rest now!” So this would cause Bruce and some of the more determined ones to mutter “Just keep going Sean!” Ryan and Neal are the younger ones in the team, so they needed extra support from Tom.

Rhys was so tired, he said “BLIZZARD TEAM! WE’VE GOT TO STOP, I’M WAY TOO TIRED!” Edison, Charlie, TG and Jones would say “Dude, you joined the group, so there’s no going back!” Then they would just stare at Rhys with a strange look on their face. So Rhys whimpered every time like a really miserable puppy that couldn’t get its bone, and this made every one chuckle. TG was the team leader (if you didn’t know), so his expectations were very high.

Neal walked forward, he felt different, and he felt braver, more courageous. This made him want to beat anyone up, anyone who would dare challenge him. Suddenly, something caused him to trip, making his flicker of bravery vanish. The whole team rushed towards him, Sean and Ryan examined the wound, and they both sighed with relief. “The wound is not that bad, but remember to be very cautious around here as the Blizzard Team could pop out anywhere, anytime.” Neal nodded in understanding, feeling glad to be treated so nicely. Tom jerked his head to the object that tripped Neal. He gasped and cried “It’s part of a huge SAPPHIRE!!!!” Bruce cupped both hands on the jewel and tried to pull it out. But it was no use; it was tightly buried in the field of grass beside the Great Wall.



TG and Rhys heard the distant shout of the Titanium Team yelling “It’s part of a huge SAPPHIRE!!!!” Rhys told the team “The titanium team has found the sapphire! We must steal it from them! FOLLOW ME!!!!” The Blizzard team followed Rhys along the rocky ground of the Great Wall, but the sun was setting already, so they had no choice but to camp there. Jones wondered “Will I make it out alive?” these words echoed in his mind as if someone was saying it over and over again. With a long sigh, he crawled into his sleeping bag and drifted off into an uneasy sleep.

Daylight shined through Charlie’s sleeping bag as he yawned. A delicious smell of soup filled his nostrils, making him drool. The whole team was up, packing their belongings. A single McDonald’s burger was laid in front of him; he opened the package and finished it in four bites. Rhys said “Rise and shine everybody! Let’s get moving!” The team followed the cracked path until noon, when suddenly TG rushed towards them and whispered, “The Titanium team is right there!” he pointed to five figures only a few hundred metres away and they seemed to be trying to pull something out of the ground. Without warning Edison rushed off.

The Titanium team spotted the Blizzard team 600 metres away, Tom was frantic to pull it out and so were Bruce and Neal. Everyone but Ryan stared at the jewel, looking at it in a strange way. Suddenly, he said “I got it!!” “Got what?” said Neal, panting. “How to pull that jewel out, you dummy!” cried Ryan. Everyone let go and let Ryan have a go, Ryan put his hands on the jewel and twisted it. CRACK. The jewel was thrown into the air, Tom jumped and caught it with his hand and gazed at it admiringly. Everyone circled around him and stared, all of them were touching and feeling the palm sized jewel.

Edison was so close to them when they got the jewel out of the ground; they were just a metre away from him. Edison thought of nothing else, he leaped forward and grabbed the jewel out of Tom’s hand. Bruce stumbled back shocked; luckily Neal was there and caught him. Edison grinned, he had the jewel! He spotted the rest of his team waving too, so he raced forward to get past the people gasping in front of him. Out of nowhere, a powerful arm grabbed him on the waist, causing him to fall down. As fast as a bolt of electricity, Sean pushed the jewel out of the way and Edison landed empty-handed. Snarling with anger, he pushed past Tom and yelled, “Team, help me here!” TG and Jones leapt forward, forcing Neal and Bruce to fall. While Charlie ran up to Edison and screamed “Throw it over here!” Unfortunately Tom caught it and ran off. But he tripped over a piece of rubble and was caught off balance, which made him hit his head. The sapphire was thrown into the air; luckily Sean leaped up and snatched the precious jewel right before TG could.

Bruce toppled all the members of the Blizzard team with a single push and carried Tom screaming, “Titanium team, let’s move out!” The titanium team ran off leaving the other team behind. “OMG, we’ve got the jewel!” yelled Neal happily! But Tom knew this was not the end...

## The Story of Yang Long

Orla Godfrey, 8, International College Hong Kong Hong Lok Yuen

Long, long ago in China there lived a red, yellow and green fire-breathing dragon called Yang Long. He was covered in shiny scales which glistened in the sunlight and his claws and teeth were as sharp as kitchen knives. He was born in China and loved it from his head to his tail – which was a lot! Yang Long was very brave and he protected China for many centuries by helping the army. He advised the Emperors and Generals, helped to train the warriors and fought alongside them in their battles.

But even dragons get old and tired. This was a problem. You see, China didn’t have anyone or anything as big or strong as Yang Long, so if there was an attack on the country in the future, who would help to protect them? Before Yang Long got too old the Chinese people had to ask him what they should do, because as well as being very brave, he was very wise.

Yang Long thought for three days and finally he replied “I will build a wall to protect you.” The people thought this was crazy! How could a wall protect them? But they trusted Yang Long, because after all he was very wise.

So Yang Long made a wall out of stone bricks that the people brought to him. He stuck them together with “frue”, which was really strong glue Yang Long made himself by breathing fire. After the wall was built, although they were still a bit worried, the people felt reassured. They called it “The Great Wall”, because Yang Long was so great.

Yang Long’s plan worked very well. But because the Great Wall protected China he wasn’t needed much anymore and after a while he got very lazy. He moved to a mountain close to the edge of the Great Wall and all he did was lie around eating dragon fruit – his favourite food.

But one day China’s old enemy came back again to fight them. They had newer and stronger weapons. Because China was isolated behind the Great Wall they didn’t know about these modern things. With their new weapons, the old enemy managed to actually get into parts of China. The people decided they needed Yang Long’s help again.

General Ping, who was in charge of the Chinese army at that time, went to see Yang Long. He was in his usual spot on the mountainside, lying around doing nothing with a pile of dragon fruit beside him. The General was a very fit, kind and friendly person - but a trifle bossy.

He was dressed in his shiny armour most of the time. He ran all the way up the mountain to see Yang Long. Exhausted and panting very hard, because of running in his heavy armor he struggled to say “Yang Long we need you!”

Yang Long looked up and yawned “I’m getting old, sorry I can’t help you.”

“But there are so many things you could do - you could advise us or train us or even try to fight for us.” General Ping said respectfully.

“Okay I’ll try to fight for you.” Yang Long said sounding more like his old self again.

General Ping was surprised how easy it was to persuade Yang Long and he was also happy because Yang Long was back to normal.

The great dragon did fight alongside the army and in fact he was as strong as ever. With General Ping’s warriors he protected China and defeated the enemy. After this battle he kept fighting for China. This showed that he was a good-spirited, dedicated dragon, so the people forgave him for being lazy before. With the Great Wall and Yang Long, it seemed as if China was safe again.

But some years later a warrior was patrolling the wall and discovered a hole in it. He asked General Ping about it. The General said “I don’t know but I’ll ask Yang Long.” Yang Long also didn’t know why the hole had appeared, but he said he would try to fix it if the warriors could help. But no matter how hard the men and Yang Long worked, they couldn’t fix the hole. Every day it seemed to be bigger than before – and they couldn’t find out why this was happening. Unknown to them, their old enemy was making the hole. Every night when they went home after working on the wall, their old enemy came back to make the hole bigger again. They wanted to make the hole big enough so their entire army could get in.

Finally one day the hole was big enough and the enemy army prepared to attack. However they were so noisy you could hear them coming from miles away. This gave the Chinese army a warning and they were already prepared by the time the enemy arrived. General Ping realised what the enemy had been doing and ran to Yang Long to ask him what to do.

Yang Long listened while the General told him about the enemy. He realised that the enemy was too strong to fight. He also realised there was only one way to save China...he had to sacrifice himself! So he laid his body all along the Great Wall from his head to his tail and he gently pushed down on it and sunk gradually into the wall. This repaired and strengthened the wall but left behind only Yang Long’s spirit, imprisoned inside the Great Wall. When the enemy got there they couldn’t get in. They tried breaking it but they couldn’t, the Great Wall was too strong.

That is why the Great Wall looks like a dragon. And even now if you put your ear to the stones of the Great Wall and listen very carefully you can just hear Yang Long whispering over and over again, “Are they gone? Is it over? Can I come out?”

## The Azalea of Hope

Wendy Ko, 11, Pui Kiu College

The Warring states period had just ended; Qin had just demolished the Zhao kingdom. A tremendous famine broke out in the capital. Amidst the ruins was a piece of land blooming with azalea. They were planted by two families, the Ma’s and the Tang’s. Ma’s daughter Jade and Tang’s son Ray were lovers. They swore to hold on to each other until the last moment. Jade loved the azalea and she refused to leave home. Food became scarce, people fled. One day Jade was so starved she nearly fainted when she was pruning the azalea. Seeing this Ray insisted that they should leave to seek for food. Jade brought a pot of azalea with her.

They went into the forest. Ray helped Jade settle under a canopy so he could hunt for food; however, neither a trace of grasshopper nor ant could be found. Realising he had drifted too far from Jade, Ray began his trip back.

“Jade!” He called softly. But there was no response except for the soft pound of fallen leaves. “Jade!” He called out in a panic. He sprinted towards the place where he last saw her. Jade was leaning her head on a rotten trunk, scarlet mushrooms scattered around her skirt. Jade’s lips and cheeks, once as pink and perfect as a summer morning, were now paler than ever.

“Hang on Jade!” Ray croaked, fighting back his tears. Jade’s eyes, deep as the sea, were filled with tears.

“The immortal pill,” exclaimed Ray. “The legend of the immortal pill! Jade, quick, I shall go to the capital!”

The Immortal Pill was made especially for Emperor Qin. To prevent people from stealing the pill, they made a lot of forgeries. Ray was determined to steal it. He was confident their everlasting love would touch the gods and lead them to the correct pill.

Ray entered the gates of Qin’s palace disguised as a chemist and convinced the guards that he was to examine the pills. As he entered the brightly lit room, Ray immediately smelt a scent so overwhelming that he nearly fainted. Inside the chest was the Immortal Pill, with the distinct smell of daffodils, divided into halves. Soldiers were nearing, and Ray could only grasp half of the pill and flee. Ray returned to Jade; together they reached a path that led to the ruins of the Zhao Kingdom when poor Jade collapsed from exhaustion. Her eyes turned from grey to

coal black. Ray stroked her silky dark hair that was as shiny as chestnuts, he soothed her with loving words. Her eyes sunken; her body frail. Tears rolled down Ray's cheeks, he could hear the tapping footsteps of the soldiers, "Go!" Jade whispered, with her remaining strength, and closed her eyes. Ray saw that there was no point in staying near her, and hid in a nearby village, carrying the pot of azalea.

Jade and Ray's love had touched the gods; the gods sent a fairy to save Jade. When Jade recovered consciousness, she saw a maiden gazing at her, the fairy fed her a pill, which would allow her to fall into a deep sleep for two thousand years, and then she would wake and be rescued. The fairy told Ray to take the pill if he wanted to see his lover again.

\* \* \*

Ray had already lived for a hundred years; the azalea lost the glamour it once had, Ray found no meaning in his life without his lover, and seeing the Great Wall cover Jade's body made him feel worse. Now he couldn't even bury her body, Ray felt despondent; he was adamant that he was going to end his life. It was just then when the gods sent a fairy to deliver a message:

Sun rises, sun sets,  
From where the mighty emperor rests,  
His Army will rise from the ash,  
Revelations lie in the glare.

Ray was perplexed; this was already the Han Dynasty and Qin's Army would never appear again! He searched across the country, but there wasn't any sign of Qin's Army. He was about to give up hope and was digging himself a grave when something pricked him sharp. He dug deeper and discovered it was a spear, not an ordinary spear but one made of clay! Ray's curiosity made him dig deeper and deeper, his clothes were dirty, and he was exhausted, but he kept digging, and soon he saw a warrior figure. The azalea blossomed. Ray finally realised that he shouldn't lose faith in pursuing love. What he saw before his eyes was Qin's Army reborn - the Terracotta Army. Suddenly, a bright blue light shot out of the pit, "This must be it," he thought, "The Blue Diamond Eye of his Majesty's Horse."

Carefully Ray plucked the diamond out, and on the horse's socket a riddle was delicately carved:

When the wind blows west,  
The World in one hails,  
The glow guides thee with dreams,  
Through the Wall you free,  
The beloved flower we bless.

Ray thought for a long time. He spent his days figuring the riddle out in vain— he lived his years in misery.

\* \* \*

Two thousand years passed. The diamond hadn't glowed once, the azalea glimmered as Ray became more hopeful. Ray went to the Great Wall every single day. He climbed the most isolated and steepest passages as the others were always flocked by tourists.

On an early morning, to his surprise, he saw a man in a shabby coat muttering to himself. "Poor guy," Ray thought. He pretended that he did not notice him and started to speed up his pace. "Thump," the large bag beside the man tripped him over. There was a piece of azalea petal inside the bag. Spread all over was a drill, a shovel and a map of the Great Wall.

"I am very sorry," the man seemed to come out of his mind.

"What are you doing here?" Ray asked. He discerned that the man was a foreigner with blue eyes.

"I am a magician, you see," the man continued, "I am not those who pull out a rabbit from a hat. I am not the one who turns all the cards to Aces. I perform grand shows. I want to be known by the world to be a great magician! I have been planning a massive show right here. I will walk through the Great Wall! I wanted to dig a tunnel underneath the Wall but then I would be accused of destroying the World Heritage. I have invested all my money in this show and I would be ruined if it screws up."

The diamond in Ray's pocket let out a soft glow.

Ray went home and found that the azalea on his windowsill had withered. He knew he had to accept the truth that Jade had gone; she would lie forever under the Great Wall. Instead, the diamond might help the poor man that had gone bankrupt.

The blue diamond became brighter as the days passed. When the great day of the magic show came, the light became piercing to sight. People were cheering on both sides of the Wall; the noise was deafening. Dressed in his most glamorous cloak, the magician's eyes went wild. His cheeks gave a soft blush; he was trembling, drips of moisture glistened on his forehead. Ray took a deep breath; he put Jade at the back of his mind. He took out the diamond, "Make a wish," he whispered.

Time froze as the magician vanished into the Wall. On the other side of the Wall, his assistants were anxiously detecting his heartbeat, which was getting weaker and weaker. The whole world was silenced. The audience gasped as the magician's hand pushed out of the Wall; the world hailed as he inched out slowly behind the veil. The magician ignored the crowd as he was pulling something out. Ray's heart jumped out of his chest as a second heart beat appeared on the detector...

The azalea bloomed.

## Qin's Return

Noah Law, 8, Harrow International School Hong Kong

**T**rudging through horizon after horizon looking for eternal life, Qin thought to himself how he could gain that much power. Scurrying through the wastelands digging for treasures that could help in his quest, a shiny glint caught his eye. Digging even quicker than before, he discovered something golden hidden in the red earth. Cicadas scurried over it and Qin had to brush them away along with the mud. He paused to look at one of them, remembering when he built the great wall and how many of the cicadas could be found in the trees there. One of them bit him and he shook it away before stamping on it.

He opened up the lid to the goblet. A sweet sticky liquid was inside it. He drank it with pride. "I shall be the most powerful man in China with this elixir," boasted Qin. Qin had found the elixir of eternal life.

He was going to invade the Great Wall of China and was eager to regain his place on the throne. Finally, making it to the Chinese border after sailing for miles across the ocean, Qin's second task was to find warriors. Sprinting through Shanhaiguan he came to the nearest prison.

"Halt. Name?" boomed the guard.

"You don't need my name," sneered Qin, slowly drawing a dagger from his back pocket.

"How dare you..." the guard could not finish his sentence for Qin had stabbed him.

Marching through the prison corridors Qin knew he would find some ruthless soldiers worthy of his greedy quest. Demolishing the door to the cells Qin roared fiercely at the prisoners. "Which one of you knuckleheads is going to show me the strength that I'll need to gain my place on the throne again?!!!"

"What's in it for us?" asked a prisoner in chains.

"Yeah, what's in it for us?" repeated another prisoner.

"Here's the deal; I won't kill you if you join me. Got it?" yelled Qin.

"Yes," mumbled the prisoners.

"Yes, Sir!" corrected Qin.

As Qin marched his army through China he remembered his long painful journey in finding the elixir of eternal life. After all he had been through all that he had found he was still looking for more. The more he had, the more he wanted.

Finally, standing in front of the stone magnificence of the Wall, Qin yelled, "Attack!" His army rushed forward, slicing and destroying everything in its path. "Today I shall be the most powerful man in China!!! No-one can stop me!" boomed Qin.

The Chinese Army closed in on Qin's disorganised army. Out of the Chinese Army came a young soldier. His armour was hanging off him as if it was too big and handed down. His name was Wang and he was only a child although he had been forced to fight.

Wang brought out his sword and charged for Qin. Qin kicked Wang's sword away. "Now you shall die!" cried Qin. He swung his sword. Clang! His sword hit the wall and became stuck.

"You! I'll get you!" bellowed Qin.

As quick as a flash, Wang grabbed his sword and mustered up his courage. Qin tugged at his sword, still stuck in the wall. He pulled with all his might and with that tug, he pulled his sword out of the crack!

At that moment, out of the hole in the wall from which the sword emerged, something was rumbling. Everything was silent; the warriors were, the wind was silent and the leaders were too. Until somebody yelled, "Watch out! She's going to blow!" Everybody started to panic. There was screaming all around.

"What did you..." Qin couldn't finish his sentence because erupting out of the hole, lightning shot out. It filled the sky. Everyone stared in amazement. It circled high in the sky around them. A shape formed in the lightning, the shape of a cicada, the same little animals that made their home amongst the vegetation by the Wall. Something dark was getting bigger in the sky. Not bigger... but closer. It shot straight into the ground at the base of the Great Wall. Everybody pushed forward trying to get a glimpse of this unidentified falling object.

As the mist disappeared, it revealed a dark figure slowly standing up. It was a colossal cicada. Everyone froze in fear. A sheet of lightning lit up the sky. In that flash the cicada vanished and where Qin had stood there was nothing but a pile of ashes in which were written these words:

"I shall follow the balance of life and pledge loyalty to the Wall."



# The Battle of the Great Wall

Wai Cheuk Leung, 11, Evangel Primary

Since the year 2067, chemical warfare and a series of natural disasters had turned the earth into an endless sea, with the exception of skyscrapers and mountains. There, half the survivors banded into the Draconian Empire, a series of wicked governments and “elite” citizens in a military complex. The rest, the forsaken, had banded together after a mad scramble of piracy and engineering hacks has happened between each other. The Forsaken Council was preparing to officially declare war on the Draconians, although the war had already gone on for 7 years.

6 months ago, the Forsaken discovered the Great Wall. The Council decided to preserve it and guard it due to its historic value. But the Draconians wanted it also.

“Hey! Massive Draconian movement on radar!” Captain Harlock shouted at them.

“We’ve got another few hundred ships out there. We can attack for the moment, and call in reinforcements.”

A few hours later, they were ready.

“Enemy Dreadnoughts heading towards us. 3 on starboard.”

Around 10 Hammerheads split off from the group, as 2 more Dreadnoughts joined the original 3 Hammerheads.

“Group A, charge. Group B, snipe.”

The Draconians also surged forward. One of the Forsaken ships launched a Pinch Rocket after realising the Dreadnoughts had Siege Rockets. Siege Rockets launched multiple warheads at a very fast rate, rendering CIWS guns useless. The Pinch Rocket could paralyse the Dreadnoughts for about 30 seconds.

4 of the Dreadnoughts stopped suddenly as the Pinch Rocket exploded. The 5th charged forward.

Just as Group B launched their Solid Fuel Booster-class Cutlass Missiles, which gave them a considerably longer range. The Dreadnought armed a Draconian version of the CIWS.

The damage was enormous. Although the ship didn’t sink, it was heavily on fire.

As the fleet sank the Dreadnoughts, the other ships were now battling Draconian turrets. Each Draconian turret consisted of a platform with a missile system.

The group had split in half and they were constantly moving parallel to the Draconian turrets. The group with Ripper Cannons and Maelstrom Rockets moved incredibly close to the Draconians, risking gunfire from the Defence Cannons.

“When are the reinforcements arriving?”

“We have Barracudas here in 8 hours, Hammerheads in 12, and Sea Wolves in 15. The Goliaths need 3 days, though, they aren’t that quick. We’re seeing if they might send Stalkers.”

5 hours later, they began their retreat. They had used all their ammunition.

Three fleets began to appear. These fleets had little weapons, but they were designed to carry ammunition and even had quite a number of hospital spaces.

Suddenly, the ship shook.

“The Draconians!”

The Sea Wolves were locked in a battle against Draconian Interdictors, the equivalent of the Sea Wolf.

The Sea Wolves were firing at Interdictors with their Cutlass Missiles. But they were too slow. The Interdictors charged forward. The Forsaken were forced to change paths immediately as the Interdictors caught up. Well, at least the Sea Wolves Ion Thrusters worked.”

The group of 4 Interdictors had 2 of their ships sunk by the missiles. The remaining Sea Wolves split apart.

“Radar detecting enemy Strike Cruisers, closing in!”

“Get the Javelins out!”

The FGM-148 Javelin was a small arms heavily explosive weapon, but before they fired their guns, the Interdictor blasted into pieces. The Barracuda submarines had come.

“Strike cruisers! Over there!”

“Firing angel flares and chaff!”

4 cells flew open, and with 4 missiles.

Then they exploded. The chemical flares illuminating the sky in the early morning. The Halo Rockets from the Strike Cruisers were launched too, they exploded in mid-air into dozens of bombs.

But they drove into the flares. Since the rockets were heat-seeking, they hit the flares instead of the ship. Dozens of explosions happened in midair like a large fireworks show.

That was the perfect distraction for the Stalkers and Barracudas. They had surrounded them, and the Strike Cruisers were completely blinded by the chaff. Their sonar’s were blinded by underwater flares and chaffs, and they were quickly destroyed by torpedoes.

“Do Draconians have submarines?”

Just then, one of the Barracudas lost contact.

“Sonar detects Draconian Spectre submarines!”

“Firing Depth Charge rockets!”

But as explosions started to erupt around them, there was panic.

“Requesting reinforcements!”

The submarines down below were having a huge fight. They circled around each other, like boxers dancing around in the ring.

“Get the depth charges and chaff up. Try to distract them.”

The ships steered clear of the submarines.

“Fire!”

The Depth Charge rockets flew up, then headed back down and splashed into the water.

The range of Draconian submarines blew into pieces. The remaining Draconian submarines, now retreated.



That left the Draconian turrets.

Using communications, they created a plan to finish off the turrets. The group would split into two, and attack on both sides. Since the Draconians occupied only a small portion of the wall, as it was huge, it would be easy.

The 1st group attacked 3 hours later. As the Draconian missiles came flying down in a graceful curve, the Forsaken fired their CIWS, flares and missiles. The Draconian missiles were gunned down, and the turrets were damaged. But the Draconians still had a lot of turrets. Some of the close-range ships decided to fire their cannons, and some of the turrets exploded.

A few of the Forsaken ships blew up. Ships came to surround them, firing their guns at the remaining turrets.

“Enemy missiles!”

Just as the 2nd group attacked some of the Draconian turrets had their missile systems destroyed. But the job was not done.

The Draconians didn’t expect such an attack. The remaining turrets were finished.

As some of the ships stopped, some of the men jumped onto the life rafts and sped to the wall. They quickly landed on the mountain and climbed on the wall. A cheer rose as they manned the gun towers on the Great Wall. Although it was made of bricks, the situation was as if it was even more powerful.

Admiral Dredge grinned back in the outpost.

5,000 miles away, someone looked at the report, pondering. He used a golden pistol which had been handed down by his grandfather and shot the person who had given him the report. “Get me that wall back!”

## The Rescue of the Great Wall

Walden Leung, 11, Pui Kiu College

In the middle of China, there is a city called Xi’an. In a time-worn village, a ten-year old scientist named Jeff was zealously testing out his new invention – an extra-powerful magnifying telescope.

While wandering around the individual planets in the Galaxy, something on Neptune tickled his curiosity. Jeff spotted something moving. He quickly zoomed in and gaped at the tiny creatures, jelly shaped, with blue skin and black dots bulging out from all over their bodies. They walked at a very fast pace. To be precise, sliding around is a better description of those movements. Close-up the creatures were full of wrinkles and looked like aliens in Jeff’s mind.

Three aliens came to a halt, and Jeff could zoom in even more. Inside the ‘aliens’ cells were symbols that flashed out as if messages came out from computer screens. Jeff tried to jot down some of those symbols.

But then, when Jeff was investigating those symbols, he heard his mum roaring from the kitchen. “Jeffrey! We have been sitting like statues waiting for you. Come down and have dinner, NOW or your favourite soup will be gone!” Jeff scooted down to join his family for dinner. The smell of Campbell Alphabet Soup was in fact enticing.

Jeff glared at his bowl with alphabet noodles floating around. Suddenly, something struck his mind, “A code! That’s what it is, a code!” He gulped down his soup at light speed, ran up to the attic and took down his decipher, covered by dust.

The decipher was Jeff’s science fair project last year, which could decode secret messages from all codes, known and unknown, including Alienish! You name it and the decipher can decode it. But the judges did not believe that the decipher could decode Alienish. Jeff had no way to prove it either. The judges thought that Jeff wasn’t a scientist; the classmates teased him as a big fat liar. Jeff didn’t get the prize. He was so depressed that he threw the decipher into the attic.

“It’s show time. The whole world should know it works,” said Jeff arrogantly.

So Jeff put in the piece of paper with the symbols and set the decipher to decode alienish into English. The translation came out to be: "Urgh! I am sick at looking at that long Great Wall the Earth humans built. I want to destroy it! Those humans shouldn't have that wall when we don't have it!"

And the machine kept on decoding: I have an idea, let's use some of the  $C_6H_2(NO_2)_3CH_3$  plus one of our most destructive elements – The Hekfessium to bomb that wall! As it continued: What is  $C_6H_2(NO_2)_3CH_3$ ? Another alien explained, "That's what humans call TNT, stupid!"

Jeff sat dumbfounded as the decipher kept translating.

The next day, Jeff tried to inform everyone about the wicked plan of the aliens. He first told his parents, but his parents just laughed and told Jeff to get more sleep. Jeff told his classmates. His classmates thought that he was crazy. He told his teacher, but his teacher thought Jeff only made that up in order to win the next science fair with his old decipher. He told the Ministry of National Defence, but they thought Jeff only wanted to skip school and didn't budge.

Jeff was frustrated. But he soon found out that there was no time for complaints. He had to work out a rescue plan on his own.

Jeff turned on his computer and looked up the element Hekfessium. He found out that Hekfussium was a mixture of elements that did not exist on Earth. It could only be found on Neptune, which if mixed with TNT, can increase the power of an explosion by a trillion.

Then, Jeff spent the rest of the week checking on the symbols from the aliens, using his telescope. "There is a meeting called the G20 on the planet Earth held in 14 days near that Great Wall and all the 'VIP's on Earth will be there. It is a good time for us to showcase our power!"

"Okay, so how shall we do it?"

"Here is my plan. We can actually place the bomb in a thing that the humans call 'car' and wait till the time has come. Then we can make it explode to destroy that Great Wall"

"How are we going to go down onto the Earth? We are so different from those humans that we'll be really obvious."

"Relax, don't you remember we can turn ourselves into anything we like?"

"Yes, but don't you remember that our lips will be still blue, so we will still stand out?"

"I don't reckon that those humans will recognise us, as they are too obsessed with their mobile phones and electronic devices."

Jeff noticed that there was no time to waste, so he set to work.

He locked himself in his room and skipped school. He kept doing research until he thought of an ultimate tool that could disarm car bombs, no matter what chemical substance was inside the bomb.

Jeff took a briefcase, put in two unique water containers and a sheet of plastic explosive in between. His idea was that when the plastic explosive exploded, the first container would act as a water blade that cut through the bottom of a car, and the second layer was to push the bomb away from the fuse.

Jeff has only tested the tool on a trolley, which worked perfectly. He could only hope that it worked on a car as well.

On the day of the G20 meeting, the aliens, disguised as humans, arrived on Earth and started working on their destruction plan. The aliens did not realise that their plan was known by the young boy, Jeff. As soon as they stopped the car next to the Great Wall, Jeff would come over pretending to be a tourist and put the 'briefcase' right under the trunk.

When the aliens drove the car in, the VIPs were on their way to the G20 meeting. Jeff had no time to waste. He sidled down the way and put the case at the bottom of the car. The aliens

paid no attention to Jeff as Jeff looked like an innocent boy to them. Shortly before the VIPs arrived, the street was cleared for security reasons. Jeff knew it was the right moment to push the fuse button.

After a loud 'BOOM', pieces of metal flew out of the car and clouds of smoke could be seen everywhere. A water pillar shot fifty yards away, blowing the bomb out from the car to a forest nearby.

At the same time, Jeff showed the police where the aliens were hiding and they caught the aliens. The President of the People's Republic of China was brought to the scene to meet with the aliens.

Because of their failure, the aliens were furious. They threatened that their buddies would seek revenge if they were killed on Earth. The President understood the aliens did this out of jealousy and he offered to give the aliens a copy of the architectural structure of the Great Wall in exchange for the supply of Hekfessium. The aliens agreed. They finally built a replica Great Wall on Neptune.

As for China, their artillery system has improved a lot since their 'discovery' of Hekfessium. China has surpassed the USA for having the best military system in the world.

Jeff was offered the position of the Minister of National Defence. But he gladly denied the position. So the best thing the President could do was to award Jeff for his two Wall-saving inventions, which were the telescope and the decipher. Oh, and by the way, his award was the best school science project ever.

# The New Tales of the Great Wall

Jett Li, 10, Harrow International School Hong Kong

## Chapter 1: The Beginning of the End

This was it. The end of the world was really happening. For hundreds of years, it was thought of as a joke, but time-space corruption already obliterated countless countries and lives. George was the last one standing. He took shelter on the Great Wall of China, only a chunk was left standing. His father had told him that his mission was the only chance that humanity had to survive the corruption. He took one final breath of fresh air and jumped into the portal that would take him to the past.

George's head was spinning. The portal had taken him years back in the past. It was supposed to take him to 145 B.C. but it looked like any ordinary modern city, just like home before the corruption started. Then it hit him... "I'm back in 2012" he realised. This caused him to start feeling depressed. Not only was he in the wrong place at the wrong time, but he noticed that during the period of 1000 years, not much new technology was created. He was about to use his emergency "back to the future" gadget when an explosion knocked him senseless onto the ground. His last vision was of a man that looked a lot like him facing a hooded creature.

When his senses finally came around, he saw that the man was holding a knife. George immediately recognised the man, he was his ancestor James. George asked "who is that hooded creature?" James replied "a demon named Vata." "A demon?" asked George. "It's only threat to us all is the fact that it wants to devour the world with its powers. It can slow time, burn things at will, turn the warmest place to an icy wasteland, electrocute the most powerful and tactical men on earth and even control earthquakes. However, even with all those powers, I find it a bit farfetched to be able to destroy a planet. Before he tried to blow me up, he told me that he found a key sealed underneath the Great Wall that could open a death portal in the sky...then he said something about it being able to cause dimensional destruction. Luckily enough, I was able to knock him out so that I could corrupt the key. Now it is too small to fit in the portal lock until the lock shrinks in 1000 years" said James. "Who are you anyways?" asked James. "I am..." suddenly, George was whisked back in time again and this time, he reached his destination.

## Chapter 2: Destruction or Survival

As George awoke, he felt a cold rush of wind flow through him. He opened his eyes and drew his sword, a weapon that would make him blend in with the other ancient men. His role was to travel back in time and warn one of his ancestors of the future. His mission was to get to his ancestor Sol. As soon as George found him, George pulled out a Taser and electrocuted him.

After Sol recovered consciousness, he noticed that he was in a cave shrouded by ghosts. As Sol drew his sword, it was knocked out of his hand by someone. The shadow of a man loomed over him, "Relax, my name is George. I am an ally". Sol sheathed his dropped sword. From birth, he had read minds of men to tell if they were truthful. "I am here to work with you on an important mission, will you listen?" asked George.

The news was alarming to Sol. He never would have thought that there is a time space corruption. He was surprised by the information on what he had to do to defeat Vata and destroy the key of world corruption. In time, he had learnt to wield a sword and fight with his bare hands; he also met the great Generals Yin and Yang to discuss all the possible ways to defeat Vata. Eventually, they came to a realisation that only the greatest power of Yin and Yang combined can defeat Vata. Sol named the power of Ying and Yang combined...Unity.

## Chapter 3: Vata vs. Unity

The battle between Vata and Unity had begun.

The allies set up defences at the Great Wall. The enemy demons and orcs were equipped with countless weapons, from swords to spears and from bows to bats; Vata's generals were still making the struggle even more difficult to win. General Yin had sent messengers to the Terracotta Kingdom trying to get the army there to help. General Yang on the other hand, was engaging battles with Vata's generals, Asmodai (the demon of thunder), Uberflare (the demon of fire) and Zefrost (the demon of ice). He had used a blinding flash of light to stun Zefrost and turned him in Uberflare's direction. In no time, fire and ice met and the two generals evaporated. Asmodai quickly jumped in and pushed Yang back with waves of thunders. Suddenly, a burst of light blinded the enemy, and army of clay soldiers emerged from the mountains. The Terracotta warriors arrived.

The fight from there was chaotic; the Terracotta warriors formed a circle around Asmodai and reflected his attacks against him. Asmodai lashed out but the wave of attacks overwhelmed him. George and Sol went back to back against a mob of orcs. As Unity collided with Vata, the wall around them detonated and crushed everyone.

## Chapter 4: The New Great Wall

As the wall fell apart, the key was exposed and let loose an explosion that crumbled some debris, destroying itself and most of the warriors. Little did we know the true legend of the key is sealed underneath the Wall and passed from generation to generation today...the Great Wall is not just an architectural miracle or historical landmark; it is also not merely a fence built to defend against enemies of China; it is the Great Wall of Humanity.

## The Young King's Great Dream

Linus Shing Sum Lo, 9, Bonham Road Government Primary School

Not so long ago, in galaxy not far away at all, I have a weird friend on earth. He is Johnny. One day, he invented a Wormhole Maker. He wanted to try it to see whether it worked or not. He went to the Qin dynasty at random. Johnny landed on a meadow and saw nobody but a small child. "Where are the other children?" he thought. "Never mind, this child looks cool and smart." So Johnny invited the child to his toysland. The child nodded. Actually he did not say a thing.

The child followed my weird friend back to his toysland. The child saw Lego. His eyes were shining, his mouth opened widely. He loved it like crazy. He loved the shape, smell, and just everything about Lego. He played it from day to night; he forgot lunch and dinner. He only kept on playing Lego. He built horses, ships, a mausoleum and toy army. By the time they had to go, he was unwilling to stop and very reluctant to go back home.

The child went back to ancient China. He told all the villagers about his journey. The villagers could not believe it. Years later, the child grew up. He became the king of the Qin, Chin Shih Huang. He still remembered and missed the trip. He ordered his generals to make Lego. His generals had no idea about Lego so they couldn't make any. The king tried to explain and roared "Make something like blocks! Rectangular in shape! They can pile up into bigger blocks! Very hard and difficult to break! They are called Lego! L-E-G-O!" Those generals told the blacksmiths, locksmiths, farmers, carpenters, builders and designer to make Lego. Finally, they made pillows, rectangular keys, blocks of hay, shelves, stools, bricks and tissue boxes. The king shouted, "NO! NO! NO! It does not look like this!"

One day, a man who looked like an ugly fairy came to the king. He was wearing a white robe, a white straw hat and a pair of white shoes. He was also holding a very long staff with a white disgusting viper on it. He said to the king, "I can help you, but you have to give me five-hundred smart and strong boys, five-hundred clever and beautiful girls and a huge double-decker ship which can carry a large amount of food and water, and animals like horses, cows and chicken...." The king said, "If you can find me Lego, it is a deal!" The king gave him everything he wanted and waved goodbye to them. But, one year later, the ship did not return. A few years later, the ship still did not return. The king knew that he was deceived by that

ugly man; he knew the fraud would not come back again so that he went bananas. He was out of patience now so he decided to build a giant team of big wooden ships and giant wagons by himself. He caught thousands of slaves, workers and even farmers to work. He sent the ships to the ocean and wagons to the mountains. The only mission was 'find the Lego'. A few months later, the workers on wagons came back with a pile of goods. But it was only chicken LEG, pig's LEG, lamb's LEG and even insect's LEG. The king became angry. A few years later, the sailors returned with a whole ship of goods. They found lots of things that started with letter 'O', they found Oranges and Oreos from America, they found Olive from Greece, Opal from Australia, Octopus from Sweden, Orchid from Africa.... When the king saw all the things they got from the ships and wagons, he became angry and mad. He fainted and got sick.

As the time went by, the king missed Lego and had dreams about it. He got more and more sick. Finally he could not get out of his bed. His minister brought many doctors to cure the sick king. All of the doctors failed. The other generals kept on searching for this unreal object. All of them did not come back! At last, a general named Monk had an idea. He ordered his soldier to collect a large amount of stone and pile it up on top of the mountain like a castle. It was because the mountain is too far away that the sick king could not see it clearly through the window of his bedroom. Several months later, Monk brought the sick king in front of the window and said, "My majesty, we have found the Lego. Look! We have made you a castle from it!" The king was very happy, he told his minister, "When I get better, I will go on top of it by myself, keep on building it!" Unfortunately, the king never got well. So the workers had to keep on building it. Nobody dared to stop. The castle became longer and longer until it became a giant wall.

At the end of the winter, their enemies came to attack. They went to rule ancient China. When they arrived at the boundary, the enemy captain said, "What is this long wall? How can they make it so long?" They tried to get over it. They tried to use ladders, but the wall was too high. They tried to dig through it with pickaxes, but the wall was too hard, all pickaxes went blunt. They tried to go around it, but they could not find the other end because it was too long. At last, they run out of food but still could not break through the giant wall. Then the captain decided to retreat. The sick king was relieved and sighed, "What a great wall! From that time on the giant wall was called The Great Wall.

The king has never been to the Great Wall. He died in the spring next year. The workers could stop building the castle at last.



## New Tales of the Great Wall

Michelle Wing Sze Ng, 11, Diocesan Girls' Junior School

At long last, the eternal climb to the top of the Great Wall was over. Both Drew and I let out a huge sigh of relief and stood there, feeling the wind on our faces.

When I had fully recovered from the three-hour walk, I fished out my camera from my backpack and started snapping pictures like crazy, trying to preserve the breathtaking view we could see from the summit of the Great Wall with my camera.

Drew, whose restlessness was palpable as usual, was pacing about, peering around everywhere. Suddenly, he gave a cry of ecstasy, having finally found something interesting enough to rivet his attention, if only for a few minutes.

I thought to ignore him when he called me over to see, but the urgency in his tone startled me. I looked at the inconspicuous nook he was fixated at, and saw a thin, delicate piece of bronze with a carving on it secreted inside. On first inspection, it looked like normal cement, as it had a thick pile of dust on it, but on deliberate scrutiny, I realised it was a piece of bronze.

We looked incredulously at each other, and there was no doubt that the bronze carving was old, but why would it be left here? I kept trying to come up with reasons to refute our own theories, but there were none.

I snapped out of my reverie just in time to see him loosen the stone tile in front of it. "Drew! What are you doing? What if people see you?" He grinned. "Bet you're just as curious as I am about how it came here. There may be some kind of signature behind the bronze piece, so we might be able to figure out who carved it!" I groaned. "That's called destroying public property! If everyone did that, then there would be no stones left on the Great Wall!" "Chill Izzy, the carving didn't even seem like part of the Great Wall. Come on, let's go back to the hotel and see what we've got." I sighed in defeat. "Fine. But only this once."

When we got back to the hotel, Drew took the bronze piece out and handed it to me. I turned to look at the back of it, and sure enough, there were some characters there. But what did they mean? I turned around, but Drew was already on Google. We compared all the characters on the stone to the ones on the computer, but only five out of the nine matched. They were the first three, and they meant "no one could". No one could what? What was it that was so important that someone had it carved on a piece of bronze?

My head was buzzing with a ton of questions, but I had a feeling that Drew had even more. "What do we have to do to find out what these other characters mean? If we asked some random people on the street, the chances are they can't tell us!" Drew said.

"Well, we could find a translator. But I don't think any ordinary translator can tell us about these characters. They seem really old. I don't think anyone even uses these in China nowadays." I told him.

"What are we waiting for? Let's copy the symbols down on a piece of paper and go." I shrugged and took a piece of paper to copy them down. But no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't draw one that was even a bit similar to the ones on the tile. I peered at the ones Drew had drawn. They seemed much better. We would have to use his then.

While he was copying the characters down, I searched on Google Maps for nearby translators. There was one a few blocks down, so I decided we would go there first. If that wouldn't work, there were still a dozen or so we could try.

When we arrived at the shop, I knew at once that this was a poor choice. The people at the counter were too young, and the shop was too new. It was probably just to translate modern Chinese characters to English or vice versa.

The next few shops were just as disappointing as the last. We had almost gone through the whole list when I saw a sign pointing to an old shop saying, "That way to translation shop." I pounced on it immediately and went into the shop with Drew.

The shop smelled old and musty, full of incense. Behind the counter was an old man. He looked to be in his nineties already. I approached the counter and asked him about the characters, giving him the sheet of paper. He looked at them and smiled, saying, "I would be honoured to translate them for you, young lady. Those characters dated back a few thousand years, and they were extremely difficult to write."

The man creased his brow in concentration and started to translate them first into modern Chinese, then into English for us. "It says, 'No one can live forever'. The signature, it is from a famous sage man back then. Unfortunately, he was killed by the emperor when he was only in his forties."

My eyes widened in surprise. "Do you know why he was killed?" I asked the old man. "Of course, young lady. He was killed because he said this to the emperor. The emperor, you must understand, was obsessed with the idea of never growing old and ruling the kingdom forever. When he heard this, he was enraged. He ordered the man to be killed immediately. The man was called Hiaonam. Have you ever heard of him?"

Drew and I looked at each other, mouths hanging. The name was indeed familiar to us. The man was our seventy-seventh generation great grandfather!!



## One Last Wish

Natalie Lai Ka Wang, 11, Diocesan Girls' Junior School

It was all because of a calling a few days ago. Today, standing on the familiar grounds of the Great Wall of China, he waited for the summoning to come again. With a camera hung around his neck, sunglasses resting on his sweaty forehead, and brochures stuffed in his back pocket, the man was dressed head to toe as a tourist – perfect disguise for blending into the crowd.

"I know you're here," a deep roar startled him. He glanced around, it seemed like nobody heard the voice apart from him, just as it should be. He immediately rushed to the nearest gateway 15 metres away. After checking the symbols on the stones, he was sure this was the meeting place his ancestors had been telling him about all along. He looked around; this had to be the quietest spot in the Great Wall. This had to be the right place.

"Lee, do you remember the story they used to tell you?" He heard the familiar voice ask. It seemed to have come from the lower part of the gateway. He crouched.

"Yes, indeed, Emperor Qin." He began to speak, just loud enough for the two of them to hear.

"My ancestor, sorcerer Lee, put a spell on your spirit to be forever embedded in the Great Wall, and this legend has been passed on from one generation to the next, and my whole family are extremely proud of it."

"Well, Lee, you must never forget the very reason the spell was cast. For years the kingdoms have been at war and all I wanted was the power to see people in peace, united in one country. Not only did I want political power, but I also yearned for eternal life." The voice paused, as if waiting for the man to continue the story.

"Of course, that is why eventually you appointed my ancestor to transfer your spirit to this very place, the monumental symbol of your rule. Emperor, I believe the reason you summoned me here was not to recite the story we both know back to front, right?"

"My son, I no longer want to be in the Wall anymore. After centuries and centuries of seeing the world change around me, around the Wall, I realised that I had been wrong all along."

"I'm afraid I don't follow. What do you mean exactly?"

"Yes I wanted eternal life, but it was for all the wrong reasons. I wanted to feel as if I were still in power even after my death, which was why I ordered the Terracotta army to be made

as well. For years I have lied to myself, thinking that China was still under my rule. However, time has taught me to face the truth about my fate, and the life I thought I was living is long gone. Seeing everything change around me makes me wonder why I am still stubbornly, willingly trapped in an ancient fortress. I want to be freed." The voice gave out a short sigh. It took the man a while to take it all in. After all, he had never imagined that one day he would be using the mirror spell on the once majestic Emperor Qin. As excited as he was, he was quickly reminded of the fact that he had never casted a spell in his life and that he was the only person alive who could fulfil Emperor Qin's wish. His palms began to sweat, as he began to feel the weight of the responsibility he was given.

"My highness, are you sure about it? If I release your spirit from the Wall, you can never return, nor can you communicate with anybody again," the man asked anxiously, his heart beating faster by the second.

"I have been thinking about this for the past decade. I have no regrets after seeing the great changes that have taken place over time, there is nothing left I could do anyway. My only wish now is to be free and let my spirit rejoin my body so I can forever rest in peace." The man knew his time had come, that he could make history and prove himself worthy to his line of ancestors. He recalled the spell and practiced a few times in his head.

"Yes my Highness, I am ready when you are ready," he lied; his trembling voice gave him away. Desperately rubbing his sweaty hands on his pants to calm his nerves, he looked around to make sure nobody was around. He then stood up, took a few steps back, and stared at the sky. As if the spirits in the sky knew what would happen next, a thick fog rolled in and a beam of light shone through the clouds onto the very spot the man was standing at. His eyes rolled back and his back straightened, he could feel the magic all around him. This was it.

He began to cast the mirror spell. As the words rolled out of his mouth, a blue mist began to form before him, slowly taking shape of the face of Emperor Qin. His voice grew louder and stronger as he reached the last two lines of the spell, and the whirlpool of clouds began to spin as if ready to welcome this long-awaited spirit. The blue mist ceased to move and for a split second, he could have sworn the ancient King looked right into his eyes, full of gratitude. Then it vanished. The spell was cast and all was done.

The man stood still for a moment and looked at the sky again. The fog disappeared and the sky became clear. Looking around, people didn't seem to notice what had happened and he let out a sigh of relief. The sky will never look the same again for him, as he knew he had granted the Emperor his last wish, and a smile of pride escaped the corners of his mouth.

# The Great Wall

Daniel Paddock, 10, Yew Chung International School of Hong Kong

I am a tree, a tree fresh on a mountain in Qinhuangdao, northern China. I grow in height and slowly pass the other trees as I grow older; and I experience a wonderful but terrifying experience. It began with a few bulky and miserable people carrying heavy rocks up the mountain and stacking them on top of each other. "How strange?!" I thought to myself. The people grew in number, and in a few weeks the rock stacking appeared to be some sort of wall. "Why would they build a wall that stretched up into one of the many mountains here?" I thought.

The builders were tired and miserable, and this wall didn't improve their tempers as I found out one afternoon. I was watching the builders when suddenly two of them got into a fight on top of the half-wall, which wasn't at all stable and the part they were standing on suddenly collapsed. I watched in horror as some other men carried them away, but they were still screaming insults at each other! After their wounds had healed, I saw them back at the construction site, but this time they were rebuilding the part they had collapsed as a punishment.

The wall grew longer and longer, taller and taller until it snaked from the bottom of the mountain to the other side and I could see them still building. "I thought they would have finished by now, but I seem to be wrong." I still wondered, "Why are they building this wall here in the first place?" I had hundreds of questions bursting out of me but I knew they could not be answered; I would have to wait until the event to happen to find out.

Qinhuangdao were losing a lot of workers to build this wall, for there were at least 10 lives being cut short every day by falling off the wall. "What could be the reason that building this wall is so important that they don't care about losing their people?" Winter is coming, and I hoped that they wouldn't be foolish enough to lose more. After a month, my thought proved to be wrong, the weather was wild and it would snow heavily every day, not to mention the dagger-like wind. But no matter how wild and angry the weather was, I could still see the blur of workers piling rocks with their cold, numb hands.

As winter closed, the weather became worse and it snowed so heavily that I could not even see the ground, so I had no idea what was happening to the workers. More storms came,

the sky flashed with lightning, and the wind ripped my branches off. My neighbours were uprooted and left lying on the floor as if an axe-man had been here. Then, by some miracle, it was suddenly over, I was alive but it was then I realised how lethal the storms had been for the workers. Hundreds of them lay either on the wall or on the floor, breathless. But their benefit from working through the winter was that their wall now stretched far from where I could see, and I knew that it would be a true master construction when it was finished.

I soon found the answer to my biggest question, why are they building here? One day, soldiers appeared on the wall for 5 days, looking for signs of danger. On the 6th day there was a thudding noise that pounded and shook the ground. The sentries shouted and a whole troop of archers appeared. Now I realised that this wall was a defence against a huge army from the north, the Mongols, who were planning an attack on China.

I was really frightened, I was about to be caught up in the battle. The Chinese started by firing a neat formation of arrows that flew through the sky, and I heard screams of pain cry out from the Mongols. The Mongols answered by firing so many arrows that it blotted out the sky, and almost all the archers on the wall collapsed and screamed in pain. Even I got pelted with arrows that cut into my bark, freeing my sap. I seemed like a human too, I had bark instead of skin and sap for blood, but there's one thing that I was sure of, that I wouldn't go down as easily and that I had a bigger chance of survival. Then the Mongols did something that changed my mind, they were carrying torches and they set the ground on fire. I was terrified as the hands of death reached towards me, looking for me, hunting me. I was praying in panic as the flames reached closer to my roots, centimetre by centimetre. When I looked like I had breathed my last, my prayers were answered and a humongous clap of thunder brought down bucketfuls of rain. The flames died out but the war went full on after that. The Chinese were charging at the Mongols, slashing their swords and flicking their daggers. The Mongols were terrific archers and started picking them off with their bows.

It was a few days before the battle finished, and it was obvious that the Mongols had won. The Mongols took out much of the Chinese army and rode through the wall where huge gaps had been smashed through. They captured the village easily and claimed victory.

That is the story of how I, a normal tree, had first experienced the legend of the wall. I shall never forget those early days but in the years to come I witnessed many other great battles here, until eventually peace fell. Today I'm very old, yet still stand tall and proud over the wall. It maybe broken in parts, and overgrown with my fellow trees, but it is truly the Great Wall and one of the wonders of the world.

## Ming Ling and the Secret of the Dragon Jewel

Ernest Wang, 10, Glenealy School

Darkness consumed my gaze as I plunged into the icy depths of the sea. My head was spinning, my arms and legs numb with cold. I drifted silently across the seabed refusing to give in to death. I saw a glimmer of light in the distance but it was growing farther and farther away. Desperately I swam onwards with the last of my remaining energy and felt the blinding light of its power surrounding me...

I woke up with a jolt of shock, finding myself gasping for breath. I wondered why this dream was a lot more vivid than the rest and why it kept haunting me over and over again. I sighed; summing it up as a nightmare. I dressed myself and left for school.

I loathed spring in Beijing. There were always sandstorms. Like today the air was gritty and gray. Our soccer match was called off at the last minute. The playground was shrouded in a cloud of maroon sand. I could barely see anything in my way. I pulled tight my face mask only to stumble upon an ancient and crinkly text in the air. It read,

On the third night of red moon,  
the earth as we know it will be consumed.  
For the Dragon's curse has been broken,  
to calm down his rage you must obtain a token.  
A hero that does not seek fame or the purest gold,  
for the Dragon Jewel he shall hold.  
The survival of the world he shall bring,  
entirely depends on Ming Ling.

"Good god!" I exclaimed as the text disappeared all at once. I had heard of myths of the Dragon Jewel, just like every child in China. Legend says that deep down in a river an angel wanders around illuminating the darkness underwater. If you so happen to run into it, you will be given the Dragon Jewel. Suddenly I recalled my old nightmare. Putting two and two together I was meant to know the path.

When I came home I plodded up to my room. "All of this is a whole bunch of baloney." I yelled, pummeling the pillow trying to look for an answer. I could hardly relax my stressed shoulders until I drifted off into the claws of sleep.

I woke up in a frozen atmosphere. "Where am I?!" I called out, "Hello???" "Be calm young hero," whispered a voice behind me. I span around to find a mystical being.

"Who are you?" I said cautiously. "Zhen Liang, the first ever Chinese empress." "Why are you here?" "It is my curse to stay here eternally and guard the Dragon Jewel." "But why?" "That I cannot answer young one. Have faith, just trust you are me and you can accomplish anything!" Her voice faded into the background.

I lifted my head up sleepily as the milky dawn light seeped through my bedroom window. I yawned when a flicker of motion crossed my gaze. I wearily looked around, daunted as I saw the faint outline once again reminding me of the agreement. "I will not fail you..." I murmured. Flopping down on the bed, I closed my drowsy eyes. "Perhaps I'll get another visit from Zhen Liang."

I arrived in a dark cavern. The only light I saw was the flicker of a golden scale faraway. My mind whirled fast. "This isn't the place I met Zhen Liang." The flickering stopped and before I knew it I felt something coiling agonisingly around me.

"How dare you speak that cursed name!" it hissed in my face. "The one that betrayed the royal family at the edge of Yongding River! The one that gave them to the Cao army at the blood moon!"

The realisation dawned on me, "It wasn't silk on Zhen Liang's cloak. It was blood!"

"I am expecting more sense out of you," the Dragon snorted. "Who are you???" "The real empress's royal guard but then Zhen Liang took over and exiled me. I was the only one that rebelled against the murderous country."

Releasing its grip, it went on, "The Dragon Jewel's purpose was to imprison the Cao army from taking over China but it also has the power to free them for eternity."

"How's this got anything to do with you?"

"I was the protector of the Dragon Jewel until the Cao army invaded Beijing. I hid it deep underground, underneath me as the spell of Zhen Liang turned me into the Great Wall. The witch stole the Dragon Jewel. She has been waiting two thousand years for the next blood moon to arrive so she can resurrect the Cao army and take over the world."

"No!!!" I gasped.

"Take this and close the portal that the Cao army will use to come to the living world at the end of the Great Wall." The Dragon handed me a dark orb. "This is a shadow orb which upon contact with the portal will create a black hole for a momentary five seconds."

I rushed onwards to the end of the Great Wall. There was a call behind me, "Take care Ming Ling. The journey will not be as easy as you think!" I hurriedly made my way but something slammed into me. I looked up to see the terrifying figure of Zhen Liang upon me.

"Fool!" she screamed. "You were too weak to determine the best way!" Her cloak soaked in blood as she drew out a scythe. "Now you shall pay!" She slashed at my face but I dodged backwards. Through the corner of my eye I already saw a portal opening up. "You're too late now!" She cackled.

"Never!!!" I blindly threw the shadow orb. As the orb hit the portal, the first soldier coming out was devoured and we were all sucked into the deep darkness.

"This is how it ends and how it should be..." a voice whispered in my ear. I nodded with understanding as my body was swirling in the void of space time continuum.

# The Renaissance of the Great Wall

Alex Wong, 9, Victoria Shanghai Academy

It was the year 3093, and the Great Wall of China was standing tall and majestic. However, it wasn't going to stay that way for long because the world was on the verge of World War III. Yang, a young boy of the age of 9, stood on the Great Wall and thought about all the times he had played with his friends on this wall. The wall symbolised his home, his childhood, fun and joy. It was the whole entire world to him. To his country, the Great Wall symbolised unity, strength, cultural importance and history.

Suddenly, Yang's mother came rushing to the wall and said "We have been selected to go to the evacuation rocket! We must leave immediately! Grab one thing you love and let's get going!" Impulsively, Yang broke off one of the bricks of the Great Wall, and dashed home to meet his parents. Together they hopped on to a hovercraft to go to the local rocket launch site.

Since China's first manned space craft launch in 2003, the nation's space program has developed tremendously. The first Chinese space station was built in 2020 and now, more than a thousand years later, it has expanded into a city-like complex attached to the moon. The government sent a mother ship with lots of docking ports, and over the years, they sent up baby ships with 2 to 3 docking ports to form the space station. The lunar city has a protective bubble around it and some artificial gravity and atmosphere generators. The bubble can expand so that more people can live in it. The Chinese government built this lunar city in anticipation of World War III. The Chinese space station now has enough room for up to 5 million people to live in. 100 people already live on the lunar city.

World War III will be a nuclear war, so a lot of places will be bombed - one of which is likely to be China because it is a major superpower. The radiation from the bombs will affect the ability to sustain life in many places, especially the bomb sites. The space evacuation program is aiming to preserve the ways of the Chinese culture and history, while including the basic needs of the people displaced by the war. The colony needed the specialists who are necessary for survival. They include farmers, scientists, technicians and doctors.

Yang, his family and his village were all farmers, so they were chosen as a representative of his region's culture and because they knew how to farm. The plan of the evacuation is to get some of the population and culture of each region to evacuate.

Life on the lunar city was hard at first because Yang and his family had few possessions. But soon they got used to the life there. Yang felt comfortable in the lunar city because his family and friends were with him.

Many years passed, and with them, Yang grew up and became an inventor. He had not forgotten his childhood ambition to restore the Great Wall. He could still identify some parts of the Great Wall from the moon. So, he did extensive research about the history and construction of the Great Wall, sometimes not even sleeping. He met a team of skilled construction workers, builders, programmers and architects who were his friends on the lunar city and showed them his research. He built a fleet of work robots that his friends programmed to solve the problem of not having enough workers. However, the biggest problem he had to overcome was the shortage of building materials. He simply couldn't find a suitable substitute for the original stones of the Great Wall.

One of his greatest inventions was a 3 Dimensional cloner. But he didn't know what to clone in order to achieve successful restoration of the Great Wall.

One day, when he was cleaning his house, he discovered the brick, that he had taken as a souvenir. He had forgotten all about it! He put the brick into the 3 Dimensional cloner and pressed the copy button, enlarged it, waited and it...worked! So, brick by brick, Yang and his friends recreated the Great Wall of China on the moon.

One Millennium later, when Earth was inhabitable again, one of Yang's descendants who was exploring earth looked up at the moon and saw that there was a long snaky line across the moon. It was the only structure on the moon that was visible from Earth - the new Great Wall of China!



# New Tales of the Great Wall

Maggie Yang, 10, Kennedy School

I shifted uncomfortably in my seat. Jasmine glanced at me out of the corner of her eye.

“You okay?”

I nodded. “I’m fine.”

Jasmine didn’t respond immediately. I turned my head to look at her, only to see my sister craning her neck to see the pilot.

I followed her movement. The pilots’ eyebrows were furrowed, and the co-pilot was staring at the radar. He pressed a button, and the signs for seatbelts lit up.

“Passengers, attention.” The co-pilot’s voice resounded through the small plane. “We are going through a severe turbulence. In ten minutes we are going to pass over the Great Wall to have an emergency landing, so would everyone please put on their seatbelts and get ready.”

I sighed and fastened my seatbelt, and then did Jasmine’s, trying to stop her from hyperventilating. My little sister always had a problem with heights, so having a sister like me—calm, cool, and level-headed—that had a strangely catastrophic life was very useful for her.

“Oh, God, Stephanie, what if we crash? What are we going to do—” The plane wobbled.

“Whoa!” Jasmine’s knuckles were white on her seat. She began to grab at the emergency jacket under her seat, and gestured at me to do the same. Sighing, I obliged. Jasmine stuffed the jacket behind her and began to pack her bag.

The plane shook again. Jasmine froze for two seconds. “Do you think we’re going to crash, Steph?”

“We’re going to land soon, Jazz. No worries.”

Jasmine nodded slowly. “No worries. Right.”

The plane swayed a few times. The plane’s nose suddenly dipped, and I suddenly regretted telling Jasmine that it would be fine.

We began to plummet. A few passengers screamed as the air pressure increased rapidly. I imagined myself as Brian Robeson, in the plane that was crashing and suddenly landing in the ‘L’ shaped lake.

Three hundred feet, two hundred, one hundred fifty, one hundred... I blacked out.

“Stephanie! Wake up!” I sat up, and Jasmine’s forehead hit mine.

I rubbed my head wistfully, as if I was an amnesia victim. Jasmine stared at me.

“You’re awake! Finally!”

“I figured,” I muttered.

“I can’t believe we crashed. There was an airport, like, this close—” Jasmine narrowed the distance in between her thumb and forefinger. “—and BOOM!” She imitated an explosion. “We landed. You blacked out when we were almost at the ground. Eve’s hurt really badly, since she was sitting roughly where the plane cracked.”

“Who’s Eve?”

Jasmine narrowed her eyes at me.

“Oh, a passenger. Of course.”

We sat in silence for a while, listening to people shouting, the noise mostly coming from where Eve was sitting.

Eventually, the noise died down as Eve fell asleep. The head pilot called in an assembly, to get to know everyone and their situations.

There were roughly fifty people on the plane. None of us really cared what the other parties were doing, but we just wanted to get home.

“Don’t worry, everyone. We’re along the Great Wall, so we can’t be far from civilization.”

The head pilot reassured a few passengers that were panicking.

Soon, night fell as the daylight dimmed. Groups of twos and threes huddled together, whispering about the situation. Jasmine and I just lay in silence, knowing that no words could help.

All too soon, I woke up. It was about six o’clock, so there was enough light for me to explore. I began to walk eastward. There was a forest there, next to the plain that everyone was sleeping in. Jasmine was still asleep, so I didn’t worry about her.

The forest was dry, which made me more confident. I moved fast, since I was one of the best athletes in Yale.

A few minutes later, I was tired. The forest seemed to go on forever, but I knew that the end had to be somewhere and I was determined to find it.

Suddenly, I heard a strange sound. It was similar to the binaural beats that I listen to, consisting mostly of Theta beats. Very quickly, I did a reality check, but my fingers failed to pass through my palm. I took a few steps cautiously, and the sound’s volume increased notably.

I began to run towards the source of the noise. My palms were tingling, and I couldn’t shake off the feeling. Slowly, the beats began to become louder and louder, and soon it was as if the noise was being blasted in my ears.

I stopped. In front of me was a swirling mass of pink, blue, green, and purple mist. In the middle was a circle of blinding white light, which reminded me of a few pictures I saw of the Hurricane Katrina.

I instantaneously knew what it was. There was a portal in front of me, summoned by magic I couldn’t possibly fathom. Somehow, I also knew that it would take me home... home sounded like a haven right now. Forget about our jobs, home was where I needed to go.

Jasmine. What about her? A voice in my mind asked me. I was tempted to leave her, even though she was my sister. I shook my head. Overwhelmed by the feeling of loyalty and protectiveness, I started to run back in the direction I came from. My brain told me I had five minutes.

I began to run faster. I was almost there. Soon I was sprinting, and two minutes later I reached the plain. I grabbed Jasmine’s arm and hauled her upwards, and then took off again. Jasmine mumbled a few incoherent words, but I kept on going.



When I was halfway there, Jasmine woke up with an anxious cry. “What the- where are we? What are you doing? Stephanie!”

I burst into the portal, standing there, waiting for the portal to work.

“A portal? Stephanie, what about the others?”

“They’ll be fine.” I replied slowly and hesitantly.

I hated lying to my sister.

## The Great Mystery

Alyssia Yuan-Pritchard, 10, Peak School

The sun had just risen above distant mountains as class G9 of British High School arrived at Badaling station to visit the Great Wall of China. Mrs Chan, the school Mandarin teacher stood in the carriage explaining “The Great wall is almost 9,000km long which is about 9,000 times as long as Hong Kong Island”. Gemma slammed down her iPad on the table in a temper because she was almost out of batteries after playing a popular game, Minecraft, for the whole journey rather than paying attention. Mr Fizzle shouted “We have arrived, remember to take all your belongings. Gemma you are partnering with Abby today and I am responsible for you both”.

Gemma and Abby are worst enemies at school because they are poles apart in everything; money, looks, popularity, clothes and their families. Except one thing - they both like playing Minecraft, a virtual world game that allows the imagination of players to run wild, building houses, growing animals and finding diamonds.

There was an excited mood throughout the train as children rushed to get off and at the same time Mrs Chan quizzed Mr Fizzle “I hope this is a good decision because you know that Gemma and Abby don’t get along! Can you manage those two without any trouble?” Deep down Mr Fizzle knew that it was a bad decision so he decided to bring along his daughter, Lucy. “Mr Fizzle do you know what you are doing?” snapped Mrs Chan.

There were dark rain clouds overhead and a chilling wind when the children started to climb the enormously steep steps of the Wall. Most children were listening carefully to the tour guide explain the history of the wall that was built during the Ming Dynasty over 2,500 years ago. Gemma cheekily asked Mr Fizzle “Were you alive then?” Droplets of rain began to fall before Mr Fizzle could answer and there was a large deafening clap of thunder followed by a bright flash of lightning. Gemma and Abby started to run for cover but all they could see was a whirl of iPads going around them. Gemma shouted at Abby “Do you know what is happening?” “Yes! It’s an electrical storm full of flying iPads!!” and just then Abby got hit on the head and fell to the ground.

Two minutes later the weather returned to normal but something strange had happened. They were in a different world full of blocks, monsters, animals and there in front of them

stood an unfinished Great Wall of China, looking like a wobbly dragons back. Staggering to her feet Abby grew increasingly alarmed “This is MINECRAFT! We are inside a game! We have gone back in time! OMG!”

Back in the real world Mr Fizzle was panicking and Lucy picked an iPad off the ground and she was horrified to see both girls were trapped inside the game.

Gemma and Abby looked up when they heard stomping noises approaching them and it was a large fat man in red silk robes, holding a golden shaft and wearing a strange looking hat. In a polite voice, the man said “I am the Emperor and you must be my new servants. For your first task you must continue building the wall because I need it finished so I can defend against Mongols and other invaders. You need to start at sunrise and my guards will watch over you while I get my architectural plans finished for the Forbidden City!” The emperor swiftly turned around and left.

Lucy had a really bad feeling about this mess especially because she knew Gemma was not the servant type. She muttered under her breath “I need to get the girls out and I know just the thing that can help!”

It was a wet misty morning and both girls had been working on the wall for two hours. Gemma whispered “Let’s be honest, I am not the brains but I might have a plan. If you keep working here I will try to find a way out and I promise I will not be seen by the guards. I do not want to be a servant or a warrior who fights with those thingy sticks”. Abby nodded and said “Alright. I have to say that is a good idea. But under one condition: we have to work together because I don’t want to be one of the million people that died building this wall”.

Gemma escaped down the side of the wall and into a dark woodland with a small pond but was startled by a furry creature who looked cute, with big eyes, light blue fur and purple polka dots. The creature said “Don’t be afraid. Lucy has sent me to help. Just come to this place tonight and jump in the pond, shout the magic word ‘Codfish’ and close your eyes to get out of this world”. Gemma was happy but worried because she had to escape without being noticed.

That night the girls went to the pond but Abby was not convinced about jumping in a cold, stinking and muddy pond - how ridiculous! Gemma begged Abby “You said we had to work together, just trust me. I am sorry for everything that has happened in the past”. Abby reluctantly agreed and they launched themselves into the pond, tightly closing their eyes and shouting “Codfish!”

In a bright flash out of nowhere they landed on their bottoms in front of Mr Fizzle, who asked “Where have you two been and what is that revolting smell?” Abby said “We have been learning about the Wall!” with a smile. On the way back to the train Abby asked “For the next school trip can we go to another wonder of the world? Let’s try the Pyramids in Egypt?”

## Alpha and the Ghost of the Great Wall

Alpha Tin Hei Yuen, 11, Bonham Road Government Primary School

### Chapter One — The Trip to the Great Wall

“Yeah!” Alpha said. “We can go to visit the Great Wall.” “Don’t be naughty when we get there,” said Alpha’s dad. They took a cab to the Great Wall, which was a very fantastic view in the eyes of Alpha.

When Alpha and his dad were walking along the Great Wall, Alpha slipped on a small piece of sheepskin on the floor. Then, he picked it up. There was a message on the sheepskin:

“Invitation for a ghost party.

Dear Alpha,

Time: 7:00p.m.

Avenue: The door of Great Wall

By, The Emperor of the Ghosts”

When Alpha read the message, he felt very scared and weird. He showed the sheepskin to his dad.

“My dear son, don’t be afraid. It’s just a joke. There are no ghosts in the world,” said his dad. Then they continued their Great Wall tour.

In the evening, they went back home. When Alpha was doing his holiday homework, he always thought of the message. Around 6:30p.m. Alpha entered the bedroom and locked the door. He climbed over the window and took a cab to the Great Wall by himself.

When he reached the Great Wall, he thought “Oh! My brother and darnation! So many ghosts!” There were many people around him, however only Alpha could see the ghosts. Although he was really scared, his curiosity drove him to the door of the Great Wall.

He went near the door and the Ghost with a crown said, “I am the emperor of the Ghosts. I warmly invite you to come here because I want to tell you the secret of the Great Wall. Nobody knows.”

Alpha thought that the ghosts were quite friendly. More importantly, Alpha was curious about the secret. But the emperor of the Ghosts said, “First, you need to practice our ghost trick

and go on two adventures. After that, I will tell you the secret”.

“Ok! When will you teach me the somewhat ghost trick?” said Alpha. “Now!” said the emperor. Then the emperor taught him the ghost trick of going through a wall and said “You need to practice the ghost trick very well. We will meet here again next Sunday”.

Alpha returned back to his bedroom. When he finished his homework, he started to play the ghost trick. He found that it was very hard to play the ghost trick because he was not a ghost.

Everyday afterwards, he practiced the trick a lot. After a few days, he could go through a wall like a real ghost. Alpha thought that the tricks were quite convenient because he could always find a short cut by going through a wall.

#### First adventure — Mengjiangnu

Next Sunday, Alpha went back to meet the emperor of the Ghost. The emperor said “You can start your first journey now”. Then the emperor took him to the front door and said “Alpha, you need to save a girl called Mengjiangnu”.

Alpha entered a room and found that he was in a kitchen and was wearing the costume of a home-helper. He found a piece of sheepskin on the floor. He picked it up and read:

“Alpha,  
Now, you are a home-helper of Mengjiangnu. You need to sweep the floor everyday.  
Certainly, you need to remember your own real duty.”

Alpha was very angry because he did not want to be a home-helper. Even he did not want to sweep the floor everyday. In fact, he has never helped with the housework for his mother before. Nevertheless, he was willing to go on the adventure because he was eager to know the secret.

Suddenly, a girl appeared and said “Alpha, I will go to the Great Wall tomorrow to find my husband. Please come with me”. Alpha thought that she was the girl who needed to be saved.

Next morning, they set off to the Great Wall. When they arrived at the entrance of the Great Wall, Mengjiangnu asked one of the builders about her husband.

The builder said sadly, “Your husband has died a month ago”. Mengjiangnu was really upset and she cried loudly.

The King went through the Great Wall and saw her. The beauty of Mengjiangnu attracted him. The King wanted to bring her to the castle and married her, however, she was unwilling to do so.

The King said angrily, “Catch her and her helper!” Alpha played the ghost trick in order to bring Mengjiangnu out of there.

The King said loudly, “Catch them, army”. When Alpha was nearly out of the castle, the army came in. Indeed, Alpha played the ghost trick well but he was unable to fight with the army. Soon, the army caught him and Mengjiangnu.

The King said “Kill them all”. Suddenly, a wind blew them away. Alpha saw the emperor of the Ghosts again.

He said “Sorry, I didn’t succeed in the first adventure”. The emperor said “Never mind, you have done well”. Mengjiangnu looked at the emperor of the Ghosts and said “Oh! My lovely husband”. Then they kissed each other.

The emperor of the ghost turned back to Alpha and said “Alpha, practice the windy ghost tricks from this book. Come here next Sunday again”. After that, the emperor of the Ghost threw a book to Alpha and went away with Mengjiangnu.

#### Second adventure — Needfire

After a few days, Alpha could play the windy ghost tricks very well. He could blow something

away. Next Sunday, he went back to the door of the Great Wall again. The emperor of the Ghosts had waited him for a while.

The emperor of the Ghost said “Hello, Alpha. Did you get ready for the next adventure?” Alpha replied confidently, “I am ready now!”

Then the emperor of the Ghost brought him to the second door. “You are the builder of the Great Wall now. Your mission this time is to teach the workers how to use the needfire,” said the emperor of the Ghost.

Alpha said, “Ok! I see”. Alpha said goodbye to the emperor before entering the door. Alpha sat down and chatted with the workers.

Suddenly, a worker said loudly, “The Hun is coming”. All the workers were very frightened. The head of the workers said, “Don’t be afraid! Let’s use the needfire to seek help. But ... but I don’t know how to use it”.

Alpha said, “I know how to use it. You need to burn up a fire on the headfire station and create a lot of smoke. When the surrounding stronghold see the smoke, they will know that the Hun is coming”.

The workers set up the fire and Alpha played the windy ghost trick to blow the smoke up into the sky. The surrounding stronghold got the message within a short time and then the army was advancing towards the Hun.

Finally, the army won the battle and annihilated the Hun. The head of the workers felt very happy and thanked Alpha for offering to help.

Alpha said, “It’s my pleasure”. Afterwards, Alpha blew himself back to the door of the Great Wall. The emperor smiled at Alpha and said, “You did a great job. Now it’s time to let you know the secret”.

#### The Secret

The emperor of the Ghost gave a book to Alpha and said, “It’s a book of many ghost tricks. You need to practise more of the ghost tricks”.

The emperor continued, “I need to tell you that the Great Wall is going to turn into a fire dragon in the next full moon. Other ghosts and I will soon disappear. To save us, you need to kill the dragon”. Alpha replied, “How can I fight a fire dragon? I am just a little boy”. The emperor said, “You are a brave young man, we have faith in you”. After then the emperor and other ghosts disappeared.

Alpha opened up the book of ghost tricks, there was a picture of the Great Wall under a full moon. Suddenly, the Great Wall in the picture turned into a fire dragon and the book was burning up. Alpha was very frightened and he quickly threw the book into a bucket of water nearby. The fire disappeared and the emperor of Ghost appeared and said thanks to Alpha.

“That’s it”. Alpha said unbelievably.

The emperor replied with a smiley face “That’s it”.

Now Alpha understood that it was a joke. Alpha laughed happily.

# The Sleeping Dragon

Jess Yung, 9, St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary & Primary School

I am a guard, watching and waiting for bandits and invaders. Being a guard is a job that you have to do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It was getting dark, and my eyelids were drooping. Suddenly, there was a loud crash, it startled me and I immediately perked up. I called out in my loudest voice I could muster at that time to call the others out. Hearing my call, the others got up automatically as this was what they were trained to do.

They took their weapons and marched out, fearing nothing and feeling as strong as any dragon. However, there didn't seem to be any sign of creeping in the darkness. But, what we hadn't realised is that the sleeping dragon had woken up! The Great Wall of China had started moving and we were in big trouble. The Wall started moving at a fast pace, slithering across the land like a huge snake. All of us were panicking, we were all scared and worried. What would happen to us? Would our lives end this way? Knowing the threats and dangers ahead, I made my way to the side of the Wall, praying to the gods that I would live my life to the fullest.

With all my might, I clung onto the old stone bricks that were my only hope to not fall out. Some guards that weren't that lucky had fallen into the depths of darkness. The elders used to tell us stories of the Wall coming to life, and the people who died building the Great Wall will come back to life to destroy everything in their path. But it seemed like they had never told us how to make the sleeping dragon go back to its deep slumber. Me and some of my fellow guards thought hard and long, trying to bring back the memories of the story of the sleeping dragon. Quick as a flash, a body came from what seemed like nowhere and grabbed one of my friends.

"Help!" my friend cried, "May the gods have mercy on me!"

We all watched helplessly as one of our dear friends was dragged down. Yet, our friend wasn't the only one who had been captured by the dead. Guards everywhere were trying to fight off the bodies that came by the hundreds. There was no time to lose, I had to think of a solution! I scanned my memories of my past, the stories my Grandpa Chan had told. All of a sudden, it came to me. I remembered my grandfather said, "Zhong Hu is the instrument you must play, with river water is the way."

At first, I was confused. Then it struck me like a bolt from the sky. I had learnt how to play the Zhong Hu, a traditional Chinese instrument, after my grandpa Chan had given his old one to me. He only taught me one song, Jiang He Shui.

"Remember this song and your Zhong Hu when the time comes," he said, gasping for breath, laying on his deathbed. However, there was no time to rejoice, I was seeing the dead coming back to life! Some bodies had already got a grip on the stones and had started to climb up. I grabbed my old and precious Zhong Hu from my cloth sack, just before the tower I had put my possessions in had collapsed.

With great care, I took out the smooth instrument and its bow. Then I automatically started playing Jiang He Shui (River Water). I played it with great calmness. Then, suddenly, the start of the Wall looked back at me. It had become a ferocious looking dragon's head. To both sides, more bodies were making their way onto the Wall.

Ignoring everything, I kept on playing; and as I kept on playing, the dragon slowed down bit by bit. With the song coming to an end, the Great Wall went back to the place it was built; and with a great thump, settled down. The song ended and I looked up. The dragon head was gone, the Wall had stopped moving, and the sun had just risen. Even the bodies had gone back to their graves.

With my shift over, I changed places with another and settled down to sleep, right before playing my Zhong Hu one last time, treasuring the music that floated in the air. The sleeping dragon had fallen asleep. At least for now...

## The Small Role in a Mega Job

Jade Yun Jie Zheng, 11, Regents Primary School of Shenzhen

I am glutinous rice.

I thought my life would end up in someone's stomach.

But I did not know I would carry such a great job, thanks to the great engineer who found out this function of me.

Although I am glutinous rice.

Since the emperor of China commanded all the men to build the Great Wall, men were caught, women cried. This show was replaying everyday and everywhere. Our village became lifeless. So did I.

Sun rose and sun set again and again, old women's hair was brushed a silver sheen. Our village got a shocking notice: The Great Wall was completed! All the men who were caught for the Great Wall's building came home. My owner and his wife hugged together. A happy smile appeared on their faces. Their happiness influenced me. "What a wonderful life!" I thought.

However, good fortune will not always accompany us. That night, a silence covered the whole village. All the villagers were sleeping comfortably. I was standing on a stage, people were cheering for me. They greeted me with thunderous applause. At the moment a trophy was given to me, a thunder pulled me back from the dream to reality. Suddenly, I woke up. I saw the lightening crossing through the dark sky, and it rained cats and dogs. I heard a strange sound, it was like mud-rock flowing down, like an uninterrupted earthquake, like a kind of building collapsing...

The next day, our village got a shocking notice again: The Great Wall was collapsed by the thunderstorm last night! After this notice, all the men were forced to build the Great Wall again; the women cried the whole day long again, our village became lifeless again.....

On the other side, in the palace:

"What have you done?" said the emperor, it seems he was horribly angry.

"I'm very sorry, your majesty. I promise I'll do it again and better." answered the old engineer, he was afraid.

"No way! You are no use to me! Go!" shouted the emperor.

Because of the collapse of the Great Wall, the emperor was horribly angry at the old engineer, so he found another one to replace him. He was a young engineer.

The young engineer found out the reason why the Great Wall fell down when he went to the construction area. It was because the Great Wall is not strong enough causing the collapse. "Why is the Great Wall not strong enough? How to make it stronger?" the young engineer still couldn't understand, even after repeated thinking. He went home to have dinner, hoping he could find out something about the problem.

"What are you thinking about?" his wife asked when she set down the dishes onto the table.

"Well, the emperor wanted me to find out the problems of the Great Wall, but I don't know how to solve it." said the young engineer, tasting a bit of their dinner. Hey! What's this? It's so sticky!" he asked vaguely

"It's rice cake made by glutinous rice, yummy right?" his wife asked him thoughtfully. The young engineer jumped out from his chair and cried out "It's right! It's right! I've got an idea! It can make the Great Wall stronger!"

The young engineer ran to meet the emperor immediately and offered the great idea to use glutinous rice to stick the stones of Great Wall. "I can make the Great Wall stronger!"

Now, the emperor and the young engineer requested every family to give their own glutinous rice out for the Great Wall's building. Almost instantly, my partner and I were thrown into a huge and dark gunny bag. We were being tossed around. With the severe sloshing, I dizzily closed my eyes...

When I opened my eyes, we'd already reached our destination – The Great Wall. I couldn't believe what I saw when I looked straight to the young engineer beside us. All of us, the glutinous rice, were cooked and mashed up to mud. Then, we were put to stick stones onto the Great Wall tightly. We, glutinous rice, become a part of the Great Wall forever.

Nowadays, although people use cement for the buildings instead, it could never take the place of us on the Great Wall. The dream of standing on a stage to get my trophy came true! I'm not just small glutinous rice; I was used for a Mega Job as part of the Great Wall!





## Fiction Group 3

### Start Walking, Keep Walking

Samantha Brooks, 11, South Island School

At school they used to say that there was no such thing as the Great Wall, and that there was only the grey dragon, running through the everlasting trees and onwards. They said there were only the smoothed grey scales of the dragon's back, withered with age and crumbling at every step. Some people said that if you walked to the end, if you could find it, you would see the shimmering head of the dragon, its breath rising in the grey smoky air and every so often breathing out small licks of emerald flame. But if you attempted such a journey you would get lost amongst the twists and turns of the dragon's back, gaining height and climbing in dizzying circles for hours on end. But if you were to stay at the bottom of the mountain and embrace the dragon's beauty from there: breath-taking views stroke the horizon, the soft hush of reeds against the dragon's side, the taste of long forgotten oolong tea tickling your tongue. You may catch a glimpse of one of these many tails, flicking behind a bamboo grove to lure unwary travellers into its depths, or you may spot a clawed hand of stone, basking in the sun, but when you blink there is nothing but dense grass and mossy rocks.

When we youngsters heard the stories, we queried in hushed tones of the wonders of the grey dragon. While it slipped past the other children's minds like wisps of fog being washed away by the Monday morning rain, to me it stood out bold and clear, imprinted on my mind. What was it like to feel the breaths of a majestic beauty vibrating under your feet? How did it feel to have jasmine winds soaring past your ear, whispering secrets in every language except yours, to have the history of the dragon unfurled before your very eyes?

What does it matter if the dusk of today is grim, when the bright sun of tomorrow shines warm and new on the edge of the globe? If I did not carry a walking stick or walk hunched and shrivelled with age, my wrinkles twisting my face until I am contorted and weakened, I would be running along the paths leading from the beast, sprinting up to the top of his breast, throwing my hands out to feel the warmth of the sun beating a pulse on my fingers and casting rainbows on the dragon. My age does not distort my thoughts or feelings though, no matter how it may seem, and I still am able to invent my own world inside my head.

As I long ago pondered the extravagancies of the great dragon, I wondered when I would be able to step into the light and onto the softly singing twist of secrets, and when my chance would come to hear the rustlings of the birds and see the fire of his body. But I never did.

# The Great Walled Ghost

Richard Cheung, 13, Creative Secondary School

The sun rose over the far horizon and shone its optimistically blinding light over 'the land of dragons', but nobody in the village seemed to have been bothered by the glorious entrance of the fiery character; it's too common, it occurs every day. However, directly under the blazing monumental rise of the golden droplet were vague projections of two armoured men riding towards the village from the distance. Their shadows became clearer each step they took and the villagers' eyes were widened by every slash of the whip.

The Ming Emperor had laid out orders for the restoration and revival of the Great Wall to the northern border of China and he had spread his imperial tentacles all over the country for the collection of workers to graft on his marvellous project. The two men galloped into the village with a swift entrance, their knotted hair and their neatly pressed clothing of vivid colours seemed to give a majestic flair to their arrival. The paler man with a bold, prickly dark beard dismounted from his horse heavily on to a soggy paddy field. The tender mix of rice and water bothered him not; he simply glared at his companion, pointed at the individual thatched houses, and held his position. Soon after, rugged men of all sorts poured into the field reluctantly under the usher of the emperor's men. Each individual was examined by the bearded man.

"Lame," he said as he walked past a poorly postured elderly man, whose snowy brows speared longer than his beard.

"This one's a terrible worker," he growled at another. His companion was scribbling away through his papers as the bearded man made each criticism.

The two men continued to race through the many options they had; they assessed the developing bodies of naive young farmers, to the portentous philosopher of the village, but they still weren't impressed. Hours sneaked past the unsuspecting men until the punishing heat of midday arrived, that was when one surprising man rushed and splashed his way through the fields. It was Wang, the famed traveller, and slacker, of the village.

"What's with the gathering?" enquired Wang with arrogance. However, it did not seem to detract the examiners' undivided attention.

"Do you see the young fellow over to your right?" whispered the assistant to the bearded man in a casual tone. The bearded man uninterestedly turned his head over slightly; he was not expecting anything, however, he was instantly captured by the late arrival's bulging curves and shocking muscular body structure; he was the perfect solution for the Emperor's imperial demand.

"I think that we have this place settled, Cheng," said the bearded man to his partner roughly, "dismiss the rest." The two men then took the chosen workers back to the worksite as the crowd dissolved into what was then, a fading day.

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Nothing can be said of the worksite situated along a long, weary fortress of the old Great Wall, the scene was as depressing as the horrified men were. Everybody had a compelling frown hung from their faces as a sign of greeting. Wang marched towards the wall, taking no notice of the men to either side. Then he picked up a chisel, and started to chip away at the rain-washed remnants of the Qin Great Wall.

The following night, the newcomers were introduced to a scheduled patrol system. It was said that each labourer would have to take turns to survey the wall for the labourers' safety. Wang was instructed to take stance and guard the succeeding night.

The next evening, Wang crept into a tight shelter for a simple supper with his mates before reporting for his night duty. He sat beside a group of elders that had gathered around in a circle, all of them had stories to share. One particularly popular story teller was Jiao; he was incredibly recognisable for his sharp forehead and dark-tanned skin, with an impressive clawed-scar on his wrinkly face. As everyone started to gather, he announced that he was going to tell a ghost story about the 'walled ghost'.

"There was once a lonely and lowly man," said the man in a low tone, "he had just finished his schooling, and his parents had found him a wife, perfect for his kind. She was marvellous, a true beauty; her face reminded one of the joyfulness of life, and seemed to be a flame that lit the sparks of life. However, just when he was about to marry the young lady, the Qin army rode into his village and took him captive to feed the Emperor's massive craving for workers. He was sent to serve at the Great Wall and it certainly wasn't an easy life there. He was frequently beaten by guards and soldiers alike. It was said that even his workmates picked on him for his considerably young age and small size."

"This didn't last very long, it wasn't long before the soldiers over worked him, and during the last violent battle he had with his fellow colleagues, he died. The men did not want their crime to be exposed to the ignorant outsiders, so they sealed him in the jammed earth and made him part of the wall. Little did they know, the soul was never able to rest peacefully. On one particular evening, a hostile shadow appeared on the wall as the men were retreating from work. Many of them were astonished and drew back. However, one of the clumsier workers incautiously stepped on the shadow, and immediately, the wall cracked and shifted aside, revealing an abyss from which, steaming hot lava erupted restlessly, and a orb of flames embraced the worker in its fiery arms almost instantly and guided the poor soul down to the underworld. The ghost has never been seen ever since, yet it's still rumoured that it lurks around the grounds of the Wall. Nevertheless, it is only a tale of the heart, and not a real occurrence..."

Wang was now late for his duties; he rapidly grabbed a burning torch from the marshal's tent and strolled off. For the first few hours, he felt tired at the damp skies, relentlessly taunting

him to retire for the night, and wrapping its seemingly endless black blanket around Wang's tiny body, invading his mind with millions of lullabies. They seemed to have been telling him, "Go to sleep, my dear child, you know you're tired, let the exhaustion of the day end, save yourself everlasting energy and come into my arms. Sleep my child, sleep..." Wang's eyes started to shut as he drifted off to dreamland.

Hours had passed before Wang got into action again, and by then, it was only an hour before dawn. The worn out labourer rose from his uncomfortable crouching position and stretched. However, right when he did that, the flames of the torch picked up a strange colour, as if a radar had just sensed a sharp reading of danger. He turned to his left in a cautious manner. What he saw he gazed at with an astonishing sense of bewilderment, a shadow, lying right beside his own, floated around the boundaries of the wall without a rightful owner. Gliding around, it did not resemble the movement of an unfriendly ghost's eerie flow, but instead moved with swift grace and slid from here to there, as if it were a professional ballerina. Wang simply couldn't comprehend the spectacle he viewed, "it is a miraculous phenomenon that I am finally able to witness, after all of those years of slacking about and journeying across an endless plain of this country," thought Wang. The brilliant sense of curiosity tempted Wang to approach the shadow and touch it with his fleshy hand, and see what it was made of. He knew the outcome of such an action, but his precautions were drowned within a fierce sea of exploratory unrest. His hands started to move unwillingly, as if a supernatural force was dictating his actions.

"No, no, Wang," whispered a small voice inside his head, "you know where this will bring you, retreat now. Touch not what is hazardous, no..." Whilst the voice was bickering, Wang was too busy thinking about the sensation of touching the shadow. He couldn't wait any longer, but just when he wanted to reach out, the wall had already cracked open. In the confused and wild reality, he had actually made contact with the shadow already. A whole blob of fiery flames shot out and burnt Wang's body. Eroding away, he was now able to view the underworld, Wang smiled with contentment and descended into the land of no return.

The shadow sealed the opening with its darkness and turned it into a crack in the wall. It now looked as if someone had punched a great big hole in the wall, but the person responsible for it will never have a tale told in his remembrance, apart for this one, of course...

## A Mythical Beast and the Great Wall

Stefanie Cheung, 14, St. Mark's School

**A** long time ago in China in 219 B.C., during the Qin Dynasty...

Emperor Qin Shi Huang took a long time to win many wars and unify the entirety of China. To ensure its peace, harmony and stability, he was very worried about the invasion of some other tribes and nomadic groups. Moreover, he undertook a series of major economic and political reforms to achieve his goal. He has become more neurotic, superstitious and suspicious.

One day, when Emperor Qin was having his dessert after dinner and looking at China's map, he dropped a strip of tofu skin onto the map carelessly. It was dropped on the map precisely and exactly where the northern border was. The shape of the tofu looked like a dragon. In China, the dragon symbolises nobility and fortune. Emperor Qin wondered, "Could it be that God has blessed my land to prevent the invasion of Mongolia and other invaders?" In fact, he was so concerned about invasions in the northern frontier; he was going to inspect the situation at the border tomorrow. He turned in for the night, feeling cranky and wearied.

The next morning Emperor Qin arrived at the northern border. Alongside his other servants, he went to inspect the situation at the border areas which were continuously under attack, so as to discuss the feasibility of countermeasures. While they were discussing their military strategies, Emperor Qin saw many birds in the sky; then he picked up a bow and an arrow and shot down an enormous bird with a strange appearance. It was as big as a human. "What a big weird bird, I've never seen anything like it before. I wonder if it tastes good." Soon, the retinue who had gone to pick up the bird came back, returned empty handed, "I did not dare to touch the bird, and it seemed like an epiphany!" Emperor Qin mused a while and went himself to see what had happened and the other people followed behind him. He observed the bird flickering. The followers at his back muttered but did not dare to say anything. In a short while the bird was restored to its original appearance, although briefly, then melted and

faded-out. Subsequently, there appeared a luminous silver cylinder. It intermittently gave out different coloured lights, and on top of it was a pellucid jade like hemisphere. Emperor Qin suspected, "Is he the legendary mythical beast? Will he bring me fortune? Will he blame me for shooting him?" To maintain his dignity, he said solemnly to the others, "Don't be afraid!" Emperor Qin then respectfully bowed at the bird. Before he raised his head, the hemisphere in front of him abruptly disappeared. In a flash it re-appeared on the top of Emperor Qin's head. A yellow glazing light came out from the bottom of the hemisphere and beamed on the back of Emperor Qin's head. It seemed that they were communicating with each other. The people were frightened and some of them grasped their weapons to protect Emperor Qin, but they could not reach him. Every time they approached, they were bounced off. When Emperor Qin raised his head, suddenly he saw a vision before him. It was like he flew up high in the sky, below were high mountains and lofty peaks. This scene was so familiar. On top of the mountains and peaks was a great wall built along the northern borders. In between the peaks were beacon towers. There were also watch towers, troop barracks and garrison stations. All these constructions were fascinating and magnificent. Emperor Qin was very much delighted to see these. The people around saw the happiness on Emperor Qin's face, they stepped back slowly. Later, Emperor Qin worshipped the mythical beast on bended knees. The other people did the same accordingly. The mythical beast let Emperor Qin see the future of the Great Wall and Emperor Qin believed it had super power.

Emperor Qin strongly believed that the dragon he had seen on the map was "IT, the Great Wall". Actually, Emperor Qin had talked over the plan of building a great wall half a year before. The reason they had not proceeded with the plan was because this huge project was very arduous because of the dangerous steep mountains and crags. However, after what had happened to Emperor Qin, no one could stop the plan this time.

What mythical beast? Emperor Qin trusted the mythical beast was sent by God in heaven to show him the way to protect his land. In fact, it was an alien using a bird appearance to cover his identity. Some of its mechanism had malfunctioned when it was shot by Emperor Qin. It had to make a deal with Emperor Qin. It let him know that it needed a kind of rare stone. In fact, this kind of stone was the key material which could help to fix the alien itself. In return, the alien promised to help Emperor Qin in building the Great Wall.

The alien came to source the stone because its kind just had a war with another kind. Most of its kind needed the materials to repair their own mechanism after their loss in the war. That was why it had landed in the wilderness in search of the rare stone.

It took ten days to find the rare stone for the alien. After Emperor Qin gave it to the alien, the alien fixed itself shortly. Then, the alien started to find more rare stones for its kind. In the mean time, while it was finding the rare stones, he threw away those stones that it wanted. Such a move created a strange weather phenomenon in the northern border. They had stone rain for three days and three nights. Strangely, the stone rain has not hurt anyone. All those stones dropped were good enough to build the Great Wall. After he had kept his promise to Emperor Qin he left. Of course, it brought along the rare stones it had found. In fact, the alien had done the same thing, "the stone rain" a long, long time ago. The last time it came to the Earth, it had helped the Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, to build the Pyramids.

The Great Wall took more than ten years to build. Eventually it was built successfully. It was as long and spectacular as what the Emperor Qin had seen before. He was satisfied.

Because of the tofu and because Emperor Qin met this alien accidentally, it made people praise Emperor Qin for building The Great Wall to protect his people and his land. With The Great Wall, people in China could live peacefully in ancient times.

## The Six Brothers and the Great Wall

Lyndon Man Hon Fan, 12, HKUGA College

Once upon a time, the emperor of the heaven, Yu Wang, had six sons, Zhao, Han, Wei, Chu, Yan and Qi. They all had different personalities and they didn't get along with each other. They always argued no matter how serious or minor the event was, and fought over everything, from a spot for visiting the Imperial Garden to a dumpling.

One day, the six sons went to practice archery with the emperor, but there weren't enough bows and arrows. As usual, they fought again and broke all the bows and arrows. The emperor was as angry as a bear because it had already been the tenth argument of the day. He was utterly disappointed and scolded at them, "That's it! I've had it enough! You all are going down to Earth forever until you all cooperate!" The soldiers beside the emperor grabbed the six brothers and sent them to Earth.

The six brothers were sent to China, when it was the "Spring and Autumn Period" of Zhou Dynasty. They were totally shocked by the scene that civilians were running away from soldiers on horses. They thought could use magic to help the people but they were not allowed to do so. Therefore, they ran away with the refugees. As they were escaping from the soldiers, Wei, Zhao and Han got lost with other brothers, who all established their own state. Wei, Zhao and Han first joined the Jin state, but later Wei killed the leader of Jin, splitting the territory into three.

After years of battling, the brothers plus another mortal, Yin Zheng, established themselves as the warlords of the "Warring States Period". The brothers were as uncooperative with others as they had been in the heaven. Therefore, they all set up their own countries and tried to rule the whole of China, fighting against others.

The Qin state, led by a mortal, at first was not as powerful as the other countries reigned by the six brothers. However, one thing that only the Qin state did was that he started to hire and cooperate with scholars. Luckily, he got a very brainy advisor called Shang Yin, who executed a big change in the laws of Qin, and made Qin a lot stronger than the others. This method improved the farming of Qin rapidly, which made it very strong. It also strengthened its army, making them more fierce and undefeatable, which expanded the territory of Qin.



On the other hand, this situation was no good to all of the immortal sons, so they decided to convene a secret meeting. Zhao asked, "Hey guys, we will be losing if we sit down and do nothing. What shall we do?"

Wei suggested, "My general suggested cooperating with you."

"But it is hard!" exclaimed Chu.

"Don't worry, Chu," responded Han, "We've once done this with Wei and Zhao, haven't we?"

Wei and Zhao nodded.

"Now, we shall work as best as possible so that the Qin army won't defeat us. Deal?" Han held out his right hand and the rest of the people put theirs on top.

"DEAL!" shouted the rest of them in unison.

The next day, their plan worked as perfectly as it had been thought, and the other states forced Qin to retreat from Han. However, one of the sophists in Qin guessed that the six emperors were still worrying about whether the others would attack one another. Therefore, he formed allies with all the states separately and the six states, once again, were tearing at each other's arms. They gave up their coalition tactic and worked on their own. Afterwards, the Qin state took immediate action. He took over the other countries and claimed the first ruler of the whole of China.

After a few days of ruling the whole of China, the Qin emperor had to punish the immortal sons. The day before the verdict, Yu Wang went to visit the Qin emperor in person. As the Qin emperor saw him, he greeted Yu Wang and was told to sit down.

"How are my sons doing?" asked the emperor of heaven.

"Who are your sons, highness?"

"Zhao, Han, Wei, Chu, Yan and Qi."

"What? I've just defeated them."

Yu Wang sighed depressed.

"I didn't mean to do so, your highness, I didn't know....."

"I'm not sighing about that, Yin Zheng. I shall tell you the whole story and why they are on Earth." And Yu Wang told the reason why the sons ended up here.

"Don't let them know that I've been here. Just think of a punishment that will change them."

"Don't worry, your highness, I shall do so."

"I've got to go now. I shall see you again." And Yu Wang disappeared into the thin air.

The next day, the Qin emperor had already thought of a punishment for the sons of Yu Wang. He brought them to the current end of the Great Wall and told them to finish it. However, before they had started, they were arguing about whether the western or the eastern route was easier. After hours, they started to build the wall, but they could not put the rocks in place perfectly, which made them quarrel again.

The next day, they found that the walls that they built the day before had collapsed. They accused others of ruining the work but spent no time actually working. Three days later, more of the walls fell down. After a week, the rocks used to build the Great Wall had worms crawling in them. And even worse, some of the towers were on fire all of a sudden. They were very angry at each other and made Yu Wang extremely furious. He cried out from the heaven, "You all! Stop it!"

"Father?" questioned the brothers.

"Yes, I think you all are disappointing me. You have learned nothing from the war, and now you are still bickering. I was the one to break the walls and put worms in the rocks! If you keep this misbehaviour, then you shall stay on Earth and be banished from heaven forever!"

"Father....." Zhao called, but there was no response. The brothers were deeply hurt by their father's words.

That night, they sat in a circle and talked about Yu Wang's words. Zhao suggested, "What about working together?"

Wei responded, "Are you nuts? We tried that once and almost got beheaded!"

Zhao cried, "Because we still do not trust each other!"

Qi stood up and said, "He's right. We have to have faith in each other. Otherwise, the situation will get worse and worse. Say, who wants us to be like that?"

No one raised their hands.

"You all want to go back to heaven, don't you? We have to cooperate and work hard!"

"Yeah, but how?" Wei asked.

"Trust each other!" Qi answered, "That's the only way to do so! Zhao! Let's work!" and they went off. Others, except for Wei, who was still worrying about whether to cooperate with them or not, followed Qi.

On the next day, most of the problems were fixed, including the worms in the rocks. Only Wei was procrastinating. He saw the other brothers working incredibly hard and caring about each other, which surprised him, as this had been their first time. He thought the hearts of Qin state were truly tied together, which was an example of being cooperative, and decided to join them. He apologised, "I am sorry about doubting you all. I should have trusted you, brothers."

Qi replied, "It is okay, Wei. We have to cooperate and build the wall fast."

"Cooperate!" the brothers chanted, and they continued working.

After a week, the Great Wall was almost finished. When they put the last rock in place, the Qin emperor went to check the quality and he was astonished. He freed them when a voice from the sky boomed, "My dearest sons, you have finally understood the meaning of cooperation and working together. You shall all be able to return to the heaven in no time."

"Thank you, father," replied the six sons.

"Go now," said the Qin emperor, "your father is calling you."

"Thank you, your highness, and we shall visit you again," responded Chu.

The six sons, stepped on the flight of stairs to heaven as they waved to the Qin emperor, promising that they would visit him some time. They became less opposing to each other, and made good friends with the Qin emperor. Whenever they were about to start an argument, they looked down towards the Great Wall, remembering their cooperation. They sometimes helped people on Earth to learn the importance of cooperation, so that there were fewer arguments. In the end, the Great Wall became a symbol of cooperation and the relationship between the brothers was forever admired by the later generations.



## New Tales of the Great Wall

Allison Ho, 12, German Swiss International School

It was majestic. A golden dragon, bathed in the twilight glow winding as far as the eye could see, creeping stealthily through the hills and beyond. As the sky darkened rapidly, we stood admiring the magnificent piece of architecture stretched out before us.

Today was a special night. As the twilight glow faded and the lights surrounding the perimeter lit up, we began to look forward to the dinner we had planned to have on the Great Wall! We began our walk a little faster in anticipation of what was in the hamper we were carrying.

Having reached the fifth tower, we made the much-needed halt, we spread the mat and opened the hamper to find a huge slab of ham, blocks of cheese, olives, and baguettes and tubs of chocolate mousse! The tempting food disappeared fast and we were almost finished when suddenly the lights on the tower dimmed, creating a spooky glow.

A while later, all of us huddled together as the lights dwindled to nothing, plunging us in darkness. "Where are the candles that I had put in the hamper?" Dad's voice rang out, sounding unnaturally loud in the velvety darkness that enveloped us. Alfred rummaged through the hamper and came up with two candles and a lighter. Soon, the light created an eerie glow, casting long shadows against the walls. Alfred spoke up, "What on earth is THAT?" he asked, pointing a trembling finger at something in the distance.

We all held our breath as we looked in the direction Alfred was pointing at. After a few minutes of intent staring, Dad glared at Alfred for giving us all a big scare. But as I stared more intently in the direction to which Alfred pointed I saw something moving in the distance. The hazy shape of a man with long hair gradually came closer and stood there watching us intently. Soon, two other spirits joined him. Everyone stared at them in fear and awe. Surprisingly, one of them began to communicate with us telepathically. His name was Wang Yao and he had a strange tale he wanted to relate with us and suddenly he launched into conversation.....

"It was on a dark and dreary day that I was chosen to help to build the Great Wall by the royal command of the emperor along with a large group of able-bodied men. It was impressed upon us that this was a great honour. We were going to build a wall which would keep away the Mongolian invaders which had always been a threat to our great Chinese empire."

We listened to him with bated breath and the next moment, he continued.

"Little did I know what we were letting ourselves in for."

The other spirit now spoke up. "There wasn't even any time to say goodbye to our dear ones. We were dragged away and taken to the bleak and barren site where we were supposed to assist in building a wall which was going to be 8078 kilometres long and 5 metres wide!"

Now the third spirit spoke "We had to cut the stones from a quarry, carry them on our backs and place them one on top of the other to construct the wall."

"In a few days, my back was a bleeding mass of aching flesh. Since there was very little food, just a mere bowl of rice and some vegetables, we felt weak. It was a very difficult and demanding task and the supervisors carrying whips never hesitated to lay them on us."

One of the spirits spoke once more, "I was in charge of stirring sticky rice to weld the bricks together. As we were always hungry, I scooped up a handful of rice and stuffed it in my mouth secretly. The rice burned from being in the boiling pot for so long, but it was sticky rice and I appreciated the comfortable feeling of being full for once. But the rice being sticky was for the bricks to hold their shape. When the guards came to check on me, they saw the countless indents in the pot from me scooping the food. As I was the only one stirring the pot at the time, he pointed his finger at me and beckoned me to come closer. As I did, he took out his whip and hit me with biting blows continuously until the floor was stained with my blood. When he poked me to try to get me to get up, I refused; when he saw that I was too weak to get up, he passed my unconscious dead body to my brother and ordered him to throw my body between the blocks. You are all sitting on my body right now," and he grimaced.

When we all heard that we were sitting on a dead man's body, we almost jumped out of our skins. Some of us scooted forward, and some of them scooted backwards. Everyone sat in their new spots tentatively in fear that they were sitting on another body.

"So...how come all of you died on this wall? We heard one, but what about the others?" the ever-curious Alfred asked.

"We all have different stories. Do you want to hear them all?" the grumpy spirit asked Alfred. Obviously, he was trying to be sarcastic. But when it comes to Alfred, all sarcasm is lost.

Alfred nodded eagerly. Sighing, the spirit began his tale of woe.

"That day, the sky poured down on us. Relief for rain was short-lived. When the rain drenched us, the bricks got heavier as the water would stay on the bricks. I did not have a good night's sleep the night before, so I was sapped of my energy extremely quickly. I collapsed so many times that I lost count... but it was because I collapsed so many times that they sent a guard to watch over me. I was frightened. He held his whip so fondly as if it was a pet. I was so freaked out. He told me if I tripped one more time, he would literally kill me. I tried my best not to trip, but I was so scared that I fell flat on my face within seconds. The guard immediately threw me onto the bricks, still alive. He immediately took a brick and put it onto me. I was suffocating."

The spirit finished his story and stated, "And you are currently a few steps away from my body."

Yao smiled sadly. "I am afraid there is not enough time to listen to all of our stories. This will be the end. Goodbye. And thank you."

They blew out the candles and left us in darkness. Dad took out his lighter to relight the candle stubs. There wasn't really any need as the sky was beginning to brighten. We were all creeped out by this little episode.

Alfred enthusiastically jumped up and looked at his mother happily. "That was an AWESOME ghost story! Let's go find some ghosts!" he said.

His mother reprimanded him with a stern look. “Those ghosts are dangerous spirits Alfred. You cannot just go rushing around this unstable wall with no adult supervision, we have to go back now.”

With an unhappy sigh, Alfred helped the rest of us pack up and then we all went to the car.

Once we put all our belongings into the trunk, Alfred slumped over and fell asleep at the drop of the hat. Sighing amusedly at his ‘antics’, I gazed out of the window, one last thought circulating my mind – I wonder will we ever meet again, spirits?

## Guardian of China

Heily Hei Yin Ho, 13, Sacred Heart Canossian College

I took out the leaflet of the place I was about to visit at the airport – “The Great Wall in Beijing” and started reading it.

“The Great Wall was first built in 220-206 B.C.,” I scanned through it and thought “Wow, that means it was built 2,232 years ago! The entire wall with all its branches is measured 21,196 km.” I read in shock.

That night, I dived into my dreams in the hotel room right away. Little did I know the excitement ahead was not far away.

The next morning, my bus stopped at Mutianyu near Beijing where I started my journey to the ancient architecture of China. I made my way up. Soon, my shoes were on ground with tamped earth and bricks of the wall. Every few miles I saw watchtowers which were used to call reinforcements and warn garrisons of enemy movements. Signal towers were built at high points along the wall for good visibility. The sun was bright. I decided to start my work or else I’d be leaving at night with terrifying darkness. I went into the watchtower to write more. My footsteps echoed as I walked in the quiet watchtower.

The bricks on the wall looked as if they were getting loose. I stopped to study the wall. Without noticing, a rat was on my shoe. I was terrified and found myself screaming and kicking frantically with my leg. I flung the rat off and kicked the wall really hard, I pressed my hand against the wall and jumped around with my swollen leg. Suddenly, I heard a screech from the wall. I jumped in shock as the wall began to separate! I rubbed my eyes crazily and watched in disbelief. In less than ten seconds, a deep dark hole was formed. I didn’t know what made my curiosity grow, my legs were uncontrollably walking towards the hole.

“No!” a voice yelled in my head. Yet, the unpalatable truth was that my legs ignored the shouting and stepped into the hole. I gyrated wildly while falling. I stood up again after landing, walked around the dim room and discovered a grim place. Goosebumps tickled my arms as I moved. With my careful eyes I spotted a chair behind a working table. There sat a plump aged man wearing a yellow silk robe with his hair tied up in one single braid. He looked like an emperor in ancient China.

He smiled and said “Ahh! Just in time my dear, just in time.” I stared straight at him with opened jaws and a head filled with questions.

“Why am I here?” I asked. The emperor stiffened and said, “I believe I have a lot to explain and you have a lot to ask. So do sit down on the couch.” I didn’t really want to sit on the dusty couch but my swollen feet needed some rest so I sat uncomfortably at the corner of the sofa. “Right Becky, you’re the one chosen to help me.” The emperor started. I had no idea how he knew my name, it must be some power he had. “I’m the guardian of China. My job is to protect the world from aliens. The Great Wall has always been known as the landing spot of their spacecraft, like a runway. According to my spy in space, 500 aliens are planning to invade the world on Christmas day. They have chosen to land on the Great Wall of China. You must gather animals to defeat those aliens. I’ll give you power to enable them to speak the same language so please train them for the fight. My assistant will accompany you.” He nodded his head to the creature.

“Hello Becky. I’m Willy.” It said.

Willy was mauve in colour. It had two pairs of gigantic purple eyes and lips imbued with rich red.

“All assistants of mine are aliens from the last war. They were left behind after the war.” The emperor further explained. “The war is in three days, have some rest now,” added the emperor, before he disappeared into thin air. “Ok...” I murmured as I fell into sleep.

\* \* \*

RINGGG. I was woken by my phone from my boss. “Hello?” “Hi Becky, how’s your job going?” “Oh gosh! I was totally into the war and forgot all about my job.” I thought “Umm, sorry I think I’m quitting.” I mumbled. “What?? That’s a bit too sudden, is there...” My boss continued but I slapped my phone cover and cut the line. “Is this all a dream? I couldn’t have just quit my job for a war that I didn’t even know if existed! Maybe I should run away from this eerie place...” I thought. I rose slowly and tiptoed to the door which looked like an exit. Just then, Willy woke. “Don’t leave, Becky.” “I need your help,” said Willy in a tiny voice. “I can’t just leave my job for some crazy alien war here!” “We call ourselves slammers, not aliens. Slammers here are so-called assistants but we actually miss our planet a lot. I want to use the aliens’ spaceship to return home after this war. Becky, please help us fight the battle.” said Willy with watery eyes. I couldn’t believe that the emperor was such a harsh person. I had been too selfish. I was actually given a mission which I needed to complete. “I won’t leave you, let’s go gather the animals, Willy.” I smiled to him. “To gather an army of animals we first had to choose what we demanded. Flying animals would be useful to locate bombs in the sky.” said Willy as he wrote down a list of flying animals.

Surprisingly we found a large number of species of animals in the forest. We picked them and got 300 animals in no time.

\* \* \*

“You’ll need to take them to the training court today, Becky.” Willy pointed to the door which was an exit. I led the animals to the door and opened it. I taught them how to fight by using the skills I learnt from the Kung Fu films I watched.

We all waited behind the bushes next to the Great Wall. I gritted my teeth as time passed by. It’s eight o’clock now. The Great Wall was absolutely deserted and the aliens would come

any minute. I groaned as more mosquitos bit me. All of a sudden, three space crafts popped out, with purple blobs wobbling out. I flashed my torch three times to signal the animals. “Attack!” I yelled. The animals shot the aliens with arrows and guns, but they didn’t seem to kill them. The aliens seized with their soft hands and easily killed the animals. “NO!” I cried. At that moment we had already lost about a hundred animals, yet most of the aliens were still alive with strength. “The emperor is such a selfish person, he isn’t even with us in this situation!” I thought. The bats and owls threw bombs which seemed to be effective but the problem was that we did not have enough bombs. I picked up a rock and threw at an alien, it miraculously melted. I knew it at that moment. “Everyone gather rocks and fire them to the aliens!” Just then I found Willy lying on the floor I ran over and shouted “Willy, are you okay?” “I was hit by an alien. Becky, thank you. I really appreciate what you’ve done!” Willy said and fainted.

“Guardian of China! I need your help, you can’t just sit there and watch all of us die!” I wailed. A monstrous roar came from the sky; I looked up and found the emperor with a dragon. “Xing, drop your fireballs!” the emperor commanded the dragon. The dragon soon defeated the aliens. Puddles of purple liquid were the only things left on the ground. “Becky, I’m so sorry, I wasn’t here the whole time. This dragon was kidnapped by the aliens from the last war. I needed to find it before this war. That’s why I asked you to fight the aliens with a group of animals first, just in case I wasn’t able to find Xing,” the emperor explained. I was speechless. “Becky! Why do you always have to be so precipitate.” I blamed myself. “I’m sorry for always being so careless too. Do you think there’s a way to make Willy come back alive again?” I asked. The emperor nursed all his assistants. After a month, the animals were released back to the wild. The emperor agreed to let the aliens go back to their planet. Most important of all the emperor passed his throne to me, I Becky White was now The Guardian of China.

# The Secret of The Great Wall

Chloe Hui, 11, Discovery College

In an orphanage in London, there lived the twins Daniel and Daphne Benson, whose parents got killed in a huge fire. The twins had light brown hair with matching brown eyes. Having lived in the orphanage for many years they were growing bored of the orphanage for they both shared a love for adventure. So, they were thrilled when a housemother told them that they were being relocated to Beijing, next to the Great Wall of China.

A few weeks later, Daniel and Daphne arrived in China with the other orphans that were being relocated with them. The moment they arrived at the new orphanage, they rushed up to their bedroom and quickly unpacked, a simple task, because they had little belongings. Daphne looked out the window and saw that they had a wonderful view of the Great Wall and it's scenery. "I hope we're allowed to go out often, not like in London, where we were cooped up all day," said Daphne. Luckily, they could go on field trips to the Great Wall every month, which really pleased them.

The twins settled in pretty quickly, and were enjoying the new orphanage, as they could go out more often than the old orphanage. However, things suddenly went downhill, when one day, everyone was arriving for breakfast, and the housemothers realised a few of the kids that were relocated with the twins were missing. At first, nobody noticed, because they all thought they had overslept. But after breakfast when everyone started to head off to the schoolrooms, everyone realised that they were missing, because no one was ever late for class. A few of the housemothers went off to the missing kids' bedrooms and reported that the beds were empty. After a thorough search of the entire orphanage, everyone was sure that the kids were gone.

Some people were so busy studying for an upcoming test that they completely forgot about the missing children. But their attention was drawn back when their bodies were found in their beds a few days' later, dead. It caused much panic amongst the children and they all started moving around to classes in groups. Daniel and Daphne, who both loved mysteries, were keen to investigate, but after what happened to the kids, all of the orphans were under strict surveillance, and there was no chance to sneak out after lights out, because all the doors would be locked. The twins were starting to feel that the orphanage was more like a prison.

Just when everyone started to calm down about the murders, more children, who were also relocated with the twins, were found missing. And everyone knew what would happen next. Sure enough, a few days later, the missing children were found dead in their beds. The adults were in such panic that kids going to their next class had to be led by a teacher and, much to the twins' despair, all of the long awaited field trips to the Great Wall were cancelled. One day, when the children were in the library, David whispered to Daphne,

"We have to get to the bottom of this. Not only for revenge but to get our freedom back. If we don't solve this problem, we'll never be let out of the orphanage again, which would be horrible."

"I know, but how? With a combination of teachers, housemothers and guards, we never get a moment to ourselves. I'm sure it won't be long before they start guarding our doors at night," replied Daphne.

"We'll find a way to sneak out before they start guarding the doors and find out who's behind this," responded Daniel, before turning back to his homework, seeing the passing librarian.

But before they had the chance to even think of a plan, disaster struck. One night, Daniel suddenly woke up, hearing sounds in the distance and turned to look at Daphne's bed. To his horror, he saw it was empty, the blankets were thrown back and there was a smear of blood on the bed sheets. He heard the sound again, and realised they were screams. He sprang out of bed, and then reminded himself to be quieter, or else he would wake everyone and never get to go find Daphne. He tiptoed to the door and took a skeleton key out of his pocket. It was a key that could unlock any door. He unlocked the door and crept out, still able to hear the distant screams. He followed the sound, and it led him to a solid wall, with an old oil lamp bracket on it. Daniel examined the wall carefully, and when studying the bracket, he turned it sideways and, to his surprise the wall slid open to reveal a secret passageway with stairs leading underground. Daniel went in to have a look and the wall slid closed behind him, trapping him. Luckily, he always kept a flashlight with him. He pulled it out, took a deep breath and walked into the darkness of the staircase.

After a while, Daniel finally reached a large chamber. He had no idea where he was, but after one look at the tiles on the wall, he recognised them as the same tiles that lined the Great Wall, and judging by the earth covering the ceiling, he was able to tell that the chamber was beneath the Great Wall. Blueprints and maps lined the walls; each and every one scribbled on in an unfamiliar language. At the end of the chamber was a large empty throne behind an equally large table, covered in scrolls, quills and bottles of ink. Daniel heard another scream, this time extremely close, coming from a door that led to another chamber. Daniel walked over to the door and opened it, looking inside. What he saw horrified him. Ghost soldiers marching everywhere and a ghost king sitting on another large throne. He suddenly saw Daphne strapped to the wall with metal chains. He crept in and hid behind a pile of boxes. Now that he was closer to Daphne, he could see there was a soldier holding a whip standing next to her, and every so often, he would lift it up and whip her with it, causing screams and blood dripping down her body. After a while, he stopped and left Daphne, half conscious and hanging, head lowered. Daniel used that chance to run over to her, and luckily, a large pile of boxes also hid this area. He shook her lightly and her head slowly lifted up. There were red gashes all over her face, blood leaking out of each one. Her eyes were filled with tears and showed signs of great pain.

"Daniel! I knew you would come. We've got to stop them, because from what I've heard, that king's going to destroy London!" whispered Daphne, as Daniel started to undo her heavy bonds. At last, the chains came free and Daniel helped her walk over to a spot behind a big



crate. Even though they had only walked very little, Daphne was already panting and looked like she was about to faint. With a huge effort, Daniel managed to keep her conscious and they turned to watch the king.

“Move those boxes over there!” he screamed to the soldiers. “I want my plan to be put into action now! I have waited too long for this moment and I am not going to let you ruin it!” Suddenly, from behind the twins, a hand came down on each of their shoulders. They turned around, trembling, and saw a large ghost soldier staring down at them with bloodshot eyes. They screamed as he carried them over to the throne, where the king was watching them triumphantly.

“I see you managed to escape, girl. Well, seeing as you’re going to die anyways, I’ll explain my plan to you. I am going to destroy London and every single British person in it with a death ray, as revenge for what happened during the Opium War. It wasn’t fair, they forced it upon us and they will pay for it,” he declared, a tone of anger in his voice.

“But that’s not fair!” replied Daniel. “Not every British person is bad. Most of the people you will be killing are completely innocent and don’t deserve this!”

“I would like to see you try and stop me. Even as we speak, the death ray is warming up and in a few minutes, London will be nothing but a huge pile of smouldering ash,” said the king deviously, and then turned away to watch his plan begin. Daphne turned to Daniel and said,

“I know how to stop this, but I’ll need a distraction.” Daniel nodded and they crept over to an area near the machine. Daniel started collecting rocks and putting them into his pockets. After he had collected enough, he took one out and chucked it at the nearest pile of boxes. It hit a box near the bottom, knocking the whole pile down.

The king shrieked and the soldiers rushed to help. As Daniel kept throwing rocks, Daphne began to fiddle with the wires of the machine. Daniel had no idea what she was doing, but he knew he could trust her, since she was a good technician. Suddenly, Daphne yelled,

“Done!” But over the chaos, she was not heard. She pressed a big red button on the machine and the death ray began to glow. All the ghosts in the room screamed, their voices mixed together, making the twins cover their ears. The ghosts began fading and soon after, they disappeared. The twins whooped, glad that their adventure was over, and began to walk “home”.

## Strength of the Wall

Kenny Jeong, 14, Chinese International School

**B**eleaguered from the erosion and corrosion caused by time, the Great Wall endures all hindrances to its survival. The crimson sun continues to set on the sempiternal monument that stands on the border of two countries. While the vermilion sphere of fire continues to set down into the depths of the abyss, efflorescent colours of red and yellow leak through the crevices of the wall. Opulent colours make the dull tamped earth around the Great Wall earth radiate in sunlight.

To this day, the monument still stands proud, flaunting its exuberant history and the turmoil it has seen over centuries. However, there is a tale that the world has not been told that the spirit which has embodied the Great Wall, giving it immense power and strength, to stand strong.

Legends foretold a dragon, with scales made out of Damascus steel, that breathed infernos so intense it would melt mountains into a pile of ashes. A black, wild and rabid beast, it had six limbs, two of which were colossal wings. This monstrous dragon roamed all over China, terrifying villagers and devastating villages. It burned down towns, with the people trapped inside. The ancient armies of China fought the dragon for centuries, and they built monumental structures such as the Great Wall of China in an attempt to restrain the behemoth’s movements. However the dragon’s magnificent wings propelled it to great heights, rendering the Great Wall useless. It was like catching smoke with bare hands. Many attempts to contain the destructive nature of the dragon were to no avail.

Among the faithful there was a man named Ye. He was wise and was a very perseverant man, who had hope. Married and a father to an infant son, he was fully dedicated to protecting his town, which stood right next to the Great Wall. Ye motivated other residents to fend off the dragon. When he was discouraged by family members to not act so rashly, he simply refused, and ignored their discouragements.

Seeing that the dragon would kill his family, Ye requested that his family flee the town for safety. However, his wife refused to leave him alone, on a lost cause. However, Ye emphasised the need to protect those that he loved; his home, and a sanctuary to dozens more; tillers of the soil, the sculptors of the pottery and wielders of iron.



Eventually, the day came, and the dragon appeared. With scales that glistened in the immense sunlight and fangs that shimmered with stains of blood, it flew around the village. Ye along with the other men who were faithful to guarding their village stood tall, soldiers fighting for a cause that was worth dying for.

\* \* \*

The battle was long and excruciating. The dragon's immense inferno took a toll on the structures of the village, which were constructed from dirt bricks scavenged from the Great Wall. The villager's regular pikes and simple weaponry had little effect on the dragon. Ye was the only one who was ready to engage in a battle. In order to combat the dragon's flames, the villagers had stocked up water to quench the endless inferno. They believed they were ready for their first encounter.

As it first descended, it breathed incendiary flames on the villagers. Ye swiftly blocked the flames with his brass shield. The dragon retreated momentarily, before it suddenly turned around and lunged at Ye once again. Then, the second wave of flames were unleashed on the villagers. While they cowered behind rocks, Ye stood up to retaliate against the dragon.

However as the dragon's fury grew, it breathed hotter and hotter conflagrations which seared Ye's skin. Then, dozens of villagers all burst into flames, unable to shield themselves from the scorching inferno. Flames danced, swaying from side to side, fuelled by the blood and flesh of the villagers. A river would not have quenched the thirsty flames of the dragon.

In a few minutes, the village was decimated into nothing but a pile of ashes and bones. Ye was the last survivor, surrounded in a ring of burning flames. The dragon was still high in the air, waiting to pounce like a tiger on its prey. Blood stained the Great Wall, a testament of bravery for these warriors who had died. Ye was only armed with simple armour and wielded a flimsy shield and sword, and yet still stood up against the dragon.

The dragon pounced first, with its snout jabbing and thrusting towards Ye. Clever and nimble, Ye easily sidestepped the dragon's first attack. He then spun around, took the tip of his ebony blade and impaled it into the dragon's head. Further implanting the blade into the dragon's head, penetrating the skull, Ye leaped onto the dragon's monstrous head, and dashed down its neck, tearing a massive gap in its front torso. Subsequently, he withdrew the blade, right as he reached the wings, leaping off the dragon.

The beast roared in pain. It raised its wings in pain, and the Dragon cried a shriek in pain. As soon as Ye leaped off, it flew out of the tiny village and out of sight beyond the Great Wall, leaving behind havoc and destruction.

At first, Ye believed he had bested the dragon, the first to be successful after duking the dragon in a duel of honour and pride. He cheered, and roared a battle cry that echoed inside the village, alleviating the grim carnage and devastation that surrounded him. Corpses that had died fighting for what many thought to be a lost cause were basking in glory.

This glory however, was short-lived.

The dragon on the spur of moment from the distance plunged towards Ye, snapping its jaws, mutilating and butchering Ye's scarred body. The dragon had consumed Ye whole, crushing his body to a mere pile of blood and gore. After its feast on human flesh, it lifted itself and glided into the forest, leaving behind rubble and carnage. Nothing of the village was left after the dragon's descent. He was the last villager, dead.

\* \* \*

Now, the legend does not conclude there, with the evil triumphing over the innocent and righteous. We must not forget Ye's successor, Mai Long. Mai Long along with his mother had fled to another village where a brother of Ye resided. There they sought refuge at Mai Long's uncle's home.

Mai Long's uncle Han Shun was a powerful man, a man with a rare kind of knowledge in Ancient China at the time. The man alone had designed the Great Wall, in order to withstand the burning infernos of the Dragon. Many commended his efforts to contain the dragon without spilling any blood. He was a wise man, calm-minded, rational and a mentor to many.

Han Shun lived inside a great wall. When designing the Great Wall, he built an impenetrable chamber within the walls where he would reside, away from the outside world. He had no greed or lust for materialistic items that the world was lost in. Here, he spent his life, in his workshop, devising devious plans to slay the dragon.

Han Shun took Mai Long as a stepson, promising Ye's wife that he would raise him to be an intellectual, and guide Ye to become a man similar to his father; Loyal and always faithful to those he loved. Knowing her husband had failed to slay the dragon, she could no longer deny that he had passed away. Ye's wife committed suicide, ending all of her distress.

Even though Mai Long's family's death was a tragedy, all clouds have a silver lining. Despite the fact that Mai Long grew up without feeling the touch or the love of his parents, he had a loving uncle who had devoted all of his life in order to make up for Mai Long's loss of parents. From infancy to 15 years old, Han Shun made sure to teach Mai Long martial arts, so that he could fight the dragon one day. Mai Long grew up to be a strong, young boy, who had gained the love for martial arts, and had a protective personality.

When he reached his 15th birthday, his uncle, Han Shun sat him down, and decided to reveal the death of his parents to him. For 15 years, he never told Mai Long about his parents' death. Around a round table, he told Mai Long what had happened, the tale of Ye's epic battle with the invincible dragon.

As soon as Han Shun was finished with the retelling of the tale, than Mai Long leaked a tear of rage. A burning sensation coursed through his entire body, like the flames of the dragon. He slammed his hand on the table, and shouted,

"Uncle, I must kill that dragon! That beast will be slayed by me!"

Han Shun simply replied,

"Before that Mai Long, watch this teacup."

Then, he took a kettle of tea, and poured it into the cup. He continued to pour the tea into the cup, until it was overflowing with steaming hot liquid.

"Uncle, what are you doing?"

Then, Han Shun stopped pouring the opaque liquid into the cup. He then said,

"Mai Long, your head is like this cup. Because of the overflowing tea you cannot find what is inside, or what you are looking for. However, empty your head,"

Han Shun said, as he drank the tea inside the small cup.

"And you can then see, and clearly find your goal, or what waits you." At the bottom of the cup, was a silver key, which had a skull emblazoned onto the blades.

Mai Long picked up the key from inside the cup, and inquisitively asked,

"I swear that was not there... But what does it open?"

Han Shun then replied. "In the basement I have a room. That room has been locked for decades for a good reason. That is an alternate gateway to the underworld. There is a certain blade in the underworld you must retrieve in order to slay the dragon. However, you must first defeat the guardian of the sword, Tsun Tzu, before you can retrieve the blade."

Mai Long, too eager to go and retrieve the blade from the underworld, stood up immediately from the table. Han Shun grabbed his arm with an iron grip, as he was about to enter the door to the underworld. He then said, "Remember, fight with a clear mind. Only then can you find what you are looking for." Mai Long inserted the key into the keyhole, and twisted the key. He then, slowly put his calloused hands on the brass doorknob, turned it, and pushed the door open. In a blink of an eye, he was in falling down to the underworld.

As Mai Long fell down, darkness continued to close in, and he screamed at the top of his lungs, terrified. Slowly, Mai Long felt his veins being pressed against his skin so hard that his whole body ached. He continued to fall, and it was then he saw the ground below him. A dirt surface that was barren and completely void of any life at all. He knew he was close to the underworld.

Mai Long landed on his back with a thud on the cold hard ground. He groaned in pain, and turned over. He slowly opened his eyes, and found a man, clothed in a cloak of a velvet coat, with a blade in his hand. When he opened his mouth, he spoke in a distorted voice, and bellowed, "Welcome to the gates of hell my friend..." Then, he took another loud, deep sonorous breath, and shouted, "If you are not a dead man, and have a pumping heart then you are not welcome here, in the underworld."

Mai Long got up from his back, and shouted, "I'm here to get the blade which can kill the dragon." Mai Long only assumed that this man was Tsun Tzu, the guardian of the blade. Only a man like him could keep the blade, in such a twisted dimension.

Then, the man, with a smile, crackled into a cacophony of laughter, and bellowed, "It's a lie when men say the best things in life are free, as they obviously are completely oblivious to the true value of all things... Even your life itself has a price..."

Then, Mai Long proceeded to ask, "What do you charge for it? The whole of China awaits this blade to rescue itself." Then, Tsun Tzu only replied with a long, and demanding answer, "Well, I am in the debt of your uncle... He has saved my neck from that dragon many times... I do suppose that I am in debt to his soul... Very well, young warrior, I bid you farewell. I do warn however, that blade possesses... a very twisted and dark power..."

Right after, Mai Long stood on the barren ground, and waited for a reaction from Tsun Tzu. Then, Tsun Tzu merely vanished and the blade he was holding in his hands dropped cold on the floor. A certain enchanted aura entranced the sword, and blue smoke lifted up from the blade. The blade was forged of a myriad of sanguine diamonds and as soon as Mai Long touched the blade, a large purple hole appeared right below him. He fell, and into the void he disappeared.

\* \* \*

As Mai Long fell into the void, he had experienced a constant stinging on his back. He rotated inside the space without any gravity for hours, and hours. The void is a space that theoretically does not exist. People say it is the dimension that exists below hell, and right above the abyss of emptiness. It in fact, lies underneath the Great Wall, a dark realm nevertheless. Void suggests emptiness, where nothing is able to thrive. However, the void in contrast is a home to many unspeakable horrors that should never have to be exposed to the very likes of men. It eats away at the mind, until the one trapped has to resort to killing and ending their own lives, to end the infinite pain.

Mai Long continued to fall into the void, as he ventured on deeper, rotating helplessly. To this day, no one has discovered what Mai Long has experienced there. However, when he

exited the void, he became a changed man having witnessed the horrors of the void. His heart that was once full of compassion and mercy evolved into a heart thirsty for blood and death. Visions of death, pestilence, and suffering plagued his very mind, and for years, Mai Long had been strengthened by enduring these near death experiences, and being resilient against these visions which lured him into killing himself.

When Mai Long finally dropped out of the void as a strengthened man and woke up to the intense flames smothering his face. He slowly opened his eyes, which had a flicker of ash scattered across his eyelids. Slowly getting to his feet, he suddenly fell back down as the weight of the blade dragged his body down to the ground. Scouring the last ounce of strength in the nooks and crannies of his body, he stood up. Before him stood the dragon that had burned down the innocent of China.

As he stood up, he realised that he was standing on top of the Great Wall. Despite the fact it was scarred with ethereal flames, and asbestos leaked from the walls, it stood tall, one of the only structures that stayed intact throughout the years that Mai Long had disappeared in the void. He stood on the wall, a lone warrior bearing the sword. Dressed in nothing but armour made from decade old bronze plates, which were decayed and dyed of rust by time.

The dragon stood tall and proud in front of Mai Long, and it flapped its wings hard, in order to create a massive gust of wind, which blew Mai Long back off the platform he stood on. Mai Long drew out his sword, and then swung it recklessly, not knowing its powers.

To his surprise, the sword leashed out a purple slash of wind, which traveled until it scarred the neck of the dragon. Silver, velvet blood rushed out of the wound, and drenched the Great Wall, painting it a luminous azure shade. Mai Long then observed the dragon's weaknesses, finding that it was exhausted from breathing out flames. The dragon was beginning to resort to melee attacks, and with Mai Long's consistent slashes, the dragon was soon wounded heavily. Mai Long then decided that he would have to slay it once and for all.

He swiftly glided under the belly of the dragon, sliding on the rocky and poorly polished floor of the Great Wall. He then thrust the blade as he was gliding down, bearing the blade in his hand firmly. He never let go of the blade, despite the fact that it chafed his hands every single moment he grasped the metallic handle. As he finished sledding out of the dragon's proximity, he finally mustered all the courage he had remaining, and stood up.

Tales tell what happened next differently. Some say that the dragon consumed Mai Long, and they both disappeared into history, where not many remember their epic battle.

However, some say that Mai Long had slain the dragon. Others say that Mai Long has died with it. What we do know is this; the iron spirit of the dragon is embedded inside the very wall, and gives the wall an aura of strength. The spirit of the dragon, which is sturdy, and resembles strength, will ensure that the Great Wall will protect China for eternity, and will never fall, despite the countless blemishes time will naturally bring it.

Maybe the Great Wall of China may fall one day.  
But not when I am still alive.

Mai Long

## A New Tale of the Great Wall

Chou Ka Ying, 14, Tung Wah Group Of Hospitals S. C. Gaw Memorial College

“Boa.....Boa .....where are you? Boa!” I shouted out.  
 “Soo Jung, have you had a nightmare? Why are you shouting?”  
 My grandmother heard the sound and ran quickly to me.

I woke up and looked around. I saw a clock in front of the ebony bed, a cactus on the windowsill. All of the above illustrated one thing which was that I was back to the world of mankind. Then, I wondered, was everything just a dream although what I’d experienced I believed to be truly authentic. I spread out my hand and noticed there was a wound on my ring finger, and the skin around the wound was glowing red. I touched the wound lightly, then I felt severe pain. I likened the pain to a caterpillar biting my wound. The pain was a sharp reminder to me that it really happened.

After a while, I suddenly remembered that my grandmother had been standing next to me for a long time. For a time, I had completely forgotten the presence of my grandmother. I didn’t want my grandmother to worry about me so I took her to the garden and explained what had happened to me. At the same time, I recalled many things that had happened in the past two weeks.

Last month, at the beginning of the summer holidays, I originally planned to travel to Korea with my parents. However, they suddenly received notice from my father’s company that they had to go to France for my father’s work. They didn’t want to leave me at home alone. So they sent me to my grandmother’s home in Beijing. At first, I didn’t want to go there since my grandmother’s home was a traditional Chinese quadrangle without internet access, a TV and other modern facilities. Finally, I was compelled to live in Beijing for three weeks until my parents came to take me home.

The first few days in Beijing were very boring, I had nothing to do but just sleep and eat. One night, during my first week in Beijing, my aunt came and took me to the Great Wall. I had never been to the Great Wall so I was very excited about seeing it for the first time. As the saying goes, “He who has never been to the Great Wall isn’t a true man.” I was interested in it and wanted to see it for myself.

The journey to the Great Wall took about one hour during which I felt very nervous as I eagerly awaited its sight. However, the reality of seeing it did not match my imagination. When I arrived there, the only thing I could see was a large number of people. The people pushed us to walk forward and I got separated from my aunt in the resulting confusion. I continued to walk ahead. As I did so, the number of people around me decreased and eventually there was only me at a section of the great wall. I looked back at the route I had just walked. I had covered a huge distance from the beginning of the great wall. While I was squatting, I saw a unique symbol on the side of the wall. The symbol was drawn in a covert corner of the wall. I thought if I hadn’t squatted, I would not have seen this symbol. I studied it carefully. Although I didn’t know what it was about, I knew that it wasn’t a Chinese or an English word and I knew that I had never seen it before. It looked like a picture of a dragon and I was curious about the unique symbol.

Then, when I tried to use my hand to touch the symbol, a miraculous thing happened.

In the dark sky, seven stars appeared abruptly and they formed a logo of a dragon and came closer and closer. They rotated faster and faster. Unexpectedly, the stone under my foot moved to both sides of the Great Wall. This made me fall underground and the stones above my head closed over me so that I was entombed underground. I wanted to stand up and get away from there but it was impossible as the stones above me prohibited any light reaching me underground. In total darkness, I was very scared and cried out. My cries for help drew no responses so, after a while, I stopped crying and tried to calm down. I started to search for something useful from my bag and I found my mobile phone and used the flashlight apps to illuminate my surroundings. I saw that I was in a place similar to a tunnel and I could feel some wind coming from the depths of the tunnel. I walked gingerly towards the depths of the tunnel. I only wanted to get out of this place quickly. So I ran very fast and I didn’t know how long I had been running. Finally, I arrived at the middle of the tunnel. There was a large wooden door with a few words written on it. I didn’t know what it was about. I just opened the door. When I opened the door, a fresh breeze flapped softly on my face. I breathed the fresh air forcefully to soothe the toxic feeling I’d experienced in the tunnel. The fear in my heart disappeared slowly after I saw the views outside the wooden door. The endless grasslands, dotted with colourful flowers against a backdrop of wispy clouds floating in the blue sky, was a sight to behold.

Nearby, a blossoming flower swung like an adolescent girl dressed all in white. “They should only appear in fairy tales, shouldn’t they?” I murmured to myself. How untrue it was! I set foot on the grasslands. “Oh! It is so soft!” I shouted out. I began to move forward since I wanted to find out what else was in this mysterious land. Every step I walked was like walking on marshmallow. After I walked almost one hundred paces, I saw a village in the western corner of the grasslands. I was inquisitive about the village. Did it have any inhabitants? Was the village real or just a hallucination? It didn’t exist. If there was a person living, he/she would help me to go back home, even my grandmother’s home. I asked myself many questions as I was afraid that I would be disappointed with the truth. If there wasn’t any person, I would need to stay here for a lifetime. Would I see my parents again? I hoped the answer was “yes”. I walked to the village full of expectations. When I reached it, I couldn’t believe my eyes! I rubbed them seeking clarification of my vision. However, that didn’t work. Perhaps I was wrong, but alas, it was true and my eyes had not been mistaken. There were about 80 “people” that I could see in the village. I was shocked by the physical makeup of the villagers since all of them had tentacles on their heads. Moreover, their eyes and hair were blue in colour.

“Hi!” I said to one of the female villagers. “I am Boa!” “Where do you come from?” she asked. I explained to her what I had just experienced.

We talked for about thirty minutes and I told her lots about the world above the tunnel. She, in turn, told me a lot of stories about both the underground world and the village. From her, I learnt that the village was previously on the land and that the villagers were the offspring of the dragon. They were guardians of the Great Wall. In order to protect the Great Wall, they chose to live underground. The tunnel that I had seen previously was the only passage to where I now was. The words I had seen previously were the literature of this world.

I lived there for a week and the villagers were kind and friendly. They all treated me as if I was one of them. My affection for them grew, as it did for the underground world because of its purity. However, I knew that I couldn't stay here for a longer time, because I missed my family. Therefore, I asked Boa to send me back to the world above the land.

Boa agreed to my proposal since she knew I missed my family and so that was the last day I stayed there. She and the villagers held a farewell party for me. At the end of the party, Boa gave me an ornament as a goodbye gift although it was just made of some flowers and it wasn't very refined. It was the best gift for me. Then, Boa took me to the grasslands where she read the spell. "In the original dark sky, seven stars appeared abruptly. They formed a logo of a dragon and came closer and closer. They rotated faster and faster....."

Soon after, I returned, to my grandmother's home. The experience under the spell has become my own precious memory. It has not been shared with another person; it was just for me. I know that I can't go to the underground world again but I will remember them all in my heart – especially the offspring of the dragon, the guardian of the Great Wall, the picturesque underground world...

## The Truth of the Great Wall of China

Holly Leung, 12, Independent Schools Foundation Academy

It was a gloomy dark day as the dragons watched the land of China under them, torn in battle and war. The land was breaking apart by this terrible war. The dragons could do nothing but watch and pray for the Chinese people.

"Those foolish humans," Dragon Di cried, staring stonily at the map, "They shouldn't be fighting each other!"

"Why would that be, Dragon Di?" said Dragon Jan, "We have always fought each other to understand who is the best! Right now, as I watch the fight, Jin is the best."

"Not everything is about warfare, Dragon Jan," Dragon Wanli sighed, he was also looking closely at the map. "Our people are about to be demolished by the ethnic minorities!"

All three dragons were now giving their undivided attention to the crystal map, the map showing the people of the different areas. Indeed, the dragons could see the flag of the ethnic minorities moving closer and closer to the land of China.

"What should we do?" cried Dragon Wanli in despair, "The nation that we have built up will get destroyed! Our people must come together! We must do something!"

A figure suddenly appeared in front of him, "We can do nothing, Wanli," the figure's voice roared in the dragons' ears.

"Master Tai....." All the dragons bowed down in respect as the figure came closer.

"You may regain position, dragons," Master Tai said, "Wanli, you can do nothing. This is commandant 21 written by Dragon Shamo. 'No dragon must ever interfere in the business of mankind. Dragons are only allowed to watch them fight their own battle. If any dragon breaks this commandant, the dragon's companions must judge him.' You hear that, Wanli?"

Wanli could only nod sadly before retiring into his cloud cradle. He could not bear to watch the people of his country suffering while the dragons did nothing. As he drifted off to sleep, he heard a voice call out, "Dragon Wanli, you aren't the only one....." A dragon appeared in the midst of his dreams. "I am the legendary dragon, Heliu. I could not bear to



watch the people suffering, and opposed my own Father, Shamo, to make the people of China's days better. I sacrificed myself to turn into the Yangtze River. I want you to do the same." Then, the dragon faded away.

Wanli woke up with a jolt, and became ambitious all of a sudden. He knew what he wanted to do. He must follow Dragon Heliu's words, and let the land become peaceful once more. He came to the place where the ethnic minorities were heading towards, the only line between them and the Chinese. He knew what he would do; he would use Heliu's image to build a wall, to block the ethnic minorities from the Chinese forever. As he summoned all his power, he could feel the air rushing up his nose, his body felt like it was on fire, and he could feel his claws clenching tightly together. Then, his power shot off his claws, and every rock on the ground was lifted up in the air, controlled by Wanli's enormous claws. He gathered up all his strength and pieced the rocks together, his snout shooting out fire flames as he did so. It took him every bit of his power to do so. When he was done, it was a massive creation, one that could stop the ethnic minorities from coming in to China for centuries to come. Yet, Wanli's creation must stay hidden for now. He placed a spell on it, a spell that guarantees that the wall stays invisible until the day when it is actually built by the people of China.

Years later, the Qin emperor started building this great wall, and Wanli's secret was finally revealed. The dragons were astonished by what Wanli had done, but as he protected the people of China, the dragons weren't very critical, and he was judged that the wall shall be named after him. So the wall was named after Dragon Wanli, as they say in China, Wan Li Chang Cheng, and in English, the Great Wall of China.

## Time Machine

Peony Yee Kei Leung, 12, Diocesan Girls' School

Have you ever wanted to change the course of history? Like, stopping the Opium War, or stopping the Chinese Civil War? Well, I know someone who wanted to change the course of history. Sit back and enjoy.

There was once a girl who, when looking back on history, would find the loss of so many lives in the construction of the Great Wall a terrible pity. She was called Sarah.

As she grew older, she became a highly respected scientist, because of what she invented: bubble public transport, for example. Bubble public transport is a public transportation which allows the passenger to take their ride in a bubble. It was highly recognised, and Sarah became the greatest scientist of her time.

Yet, the invention she wanted to complete was a transportation that could travel so fast, it could go through time. She wanted to be able to change history by travelling through parallel worlds. She was normally practical, but she couldn't give up the dream of being able to change a bad test mark, or to be able to spend more time with her family members. The hidden secret in her heart was that she wanted to go through history to change the fate of the people who spent years in constructing the Great Wall. In short, what she wanted was to persuade the Qin Emperor that there were better ways to defend China rather than making a humungous stone wall which ended so many lives. She needed to go back.

Of course, such an ingenious invention could not be kept secret for long. The one to discover the secret was an evil, moody, obsessed, mad scientist, Anzac.

Anzac was obsessed indeed; he was obsessed with evil inventions, with turning back time, with correcting a past wrong.

Years ago, Anzac met Sarah at school. She wasn't pretty, nor was she popular. The only things going for her were her brains. She was the smartest girl in school, even wiser than the teachers. He learnt to love her. Maybe it was another obsession, or maybe they could really have set up a fortunate life together. As it turned out, Sarah was leaving the town forever. They couldn't contact each other. Anzac, after that, never saw his teenage love again.

Anzac didn't know that he was about to take the time machine from was his teenage love. He only knew he had to turn back time to make sure that he would intervene with the course



of events and would follow Sarah when she left town that fateful day with her father. He was determined not to lose her again, given the chance.

\* \* \*

In Sarah's lab, commotion whirred all around the room. Sarah was the commander of the chaos, fixing a huge bulk of a machine and checking some settings.

This was actually the time machine. She smiled and hummed her favourite song as she twisted in a few screws and flung away the screwdriver to her back, where it rebounded on the wall and joined its companions on the floor.

At the dingy window, Anzac peered inside. Actually, if he just looked at the scientist, he would recognise her as Sarah, but Anzac continued to stare at the time machine. He could see the time period on the settings to be Qin. What could this scientist be to go to the Qin period? Just as he was about to train his microscope on the scientist, another person burst in. Anzac dove into the bushes under the window and changed the dial on his hearing machine to 'high'.

"-----are you doing?" he heard a voice say. Possibly it was the voice of the new-comer.

"I'm going to the Qin Dynasty. You're the only one who knows about the time machine. Don't betray me now. Just let me go. I'll be back soon." A weary voice said.

"You're not on about your dream of saving the Qin people, are you? Oh no, you're serious. You'll get beheaded, come on, snap out of it!" the new-comer said.

"No one deserves to be treated like this. Get your hand off the dialer. Now. I need to set the speed of travel."

Footsteps sounded. Wow, the commanding tone of the time machine inventor was really familiar, Anzac thought.

Anzac realised that the inventor was about to go to the Qin dynasty with the time machine, and he couldn't set things right. No, he had to stop them. But how? That was the question.

"As your fellow scientist, I really advise you not to go. Really." The new-comer said meekly.

"Stop worrying, I'm coming back. I'm not as fragile as you think." The inventor said.

Then, he heard a click, a whirr, then total silence.

Oh no, Anzac thought. No, no, no. The inventor had disappeared with the time machine to the Qin dynasty. Well, it looked like his mission had to wait.

\* \* \*

In the Qin dynasty, a muffled thump sounded throughout a grass lawn near the Qin Palace. A flock of startled birds took flight away from the lawn.

Sarah stepped out from the time machine, dressed in a Chinese costume she rented from a costume shop downtown. Sarah dared not think about the cost of the rent for the costume when she went back to the modern world. Well, first things first.

At that, Sarah set off on her mission to save the workers of the Qin Dynasty.

\* \* \*

"Heyup! Heyup! Heyup!" the cries resounded from the construction site.

'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.' True enough. If the Qin Emperor could find that lump of mud impressive enough to build an effective barrier against invaders, he does have a

strange concept of beauty, Sarah thought. Then, she realised that the version of the Great Wall seen in 20th Century had gone through many changes.

The lump of soil being pushed by the workers wasn't strong. It kept loosening up in different places. How could that lump help the Chinese to defend against attackers?

Sarah's eyes went from person to person, looking for the most authoritative person at the site. Her eyes landed on a man with a beard, a tall hat and blue robes. Surely he was the person in charge.

Sarah approached him with her chin in the air. The man was positively afraid. Sarah said, "Do not fear. I come in peace. I wish to see the Emperor." The man, paralysed with fear, nodded and gestured her forward.

At the palace of the king, Sarah kneeled in front of the throne. After some time, the silent Emperor asked, "What is it that you are here for, lady?"

"I am a prophet. I can predict your death and your future actions." Sarah lied.

"Ah. I do not believe you. Prove to me you are right! Or else..." the threat hung in the air.

"Worry not, my king. I shall prove to you that I am a prophet. Indeed, you are thinking of going north to slay the Huns, are you not? You are thinking of burning books that will be harmful to your reign, are you not?" Sarah said.

His eyes widened. "Indeed, you are the almighty prophet! You must be here for a reason, and may I ask what it is?"

"It is that the Great Wall of China must not be built! It is the will of the Gods that you stop construction immediately and ask all workers to go back home." Sarah said.

"If it is the will of the Gods, what can I say?" The Emperor said with a bitter laugh.

And Sarah's mission was over.

She boarded her time machine, set the dial, and crossed through parallel worlds to reach the year 2013.

In 2013, the world hadn't changed. Hong Kong was still an important financial sector. China was still a booming industry. Most importantly, the Great Wall of China was still there.

It was not possible. She went on Wikipedia and searched 'the Great Wall of China'.

The first words were these: "The Great Wall of China was built in the Qin Dynasty. A prophet had almost dissuaded the king from building the Great Wall, but his efforts didn't work and his advice was ignored."

His? When did he become a male?

There must have been something wrong. Well, Sarah was in no position to change it, unless she gave her secret to the whole world. And that would not happen.

Anzac checked in the window for the time machine. It was there! Yes! He could embark on his mission.

He stepped into the straight, oval chute, pressed the dial for the time when Sarah left town, and pressed the button marked "GO".

He was back in familiar surroundings, standing next to Sarah on the beach, just the way he remembered it. Sarah was saying, "I'm leaving."

He said, "I'm going with you."

A look of pure joy spread across Sarah's face. She nodded, told him to pack his stuff, then covered her face in her hands and ran off before he could see her cry.

Thinking it was safe enough, he hopped back into the time chute and went back to 2013. Nothing had changed. He was still single. Sarah was still single.

When he sought out memories from his brain, he 'remembered' that Sarah, disgusted by his talk of destroying humanity, had left him years ago. He was the same old man with nothing to lose.

“Man has no power over history,” Sarah and Anzac sighed at the same time, separated by a wall of silence and desolateness.

They travelled through time, and they created New Tales of the Great Wall.

## New Tales of the Great Wall

Raphael Chun Yin Man, 14, St. Joseph’s College

The Great Wall of China which we can see today was built in the Ming Dynasty to secure the Chinese from Mongolian invaders. Many people who have been to the Great Wall think that there is nothing but wilderness beyond it, and that there is no life in the rocky hills where it lies.

Having recently read a book talking about ancient underworlds in the tombs of Egyptian Pharaohs and Chinese Emperors, I wondered if there were any such mysterious places under the Great Wall as well. I therefore went to the Bat Tat Ling Great Wall last month, and climbed down from it by means of a rope ladder to explore.

I stepped down onto the steep hill. Before I knew it, my feet lost their grip on the slippery grass, and I slid about three metres down onto a piece of rock. I got up and stepped onto the rock to get a grip. Just then, the ground gave way, and all the earth around me crumbled down. “Ahhhhhhhh!!!!” I screamed as I fell down and down...

After a while, I landed with a thump on something soft. A bright light shone on me, but it was not sunlight. “Who are you?” a voice bellowed. “My name is Raphael. I come in peace!” I frantically replied. “Okay!” a small man, about seventy centimetres tall, approached me holding an LED lamp. “Follow me to our leader.” He led me through a series of twists and turns until we arrived at a wide road. There were colourful LED lamps hanging from the high ceiling, and shops on both sides of the road. Numerous small men and women hurried in and out of the shops. When they noticed me, they froze for a moment, before a wave from my guide signalled them to go back to work. The guide led me to a small temple and told me to look into the red window on the second floor.

Another small man, much older than my guide, soon looked from the window at me.

“Welcome to the Underworld of the Great Wall!” he said. “Who are you?”

I replied, “My name is Raphael Man. I come from Hong Kong where I work as an engineer majoring in transport systems.” “Who are you?” I asked

The little man chuckled before saying, “I am the leader of this Underworld. We are people of the Ming dynasty, or at least our ancestors were. They were sent to build the magnificent Great Wall above.”

He whispered at me, "You may not believe what I am about to tell you, but listen: One day, a very bright light shone on those men. They got squashed and squashed for a short while, and when they opened their eyes, they were as short as us! They dug out streets and roads with tools, and after years of expansion the Underworld is now home to ninety thousand people, scattered around different sections of the Wall. This temple is the Capital of the Underworld." He finished with a smile.

He also added that there were two entrances to the Underworld. The first one, where I had fallen in, was originally dug to catch large animals. The other entrance was built at the shore of the Bohai Sea, where they grabbed fish and other seafood.

The level of technology was very advanced in the Underworld. For example, they used internet-enabled monitors to watch Underworld television programmes. All monitors in the Underworld were connected by Wi-Fi. The electricity needed for them was generated by a geothermal power plant.

The leader excused himself so that he could make a speech to the public about me. I thus left the temple for a stroll. I discovered that the air in the Underworld was very clean, as were the streets. It was a great contrast with the world above.

When the leader finished his speech, he asked me to stay with them for a while to help them construct a new railway system run by electricity, to replace their old diesel-run system. I stayed at a luxurious hotel, in the only room big enough for me: the presidential suite. I felt like the BFG, as I squeezed my way through the narrow corridors of the hotel. I lived comfortably in this hotel room, with a faithful butler at my service.

I held a daily meeting with the leader, and gradually passed down the technology on railways that I knew about. The leader was very impressed, and began inviting me to talk about other aspects of the modern world.

In addition to my daily meetings, I took a tour around the capital of the Underworld, Zhong Changxing. The lives of the people were using high technology also. They used small TVs and electronic games at home, just like people nowadays. The people of the Underworld also used high levels of technology to communicate verbally, which involved stone tubes and other machinery. The process was environmentally-friendly and very convenient. I was impressed.

However, there was a new twist in my third week staying in the Underworld. That morning I woke up to find scores of people demonstrating around the hotel, demanding to see me. Shocked as I was, I decided to go out to meet them. I was "greeted" by a series of small genetically modified tomatoes flying at my feet once I set foot out of the hotel.

"GET OUT OF HERE!" the people shouted.

"Why?" I asked in spite of the clamour.

"YOU HAVE USED UP A LOT OF OUR RESOURCES!" they boomed.

The leader of the protest shouted at my ear, "You have used up our monthly quota in two weeks! Get out of here, or bear the consequences, you lazy bug!!"

"I will try to consume fewer resources then." I replied. Obviously, the people were not satisfied. "JUST LEAVE HERE NOW!!! WE DON'T TRUST YOU!"

"Okay, but let me talk with your leader." They still seemed not satisfied, but I did not dare say anything more. I marched quickly to the temple, with the protest procession at my tail. "HI!" I shouted loudly at the window. The leader was out in seconds. After briefly recalling what just happened, I asked for his opinion.

The leader sighed. "I am in a jam. I want you to stay here to assist me, yet I will not go against the views of my people."

He decided that he would hold a discussion with the opposition party. After what seemed like an eternity, the leader finally emerged out of the temple. "You must leave here in two days." he announced. I nodded in defeat. The protest procession, pleased with the result, dispersed shortly afterwards.

At the last meeting with the leader, I passed on some more basic information on constructing a modern railway to him. During that period, I also told him that the hole where I came in was too deep for me to climb up. The leader directed me to make use of the entrance by the sea to leave the Underworld.

Finally, he whispered, "my people hate modern people in general, because they discovered the air above was dirty, and the ground was brown and dusty. This was unlike the world in Ming, which was clear with blue skies. They hate the modern people for polluting the skies and ruining the beautiful world. Though they know that the high technology they use causes carbon dioxide emissions, we have been reducing it by using energy-efficient infrastructure, and converting all of our carbon dioxide output into oxygen by using plants."

The leader arranged a large truck for me to follow his limousine to the entrance. He bade me goodbye and asked me not to disclose what I had seen there to anybody, or otherwise their society might be destroyed by numerous visitors. He added, "This place has been peaceful for over three hundred years. It cannot afford to be destroyed by the modern people." I promised him to remain tight-lipped, and thanked him for his kindness and accommodation during my stay. Finally, I walked out of the Underworld and returned to the modern world.

I breathed in the air, and immediately coughed. Phew! It was so polluted! It was very different from the air in the Underworld. The Underworld adventure made me understand the importance of environmental protection. If we keep our air clean and plant more trees, our children and grandchildren can continue to enjoy a happy life on the Earth. However, if we don't, our next generation may hate us for wrecking their world just like the people of the Underworld.

I am planning on going back to the Great Wall next summer. Perhaps I will visit the Underworld again. During the trip, I may show them some photos of the Earth which are not yet polluted, such as country parks and natural reserves. I hope they can have another opinion on the modern people by that time.

## Timeless

Kary Kar Yuet Ng, 13, Sacred Heart Canossian College

Sunlight rose on the stony ground, making it slightly glimmered. The sky was a cloudless blue and solid heat poured down onto the earth below.

"We're here!" Simon exclaimed, gesturing to the tall columns that were the entrance to the Great Wall. I ran from behind, breathing heavily, "How did you walk so fast? I could hardly catch up with you!" I panted and a few drops of sweat rolled down my forehead. "I usually walk faster when I'm excited," Simon explained and chuckled, "come on, let's get inside". Laughing, he caught my wrist and walked towards the two enormous red wooden doors. As the path stretched on, souvenir stores lined up on both sides on the space, their baskets filled with pretty souvenirs that my sister would have been crazed about if I brought her with us. "You better hurry up if you want to finish our journey before twilight, as much as I don't want to admit, you're slow," he turned away as if to hide a smile, and I realised I'd been standing in front of one of the stores and staring vacantly into the shop through the windows. I crossed over to him and paced along.

Stepping on the rough ground of the Great Wall was giving my feet a massage, but my feet were dry and the skin was possibly peeling off inside my shoes. The heat was unbearable; it's never been this hot before, not mentioning it was still winter. Suddenly a voice spoke silently inside my head, something's wrong. But maybe it's just my illusion of not sleeping well last night. I ignored the voice and kept walking. The stairs on the Great Wall were high and narrow, which looked more suitable for climbing with hands rather than with feet, but somehow Simon managed it effortlessly. Not wanting to show any weakness, I tried hard with my inflexible legs.

Failing, I decided to use my hands at last, "Simon," I called out to him, who was far ahead of me, "I really appreciate that you want to finish the whole journey on your own, does that mean I can stay here and wait?" I said with sarcasm, motioning to the wide gap between us. "Fine," he replied, with a graceful leap, he came down and helped me up.

The moment I reached the first tower, an unpleasantly cold breeze flowed through the hole in the wall, and lingered on my face. My head felt dizzy as if something had hit it with a great force, my entire body shivered and my sight blurred. "Simon, let's rest for a while, I

think I'm a little sick," I closed my eyes, leaned against the pillar and slid to the ground. "Are you okay? You look like you've just drowned in the Dead Sea," his eyes filled with concern as he measured my condition, "do we need to go back? We can get a doctor somewhere—" "No, it's fine. Just let me rest," "will do." He stared for a while and sat on the ground beside me. I wrapped myself together with my jacket and crossed my legs. The rough surface of the wall was like pieces of scrubbed sandpaper against my hot skin. Tourists danced in front of my eyes, their shapes were unclear as they went past us and out of the tower.

I watched dully as the sky changed into a dimmer shade of sapphire as minutes passed. My heart rapidly beating with soreness in my head, and my eye lids seemed to get heavier and heavier every second. "Do you have any water, Simon?" I asked in a hoarse voice, raising my left hand to my forehead. Without any surprise, I was having a fever. "Here you go," Simon said, handing me his grey water bottle, "any better?" "Not really. Fever." I answered in a whisper. If it wasn't for the fact that Simon was just my friend and nothing more, I would have hoped to huddle in his embrace to keep warm, since the surrounding air was getting chillier as my body weakened. Not bothering to ask for the embarrassing offer, I wrapped my jacket around myself securely once again. From the corner of my eye, I saw Simon turned away with sudden sternness.

"THIS PLACE IS CURSED!" cried a drunken man from a distance, flipping his beer bottle over and over in his hands. He staggered through the crowd and finally reached the first tower where we're resting. When he saw us, terror whipped all across his face and he opened his mouth as if to yelp in exigency, staring into his eyes was like falling into a dimmed well, "be careful now" was all he'd said before he left. A horrid feeling passed through me like an electric shock—it's really hard not to react like this when someone says something like that to you. I whipped my head around to look for Simon—but he was gone! I took in a breath of icy air in disbelief, I stared with widening eyes as a piercing shriek echoed into my ears.

I pushed myself up with my arms and went out of the tower, and the scene caught me in shock. Hundreds of people were clawing at the ground with bloodied hands; their skinny bodies hunched forward like they were carrying a large invisible block of stones on their backs, omnipresent sorrowful cries passing the architecture like lost souls.

The longer I stared, the more people seemed to appear, and there were cloaked figures standing with dark pride on the two sides, hitting the slaves with a black thorny whip with immense force. Slash! The whip sliced through my skin and blood spilled out, it was like burning a sealed wound with fire or tearing away the bandages way before the wound was healed. I screamed out in pain and crouched down on the ground. "Go faster, you filthy wretches!" one of the cloaked man yelled in a coarse voice, his black hood fell down as he jerked his head to my direction. I startled as I saw his face—two deep holes dug into the place where his eyes had once been, his torn-off skin stretched along his jaw bones to his eye sockets—but instead, tears rolled down my cheeks and my body shook with fear.

I gazed up to the sky, realising it had turned a dark grey, black smoke swirled in a circle and a demon's face formed. I looked away, letting out a cry.

This is not real, this couldn't be real! I thought to myself. The others looked at me in grief—they had the same face as the cloaked man, which was not surprising anymore, and I instantly brought in the thought that I had spoken out loud.

Abruptly, a tune of soft melodies rang from my pocket—my phone. In a swift movement, I snatched it out and pressed the green button.

"Hello?" "Oh, Casey, why didn't you call me back? I've called you ten times and you haven't—" "What?" I spoke in incredulity. "I saw you went into the souvenir shop and you just



didn't come out, when I went inside to find you, you weren't there!" My mouth popped open soundlessly. "But I—" the whip whipped on me again, I cried out. "Are you alright?" Simon panted, "Where are you?" "I—" "Please come back, I'm waiting for you. Just in front of the shop." Then, the call ended with a single beep. I hurried to the entrance single-mindedly.

A skeleton hand slashed out in front of me, blocking my way. I shoved it away with as much force as I had, unsuccessfully, the cloaked man glared at me furiously. "Where do you think you're going?" With a fling of his arm, he grabbed the collar of my blood-stained shirt and flung me into the dusty corner of the passageway. A loud crack sounded as one of my ribs broke, and the torment had gone far beyond my letting out screams, no sound came out. I lay on the ground, not moving, and waited until the cloaked man looked away again to the other side of the Great Wall. Silently I crawled to the wooden door that seemed to be painted with blood, and made my escape.

The world outside the door was absurdly different, daylight shined on me and heat warmed me up completely. I touched my back softly, the wounds were gone.

"Casey?" Simon's eyebrows pulled together as he stared at me suspiciously. "Where've you been?" I raised my gaze, "The Great Wall—I was with you there!"

"No, I was waiting for you outside the shop all the time and—I supposed you had just fainted in the toilet" he paused, "I can't explain this, but—are you okay? You look green!"

How could this happen? I was inside with him, the Great Wall! "Never mind—let's go home, I think you need a doctor," he said, holding my sweaty hand to help me up.

We left the place in bathing sunlight. Somewhere in the shadows, I caught sight of a man—the cloaked man, smiling crookedly at me.

## Alien Walls

Marcus Chun Yin Ng, 12, Diocesan Boys' School

The Great Wall of China is perhaps one of the most famous historic sites on Earth. You might know it as a normal construction done by the ancient Chinese, but as always, things have more than one side.

I didn't know otherwise until I visited there the third time. I went up towards one of the checkpoints but found no one there, 'Strange,' I thought. I asked if anybody was there but no one answered. It was so quiet, I could hear my own heartbeat. I found a small door which I hadn't seen before. My curiosity helped me overcome my fear of getting separated from my family. I opened the door and saw a small tunnel leading further into the Great Wall of China, and when I mean into, I mean literally going through solid stones or bricks.

There was no light except for the faint light coming through the door. Sadly, it was quickly fading as the tunnel started to curve. I took out my iPod and shone it in front of me, I soon arrived at a wall. I knocked on it and heard a hollow sound. I walked backed a few steps and ran forward to the wall and made a few cracks. I repeated the process a few times until it started to crack open, I barely made it as I slipped through the crack. No matter, the point was that I got to the other side. I heard distant voices that were definitely not human.

I slid across the wall slowly and peeked through another door. To my surprise, there were creatures that had green skin, two 'eyes' sticking up from their heads and they had a cool looking space suit with a jet pack attached to it. Although they were aliens, they were speaking English. "Who's there?" One of the aliens asked. For a moment, I thought it was talking to me. Luckily, another alien went inside and said, "It's me, John." "Oh, hey Paul" Okay, so they were aliens who spoke English and had traditional names, typical. "One of the walls was found broken and human hair was found near it." Paul said. "Oops!" I thought. John exclaimed, "I told you we shouldn't have used hollow walls! Now we might have already been compromised, and die in this stupid wall." I almost screamed when I was yanked up by an alien, "Found him!" it said. "Bring him to me" John ordered.

"Could we experiment on him?" Paul asked. My face turned as pale as a sheet, John must've noticed and said, "Don't mind him, he's just kidding. Even if we wanted to, it won't



hurt a bit, because we will only use multi-dimensional scanners.” Relieved, I asked why they were still staying on Earth if they had such advanced technology. John answered that the reason they were still here was to protect from the end of our world as we know it. He explained that the reason the world didn’t end on the 21st December, 2012 was because they were here. He told me their people didn’t want to save us at first and tried to persuade John (who was their leader) to move to another planet just like before. He then explained that they used to inhabit Mars just like they did now, but when Mars was on the path of a meteor, John decided to just move to another planet, leaving the millions on that planet for dead, knowing that they were not advanced enough to save themselves. Ever since he had a sense of guilt inside him, knowing that he alone was responsible for their deaths. He further pointed out that they were actually stopping the meteor that was supposed to hit us by using a magnetic field generator powerful enough to disintegrate the entire meteor.

I questioned him why the Sumerians knew that the meteor would or was supposed to hit the Earth on the 21st December, 2012. He told me that the so-called Sumerians were actually aliens from another planet that co-existed with the dinosaurs, but when the meteor hit the Earth, they dug into the centre of the Earth and only came out millions of years later and became the ‘Sumerians’. They saw the stupid Homo sapiens and pitied them and therefore made a calendar for them, since they wanted to be fair, they also helped the Egyptians build the pyramids.

After explaining their history briefly, he sighed. I asked him what was the matter and he told me that they had to stay on Earth to protect us from the meteor even with the magnetic field machine because it would take a few hundred years for it to completely disintegrate the meteor into a harmless size and they could not return to their home planet even if they already had the technology to do. So I volunteered to help, “How?” he asked, “You’re barely able to think for yourself!” another one exclaimed. I told them about my plan on keeping the magnetic field working and only pass it to a worthy person who would never use it for evil purposes.

John thought about it for a while and decided to hold a meeting with all his people. The meeting lasted for hours, but finally, they decided to let me have it. They even gave me a few hundred billion pounds worth of diamond for me to use when necessary.

I said goodbye to them as they went aboard their space ship, “One last thing,” I asked, “Why do you guys speak English?” “We invented it, duh!” John replied as he too went into the space ship and blasted off into space.

## The Dove

Stella Preece, 12, The International School of Macao

I leaned over the side of Great Wall. They were right. The Wall was amazing! I knew it had been built to protect the land from the Xiongnu tribe, but the rest was a mystery.

“I know the truth,” a voice said behind me. I jumped and looked for the one who had spoken, but saw nothing. I shook my head. I was just imagining, maybe. I listened hard. Nothing. I continued to walk. Suddenly, I heard a small, soft laugh, but no one was near me. I decided to hurry back to my hotel. Maybe I was having some kind of seizure? I stumbled down the stone steps, when suddenly the smell of cake and freshly brewed tea filled the air. I looked over my shoulder.

A sign had appeared. It had an arrow that pointed to the right. I looked to the right and saw a small hut that I had never noticed before. I walked towards it and was about to knock on the small door, when a man opened. He smiled.

“Have you come for a story?” He asked. This was the same voice I had heard before.

“Come in!” he said and disappeared inside. I had to duck to go through the door. The hut had looked tiny from the outside, but inside it was a mansion with golden staircases and a sparkling fountain.

“This way,” his voice floated out of the room next to me. Inside, a fireplace stood tall, and brilliant flames licked the incandescent logs. I sat down in one of the armchairs.

“Cookie?” The voice startled me. Suddenly, the man was sitting across from me. I took a cookie and nibbled at it while the man poured me some green tea.

“Who are you?” I asked, immediately realising that I was being quite rude. “I mean...” I started, but he held up his hand.

“I am Master Po. Listen carefully. You have to help me with something, but first, I will tell you what happened...” He looked so desperate that I shut my mouth and nodded. Po smiled.

“It started long ago, when there was a king who ruled most of China. He loved gold and silver, and every day, he would send different people to go and find more diamonds and gold for him. But there was one thing he loved more than gold, and that was his daughter, Princess Jay. She had beautiful brown hair and an amazing talent for she could turn into a dove, but only

three times. She had already done it twice. If she did it one more time, she would have everlasting life, but would stay a dove forever. Then one day, The Xiongnu tribe attacked. Defeated they were, but swore they would return. The king ordered his people to build a wall that would protect his daughter. It took many years, but everybody worked tirelessly and, finally, the wall was completed. The enemy had not attacked during those years, but the kingdom knew that they were getting stronger. Then one day, the Xiongnu came back. They simply climbed over the wall and the war began. Everything was on fire, and hope seemed lost. The king collected a bag full of gold and ran up the spiral staircase to the third tower where his daughter was. He burst open the door and stopped dead. Pinu, the head of the Xiongnu tribe, was standing there facing Jay. The king called out, and Pinu turned, giving the princess time for what she had to do. She transformed."

"Wait, what?" I asked. "How does this story have anything to do with what you need help with...?"

"Hush!" Po said, before he continued. "Jay turned into a dove. She flapped her beautiful wings and flew far away. When she returned to her kingdom, everything was ruined and her father lay dying. She glided over to him and landed on his finger. A wound in his chest pumped out more and more blood. He bravely forced a smile and told her to go. Pinu was dead, but his ghost had stolen the king's heart, and hidden it inside the Great wall. The king stroked Jay's feathers. "I will always be in your heart. I love you," he whispered before he closed his eyes. And so the great king died. Sorrow filled Jay's whole being. She knew that she needed help. And that..." Po finished, "Is where I need your help. You must find Jay, and then retrieve the heart so that she can finally rest in peace." A tear rolled down his cheek. He stood up and grabbed a bag that had appeared out of nowhere. "I have packed everything you need. Food, water, rope and hooks."

"Hooks?" I asked.

"You'll need them," Po smiled.

"No, why me? I can't help you. I..."

"You are the right person," he whispered, and before I could blink, I was standing outside. I turned around. The hut was gone. I shook my head. I was imagining. But then why was I holding the pack that Po had given me? I decided to go back to my hotel. That night, I had trouble sleeping. When I finally drifted off, I had a strange dream. In it, Jay appeared as a dove and whispered to me to help her. Then she turned into Pinu's ghost and called me a nitwit. Pinu turned into Po. I asked him to help me, and he told me a riddle.

"The answer you seek is neither in water, nor on land, but find it back where you began." And with that, I woke up. Back where I began? I puzzled about it over breakfast. I spread marmalade on my newspaper and put butter in my tea. Pinu's spirit had hidden the heart in the great wall. But, that was on land. Maybe there was lava inside the Great Wall of China? After trying to eat my bacon with juice, I grabbed the bag Po had given me and set out. I searched along the sides of the Wall first. I pressed on bricks, tried "Open Sesame!" but nothing seemed to work. Next I searched the top. But I felt so tired and the Wall seemed to go on FOREVER! I sighed and turned to go back. Back where I began. What!? I began my trip in London, but that had nothing to do with the Great Wall. I sighed again. My head was starting to spin. I slowly turned away and headed back. When I finally reached my hotel, the smell of dumplings filled the air, so I had some for lunch. They were delicious and helped clear my mind. Back where I began, back where I began... Hmm. I wonder. I have always dreamed of visiting the Great Wall..... THAT'S IT!!!!!! Back where I began! In my dreams! I was excited, when suddenly I saw a problem. How could I enter my own dreams!? All this thinking got

me really tired. I decided to go to bed. I fell asleep at once. Then, thud! I hit hard ground. I opened my eyes. It was not the furry carpet that was in my hotel room. The queen size bed with double sheets and silk pillows was nowhere to be seen. There was a faint tapping coming from somewhere above me. I was lying on hard stone bricks. I sat up. No doubt about it. I was INSIDE the Great Wall off China! I looked up. Inside a small cage dangling above me, was a dove. I stood up and on my tiptoes to see the bird.

"Jay?" I whispered, my heart thumping. I slipped a hairpin out of my fringe and managed to get the cage open. Jay fluttered onto my shoulder. Wait, where was my bag? Oh, there it was. I picked it up and tied it above my waist. Together, the two of us started walking. It suddenly started getting really hot. I stopped just in time. An enormous fire pit stopped me from going any further.

"Jay, you have to fly over and wait for me there, okay?" I whispered to the white dove. Jay nodded and flew over. Now it was my turn. I looked up. There was a hoop in the ceiling. I could swing over! I grabbed some rope and swung it. It caught the hoop and over I went. Jay and I hurried to the next room. I suddenly froze. There stood Pinu.

"I knew you would come," he grinned.

"I will distract him!" I whispered to Jay. Pinu drew a sword.

"My turn for a bit of fun!" I dodged it just as Jay grabbed the heart.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" Pinu yelled. The world seemed to tilt, change and shudder and I woke up in my hotel room. A beautiful princess stood by my bed.

"Thank you!" She whispered and faded away. Only later did I notice the little dove necklace hanging around my neck.

## When Aliens came to town, it was the Great Wall that...

Sophie Qi, 12, King George V School

No one knows when this happened, or even that it had happened, but it did. On that day, the earth suffered a nearby disaster that could have wiped out the entire world. Minnicks came to earth.

They were peaceful creatures; they really were. They were creatures smart and ambitious, eager to discover the universe. After many years of hard working, the vesolje raketa (which in English is Universe Rocket) was ready to launch. The families of the 30 crew members who were boarding the plane sniffed and said their final goodbyes. Not that they were worried of course. This rocket was safe enough, specially designed to be meteorite proof, heat proof, and radiation proof. It had several houses inside, and best of all, it was as fast as the speed of light. It was their best rocket by far.

So the spaceship set off in search of the answer to life. It whizzed past the Sunflower galaxy, raced past the Cartwheel galaxy, and braced the cold of the Sombrero galaxy, until they arrived at the Milky Way. So far, these Minnicks were bitterly disappointed. The Rasas had told them so much about the possibility of horses that could stay under water, animals that could fly, and plants the colour of sunset. And yet, all they came across was empty lands, as cold as frozen ice or as hot as melting iron. So there they were, playing with their thumbs when suddenly the Captain shouted out:

"Life! Life on planet 48! The blue one! Quickly everyone! Grab your telescopes!"

That jerked everyone into attention. Quickly, they glanced at their surroundings. They all wanted to go there desperately. This globe looked perfect, rotating quietly, as if waiting just for them to come. Taking a deep breath, the Captain plunged the Spaceship for landing.

Later, they all reflected what would have happened if they did not jump in. Eva thought they would have not missed nearly killing a lot of life. Depot thought it was for the good. But whatever they said, they all agreed on one thing: It was memorable.

When they stepped out and stood on the earth, all they saw was glory. Light and colourful birds chirped and danced in the pale morning blue sky, trees of every shade of green towered

above them, and flowers the colour of happiness shined beside them. However, their happiness was short lived by the Captain angrily jabbing the keys of every single button on the computer. He turned around and forced a tight smile.

"Sorry to break it to you guys, but this little fellow," he turned around to glare at the computer screen, "is not giving me transmissions to talk to our home in Gadahak." (In case you did not know, that was their planet's name.) "I guess the transmissions are blocked by the thick atmosphere here, so we have to leave and go back to space immediately."

"WHAT?" 29 exclaims of dismay crept out of their voices. It sounded like giving a child a present, then quickly taking it back. Finnaled, the youngest, did not really understand why.

"Can't we stay a tiny bit longer?" He begged. The Captain shook his head.

"You know what will happen. Without a message from us, our home would think we were killed here and then will send a bomb to destroy this planet, INCLUDING Bob the mouse, your new friend by the looks of it. If we don't get out of this planet and resume our connection to home in the next 4 hours, the bomb will be launched, and no one can stop it after that." The Captain explained.

I forgot to mention one bad thing about the spaceship. The spaceship could only fly into the space by a runway at least 20,000 kilometres in length. In the past, all they had to do on other places was to clear away some obstacles and make a runway. That was easy, but it took at least one day of time. But this time, there were only 4 hours. They had to find a runway ready to use, and fast.

So they searched, and searched. A river would be an ideal substitute. They quickly found the Nile River in Egypt. Too short. They journeyed to North America for the Amazon River. Not even close. The time was ticking...

3 hours left.

Out of frustration, Eva snapped out something about rivers being so short, why not something else. The Captain became alert after this comment.

"A long thread! I am sure that just now from the space I saw a long thread! Let us figure out what that was."

"Yes, I also saw it. It was a super long wall." Eva piped up.

Everyone rolled their eyes. There was probably more chance of a bird swimming under water than the wall ever being useful. After all, the longest wall they ever built was 100 kilometres long. Anyway, they dashed to the wall, which we know is the Great Wall.

But they weren't rolling their eyes when they stood at the foot of the Great Wall. The wall was twisted this way and that, built with bricks that stood out like scars and towered above them. Its dusty tail flicked lazily under the buried heaps of sand, like the King of dragons on a long day. Standing there was so captivating that for a moment even the Captain forgot where he was and why he was here. But then he snapped back.

"Let's measure it." The Captain ordered.

2 hours left.

The sun was at its full point when he heard the shout of joy from the crews.

"Yup, more than 20,000 km! We got it!"

For half an hour, the only thing Captain could hear was the sound of 29 footsteps banging back to base, everyone congratulating each other. Juice was opened, and for once everyone on that Spaceship could admire the beauty of the earth.

"But is this wall strong enough to support our spaceship?" Another question was raised by Eva.

The Captain looked at the wall and said, "It looks very solid. I do not know why the wall was built here, but I am confident that it is good enough for us. Let us start."

1 hour left.

At exactly 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the spaceship set off from earth. First there was a rumble. Then a bump, until finally, the spaceship was lifting off the earth...

As soon as they were swallowed up by space, the Captain's voice rang out of the speakers.

"Guys! The spaceship has just dropped a small fire maker..."

It was true. They could see the small yet deadly fire maker sinking down back into the atmosphere. Everyone knew that the fire maker would be a disaster to the planet, though it was just a small fire maker.

Finnald had grown to love this strange planet, so he shouted out:

"Stop!" We must go back to catch it! We can't let that kill the lives on earth!" That spun everyone around. The Captain gritted his teeth but slowly shook his head.

"We have to go, I'm afraid. Only the space can let us have connection to home. If we return, then even more will die. There is no other option." The Captain said sadly with his tired eyes.

Everyone on the spaceship squeezed their eyes shut. They couldn't bear it any longer...

And then the magic happened. The wall started rumbling, then sneezing, then turning, until finally it turned into a gold-brown dragon that looked up. Flying in the air as agile as a snake and as fierce as an eagle, he opened his huge mouth wide and swallowed the fire maker whole. Then, with a final flick of his tail, he started crumbling, creaking, and changing until he was back into the mysterious Great Wall.

The crew on the vesolje raketa gaped with open mouths, deeply shocked. What they had just witnessed, what they had just seen before their very eyes, was not special; it was a MIRACLE that was never seen before.

So as 30 dazed explorers left planet earth and headed off into other uncharted planets.

When the Minnicks finally got back home, the Captain wrote down on the great book of planets: Planet 48: Has a lot of life and civilization. Peaceful, quiet, but has a gigantic guard. Never try to attack it. Remember!

And that was very much true. When aliens came to town, the Great Wall saved the earth. If you do not believe it, you may explore the Great Wall carefully. Here and there, you will find the Great Wall is slightly burnt at many places. That was the mark left by the Minnicks' spaceship.

## Going Back to the Qin Dynasty

Chee Kiu Sik, 14, HKUGA College

As a historian, it is my obligation to study the history of the Great Wall after discovering that the building of the Great Wall had killed hundreds of thousands of people. A lot of young people were captured to build the massive construction without any freedom. I've always thought of changing history; but unfortunately, what's done cannot be undone. So, my ideal was never actually possible - until that Friday.

I was having dinner with my long-lost-best friend Abigail, who was an inventor. She told me about her new idea of building a time-machine and wanted me to try it later. I did not care about the risks and swiftly agreed.

A time-machine! How much popularity will I gain myself if I successfully travelled through time?

Her idea was to invent a pen that would allow the user to adjust a time on its screen and transfer the user to another dimension when clicked. That was pretty creative, I told her.

Next week, I was handed an ordinary blue pen.

Let's see... 800 B.C..

I twisted the cap to adjust the time I wanted it to flash. Click. A 'blue-black hole' appeared in front of me. Abigail nodded at me and I knew exactly what to do. It was too precious an opportunity to miss, and I didn't need any second invitation either. I jumped into the hole.

Instantly I felt like I was flying in vacuum nothingness. I was falling, but steadily. I seemed to have lost my senses and I was unable to move my body around.

At last, falling became sinking and I struggled to the surface for air. When I crept to the surface, I found myself soaking in lake water. I looked around.

Where am I?

The trees looked like the ones in the Qin Dynasty. The clothes people were wearing looked like the ones in the Qin Dynasty. The atmosphere seemed like how it would be in the Qin Dynasty. I supposed I was in the right place.

What am I going to do here?

I had an idea, an idea that would fulfil my dream. But before I got to work, I had to find where the Great Wall was.



The pen in my pocket started flashing suddenly. I picked it up to see if there was something wrong with it. I pulled off the cap and found a delicate scroll wrapped around the cylinder. It said "There is a pouch in your jacket. The items inside may help you."

I stuck the paper inside my trousers and started to get to work.

It did not take it long for me to find the Great Wall. The problem was, whenever I tried to speak to anyone, they stared at my t-shirt, my jacket, and my trousers and seemed to ignore what I was asking about. Even after I repeated my sentence a few times, they didn't look like they understood my words. I think the reason was that they spoke Old Chinese.

Watching thousands of people hammering on stones, I started to imagine them all dying of their enormous workload.

I have to do it.

I spoke to the workers with my best accent of Old Chinese, telling them that I came from the future. They were understandably very sceptical, so I told them all about the Mexicans, Aztecs and Mayans, Columbus, Rafael de Leon, the Sikhs, Catholics and all the way to the Opium War, New Republic of China, and 2013. I know I looked like a know-it-all and complete show-off there but actually the workers stared at me with astonishment.

"Qin will actually die out?" "I thought this is going to last forever!"

What am I going to do next?

I have to make history and at least appear in Chinese History textbooks. I am going to bring about a Revolution!

I reached for the pouch in my jacket where I found a can of spray paint.

Maybe, it can come in handy?

So without hesitation, I started spraying paint on the Great Wall.

\* \* \*

The workers were standing in the Emperor's hall, waiting for their trial.

"The one who destroyed my royal construction shall stand up. Or else, you all will be killed."

"Um...forgive me for speaking to you with such impoliteness but I would like to clarify that the devastation was done by a girl from the future," said a worker.

"Nonsense! Get this man killed, now!"

After the worker was escorted to a chamber, the meeting was followed by total silence. All the workers seemed to be waiting for something.

"If all of you aren't speaking, you'll all get killed like the last..."

Out of nowhere, the emperor's guard who was standing next to him in a helmet chopped the emperor's head with a samurai sword. He took off his helmet as the emperor's head fell onto the bloody floor. And yes you're right, he was me in my perfect disguise.

Then, with me in charge, all the workers flowed out of the hall and started throwing things around the street.

"The emperor's down! The emperor's down!" We all sang.

I was told to be the next emperor but I gave this opportunity to one of the workers.

Job done.

Back in 2013, Chinese History textbooks will be writing: the building of the Great Wall actually didn't even start as the plan was stopped by an unknown historian from the future who predicted what would happen later. She brought about a revolution and killed the emperor. Only few died in this uprising...

I felt for my pen in my pocket. I twisted it to 2013 and flash, I jumped into the falling dimension.

I could not believe my eyes when I was shot out of the black-hole. Everything seemed so different: my home had become a barren land. Everywhere, there were broken pieces.

Where are all the people? Where is Abigail and her lab? Where is everything? Then I noticed what a huge mistake I had made. I noticed an old lady sitting under a sterile tree. As she was the only living thing here and my only hope, so I decided to ask what had happened in all these years.

She told me, since there was no Great Wall around the edges of China built, China was constantly attacked and all lives were cleared off the land. People all wanted to own this land so they were still fighting over which country this land belongs to. After all that war and invasion, all the valuable things in this area were taken away and used and at last a barren land was left.

After talking about history, the old lady stood up and said, "It's time for me to go now." Then she walked around the tree, took out a pen and jumped into a hole that appeared in front of her in thin air. Slowly, she disappeared. But I can still hear her distant voice:

"There was a time I could have been an emperor. But I gave it away to a worker. How stupid," she mumbled.

## The Old Man's Song

Gabriel Wan, 15, Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

Turning back to look at his cottage for one last time, I felt tears threatening to escape. Never once had I thought that there might be a story like this behind his song; behind the legendary Great Wall.

\* \* \*

I inhaled deeply, breathing in the crisp mountain air. It was laced with the sweet scent of fresh grass, and the almost imperceptible calming aroma of little wild flowers. A zephyr made an idle attempt to threaten me, but the sun was warm on my skin. Taking in the ravishing landscape, I walked up to the gates of a tiny cottage.

I was assigned to cover a special story about the Great Wall for the magazine I was working for, and after several months of searching, I had finally made arrangements to meet an inhabitant of this remote little village in the mountainside near the county of Laiyuan, in the Hebei province. It had been a strenuous journey, but it was proved to be worthwhile in the end.

Raising my arm slightly when I reached the old wooden door that was barely hanging from its hinges, I knocked softly on the door after a brief moment of hesitation.

There was no answer.

I made another futile attempt, and then leaned forward to press my ear against the door, straining to pick up any tell-tale sounds of movement from within. It was only until then that I discerned a soft tune accompanying the blithe chirping of the birds, wafted along the wind towards me from a distance. Enamoured by the peculiar, strangely enticing melody, I subconsciously headed towards the source of it.

After a few minutes of walking, a queer sight came into view. On a small wooden stool next to a pile of rubble, sat a bony old man playing an erhu. His eyes were closed and his forehead crinkled in concentration. Approaching him gingerly, I sat down on the grass a safe distance away from him, and – completely mesmerised – listened intently as he played.

The music was like nothing I had ever heard before. It was beautiful and dulcet at first, singing of love and pulchritude. The birds joined in, and even the leaves and flowers seemed

to dance along in the soft summer breeze. Yet, towards the middle, the delicacy and joy was slowly replaced by anguish and distress. The song of love transformed into a song of woe, crying out in melancholy.

Even as the piece drew to a close, the old man still remained oblivious that I was watching him. He simply sat there, gently caressing his erhu with a distant look in his eyes. Driven by my habitual curiosity, I decided to go up and talk to him.

'You play really well,' I said timorously, unsure of where to begin.

'You're too generous with your words, young lady,' he murmured, and gave a wistful chortle.

'What is the song about?'

'It's a long tale. In some way, it's about the Great Wall.'

'I've always thought that a song about the Great Wall would be more... melodramatic,' I commented, assuming that he was trying to praise the acclaimed history of the Great Wall.

'Your piece sounded more like an elegy to me.'

'It is one, as a matter of fact.'

Noticing my puzzled expression, he gave me a weary smile. 'Are you in the mood for a story?'

\* \* \*

'I have been living in this village my entire life. Until just a few decades ago, a section of the Great Wall used to lie right here,' he motioned at the pile of rubble. 'It wasn't just a wall – it was the children's playground, the adults' meeting place, and our grandparents' favourite napping spot.'

He paused, smiling to himself as he recalled some childhood memories.

'What happened?' I asked eagerly, urging him to continue.

'Patience, young lady,' he chuckled softly. 'That's the problem with youngsters these days – you forget that it's a virtue.'

'It was 1967, a lovely early August afternoon like today. Little puffs of white clouds scattered across skies that were as blue as sapphires, and a sea of wild flowers adorned the endless carpet of green grass as tiny red, purple and yellow dots. Despite that, it was a dark time for many. It was a year after the Cultural Revolution had started.'

'I was just a young boy then, having just passed my eighteenth spring. I was teaching the village children to play football right here when a young girl I had never seen before made her way staggering towards us, tripping every few steps.'

The old man's expression hardened and his voice trembled a little as he continued with his story.

'She was about my age, but with clothes tattered and torn, hair unkempt and face smeared with dirt and blood. She appeared dishevelled, so weak and fragile as if she hadn't eaten for days.'

'When she reached us, her knees buckled underneath her and she fell into my arms, panting so hard she could barely speak. Yet, she hadn't needed words; her eyes were wide in terror and consternation, and I understood. Somehow, I knew from the very first sight that she was special. And so I took her in and nursed her back to health.'

'Wait,' I interrupted. 'So you just let a stranger you barely even knew stay with you?'

'Times were different, dear. People were different,' he shook his head a little. 'Besides, the Red Guards were dominating most of the more civilised cities at that time, throwing most areas of China into chaos. Refugees were not uncommon, and our village here in a remote part on the mountainside would have made a convenient hideout.'

'But why did she have to run away? She's just a young girl after all – surely there was no reason for the Red Guards to hurt her.'

'She wasn't just a young girl. Her parents were professors at the Tsinghua University. The Red Guards got hold of them as they were making preparations to send her away to secluded rural districts, and were executed for treason. She was left battered and forlorn – no family or friend of hers survived the purge. It was a tragic experience for her, although it had – in some way – brought about our meeting one another. Some might consider it arbitrary, but I'd prefer to call it fate.'

He stopped, closing his eyes and smiling softly in reminiscence.

'We would sneak out in the middle of the night, climb up the Wall and sit on the battlements, and just talk. Occasionally, I would play the erhu while she sang. Her voice was sweet as a nightingale's, and we could have gone on forever if not for the rising sun that would eventually appear in the far distance every morning. Only until then would we reluctantly part ways.'

'But sadly, good times never last for long.'

His smile faltered, and he took a deep breath before resuming.

'I was ploughing the fields one afternoon when she came over to me, asking me to meet her at the bottom of the Wall where she had set up a picnic. It wasn't a surprise; we had always had picnics from time to time. What did come as a surprise, however, was that when I reached our usual spot under the Great Wall, over a hundred feet of it suddenly collapsed.'

'And she was nowhere to be seen.'

There was a moment of silence as his gaze wandered into the far distance, and I anxiously fiddled with the grass.

'They found her body a few days later, buried four feet underneath the rubble.'

'I'm sorry,' I muttered, almost inaudibly. 'But, why would-?'

'That winter, a mining company began the construction of an underground network of mines just a few hundred feet away from our section of the Great Wall. It was jeopardising the structure's stability, and cracks were starting to appear.'

'Furthermore, our part of the Great Wall wasn't a tourist attraction, so they never bothered to provide it with any maintenance.'

He lowered his head, struggling hard not to shed any tears.

'We had been engaged to be married that following spring.'

I looked up and met his pensive and doleful eyes that bore right into my soul. I felt tears prickling my own ones, and quickly averted my gaze.

'This is why I said it was sort of an elegy,' he shrugged nonchalantly, attempting in vain to grin and cheer me up. 'I was not playing to praise the Great Wall; I am playing to reminisce about all the lives lost because of the Great Wall.'

After a moment of silence, he picked up his erhu and started playing once more. I spent the rest of the afternoon by his side, listening to his music echoing in the mountains. Then the time came for me to leave.

'I'll see you soon,' I promised, more to myself than to him, before turning away.

But I never saw him again.

## New Tales Of The Great Wall

Thomas Yik, 12, Island School

**H**ave you ever wondered, just a thought, about the way the great wall is shaped? Why isn't it straight like a normal wall? Has it ever occurred to you that it looks like a dragon?

These thoughts have bothered me like unfinished homework since the age of six, the first time I went to Beijing. My life didn't have a lot of excitement. But once I stepped on the Great Wall, I knew there was something coming my way.

This secret has been with me until now. Reader, this will change your life as it did mine.

When I stepped onto the Great Wall I felt nauseous; the world spun around me and I felt an invisible force pulling me back. Instantly people moved around me with unimaginable speed. I saw many faces I didn't know and when I opened my eyes, it was already night time.

I stood alone in a forest. A breeze blew lightly in the night sky and I pulled my jacket tighter. At that moment I was confused. Why was I not at the Great Wall anymore? Where were my parents? I sat down and cried. I didn't know where I was. My parents were gone and I didn't know what to do. I stood up after a while. I had to pull myself together; I had to find my parents. At that point my world went black.

I woke to find myself in different clothing than before. It was old and brown, although it fitted me quite well. An old woman with wrinkles came in with a bowl of foul-smelling liquid. It was brown and very hot. She said to me that her son was out hunting and had thought I was an animal so he had hit me over the head. I thought that this is my way of finding my parents so I asked her if she saw them. She said she didn't and I could stay if I helped around. I walked outside of the bamboo house and I found something I thought to be extinct...

Black and white bear-like creatures were everywhere. Now I know they were called pandas. Just at this moment a man walked by me into the house. I presumed that this man was the old woman's son. He has been in there for only a few minutes before he came out to talk to me. I asked him about the pandas and how they were not extinct in Beijing.

"Extinct?" He said confused. "They are not extinct."

I continued to ask him about the present year. He told me there was no date. China was still in chaos. I ran away from the conversation and cried in the forest. This meant I would never be able to find my parents. I told myself I must not despair. I must now make the most of my life.

My training had started. To survive in the chaotic place I now live in, I must learn to fight. The elders have taught me many things. It has only been a year but I have learnt how to use a bow, a sword and to fight. But even with these new abilities and my new home I have never forgotten the strange way I got here. The only purpose of me still living is to find a way back or forwards.

I positioned myself next to a tree. Snake-like vines dangled off it. This perfected the camouflage. The guard of the temple was patrolling around. My goal was to kill him and to see what treasures the temple holds. I steadied my breaths and pulled up my longbow. My unsuspecting prey has no clue my sharp arrow would end up through him. A splash of blood splatters on an old tree, quickly followed by an arrow. I quickly retrieved my arrow as I have learnt not to waste and I entered the dark and eerie temple.

My steps rang out of the cold stone floor. Drips of sticky liquids joined in the creepy orchestra. I lighted up my wooden torch and continued into the belly of this abandoned temple.

When I finally entered into the main room I saw many valuable things. There was a golden vase and I knew the chief of the village would be pleased with me this time. Suddenly whispers from the dark started like an applause. I couldn't make out what those whispers were but I was almost certain it was a warning. It sounded threatening. I finally controlled my jelly-like legs and made my move towards the vase. Right next to the vase was writing. My torch was blown off. Right before I could make out the first character, it just went off.

I felt the dark presences come closer. I lit up my torch again and they went away. I thought I was just claustrophobic, but it was part of so much more.

I shone my torch closer to the writing and it read: "Do what I say or you will endanger us all. Use the writing brush and the ink beside you and draw two eyes on each of your palms, eyes open. Don't question it, just do it. Ignore the whispers. Go toward the vase and pick it up. Use both palms. Then pour all the blood out of the vase. Don't look inside. Make sure all the blood is poured out and take the vase to somewhere else, like an abandoned temple."

I did not do what it read. An even until now I regretted that decision. My hunger for greed and being able to impress the chief had nearly ruined mankind.

I went for the golden vase ignoring the writing and was about to put it in my leather sack when I realised my hands were sweaty. I dropped the vase. That was the biggest mistake I have made my life.

I saw the golden pieces split in front of my eyes and blood splatter everywhere. Guilt was the only word in my brain. A shadowy figure erupted itself from the pieces of my conscience on the ground. I have freed something that meant to be locked up. I have freed evil.

I sprinted back through the dark temple and into the village, hoping the old and wise elders of the village could help me. The village was put into fear. I confronted the elders. They cannot do anything.

This monster is a dragon. It used to be the pet of the Jade Emperor but it betrayed him. It plunged China into a flood by creating storm from magic. The Jade Emperor sent a demi-god to earth: half human, half god. His name was Mie Long. It means terminating dragon. He was born to take down this dragon.

He created a golden vase with his magic and trapped the dragon in it. He also put dog's blood in it to contain it. Dogs are the natural enemy of the dragon in the Chinese tradition, that's why it could trap it. With the mission completed Mie Long died at the age of 12; returning back to heaven, back to the Jade Emperor's side.

Now that I have freed it from the cage it was now up to me to kill it. What a coincidence, when Mie Long killed the dragon he was 8. I was exactly eight when I freed the dragon.

I took some simple supplies from the village and I went the opposite way the villagers went. I can see the dragon in the air destroying China and it's people, sending the people into chaos. Armies tried to fight against it but it was a feeble attempt. They were wiped out with one sweep of the tail. How was I going to beat it?

I walked closer and confronted the dragon. It laughed with fury.

"I am going to destroy China! This is all you sent me Jade Emperor?"

I can feel the hot air blown into my face. My body was instantly put to fear. I took cover behind a rock while he was still laughing.

"This little boy is pathetic! He is no god. How can he beat me?"

How dare it insult me? Anger raged from inside me. I stood up from behind the rock with fury inside my eyes.

"Who do you call pathetic you fool! You are the one who is pathetic!"

As soon as those words left my mouth I knew I was going to die. It is a dragon; I am a human. Of course I was the weak one. I've got no choice I must at least weaken it, so my fellow people can finish it. I am willing to sacrifice myself for my people!

The dragon breathed a fireball towards my face. A ball as hot and bright as the sun was hurling towards me. I leapt out of the way and the ball merely scraped my skin. Instantly pain shot up my leg. Excruciating pain. I watered my burn with the water I brought with me. A stinging sensation is still left behind but I can still walk.

I can't keep this up. I need to use another strategy. I tried to use a bow but my arrows bounced off the side of the dragon's skin uselessly. My weapons were useless but I must fight.

An overwhelming wave of heat suddenly erupted on the rock behind me. When I turned around to take in what happened, it was too late. A giant fireball exploded in front of me.

I was leapt into a lake. Without the cool lake I would have died. I stood up from the water. Miraculously, even after a fireball to the face I was still fine.

As I look up from the water I realised that everything had frozen, time, the dragon and everything else. I knew this advantage wouldn't last forever. I took an arrow, climbed onto a hill and pushed with my arrow out on to the dragon's back. Blood started to seep out under his skin.

Time regains conscience and the dragon lets out an ear-splitting roar. My arrow was dug deep into the dragon's back. Using the time I had left I took another arrow and pushed it into the same wound I'd made. This sent the first arrow deeper into it. The dragon released a massive earthquake on it's back and I was hurled onto the ground. The dragon fell from the sky and with a final yell; it breathed the very last breath.

It's body jerked and went epileptic. The contact on the ground when it fell created an earthquake all around. A ray of sparkly golden light came down on me. Sudden warmth spread through every part of my body. Again, time freezes. The trees went still and the wind stopped blowing. Everything was peaceful.

Along with the golden light, came pride and honour. I have achieved something that no human has done before, with an exception of a demi-god. Also came down with the light, was the Jade Emperor himself. I automatically had to kneel down. Not because of pride and respect, but because he was the Jade Emperor!

He has such a peaceful look in his eyes. A stunning white beard and wrinkles on his face makes him look so old but overall, he looked so young. I'm not going to write down exactly what he said because his holy words cannot be written down no matter how I tried.

All he did was tell me that I did the world and China a great duty. Even though I had freed the dragon in the first place, I had killed him in the end. I have ridded this world of his evil



forever. I had accomplished something even a demi-god wasn't capable of. Of course I had some help but I managed to survive until the help came. He gave me three wishes. The first wish was what to do with the dead dragon.

The dragon's corpse wasn't going to be left there as an exhibition. The Jade Emperor gave me the honour to turn the dragon into stone. I requested it not to be turned into a rock but a wall. This way it is not only good for viewing, but it can protect China.

My second wish is to change history and make an Emperor build the wall instead. He shall be granted the honour of protecting China. This way nobody will suspect the wall's origins and will never know the truth.

My third and final wish is my wish from the beginning of this journey. My wish was to return to my family, to return home.

I felt nauseous; the world spun around me and I felt an invisible force pulling me back. Within moments I returned to the place I once stood. I was back on the Great Wall. I was with my family and things turned back to normal.

With the exception of one thing: I know something that nobody else does. I had done something that nobody has done and I've seen somebody that nobody has seen. Even at the age of 6, I felt that my life was complete.

So, were my thoughts of the Great Wall a coincidence?

## New Tales of the Great Wall

Wing Tung Yiu, 15, Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School

Some say "The future is amazing to discover." They are trying to figure out the unknowns on the Earth and explore something new. However, I have loved studying the past since I was small, especially the Chinese History. History records the truth. Also, I can learn about the sorts of mistakes humans made in the past and avoid making the same mistakes. Because of my passion in studying history, I became a historian. But... until I met her and I find out the "truth" that what I had believed was just a beautiful lie...

In an accidental chance, I was invited to take part in a "World History Meeting 2012" in Beijing. During the meeting, there were a lot of historians from different countries and they exchanged discoveries through interflow meetings. Having no interests in those social meetings, I just sat there at the corner. However, a girl took the initiative and chatted with me. Though she looked young, her knowledge of history is enough to make anyone gape in awe. She was obviously an experienced historian.

At first, I just wanted to treat her with courtesy. But after chatting for a while, I found that she had the same interests as me—we both love Chinese history! I was very excited to find a like-minded friend who could share my point of view on Chinese history with.

"The Great Wall in Beijing is amazing, isn't it? It is made up of stone, brick, wood and it linked up the northern borders of China from east to west. It can protect the safety of China; avoid being invaded and encourage trades. Though the process of building the Great Wall is expensive, is it worth it?" I asked her agitatedly.

"Um... I do not think it is amazing. The building of the Great Wall only builds more estrangement and misunderstanding septum to separate the Chinese." She said calmly after musing over my question for a moment.

Wondering why she answered like this. I asked her to tell me more about her thoughts out of curiosity.

"Not known to anyone, there's an inside story in building of the Great Wall. The story is told that..." Then, she began her story...

At the Qin Dynasty, Qin Shi Huang was the first emperor of China. He was an ambitious person and he wanted to have the strongest dynasty which would never fall. He heard that there

was a famous prophet who came from the west that could foresee future events so he decided to seek help from him.

“My dearest prophet, I heard that you can foreknow things by seeing through the crystal ball, is it true?” asked Qin Shi Huang with his heart filled with hope.

“Yes, it is true. So what can I help you with?” said the prophet.

“Well that’s good! I want to find a way to keep my Qin Dynasty to stay strong for 1 million years and became the most powerful dynasty in the Chinese history. All the people in the future will glorify my successfully built dynasty and my name, of course, will go down in history. If you can give me a helping hand, I promise you can have endless wealth for the rest of your life.” smirked Qin Shi Huang.

The prophet looked into her crystal ball carefully. After a few minutes, she said, “As I can see in the crystal ball, in the 19th century, a country called Germany will become a very strong country in the world.”

“What made them successful? I mean, anything special about the country?” the emperor questioned the prophet closely.

“They have a great armament powers and a callous wall called “Berlin Wall”, but...”

“That’s enough!” Qin thundered at him.

As soon as Qin Shi Huang heard the prediction said by the prophet, he decided to build a wall in China which was stronger than the one in Germany. He named it the “Great Wall” of China and started his construction on the Great Wall.

He ordered the soldier, General Meng Tian, with an army of 300,000 forced labourers to build the part of the new wall. When the Great Wall was firstly joined together, ten years had passed. During the construction, 300,000 workers were forced to join, including those conscripted labourers and soldiers. They worked from day to night but they were not treated well by Qin Shi Huang. Owing to the arduous work and poor conditions both for living and construction, a lot of workers died in the course of the building of the Great Wall. Some of their remains were even buried under the wall. Yet, Qin Shi Huang thought he did the right thing and never felt sorry for his people.

After many years, Qin Shi Huang summoned and asked the prophet again to see if it was good enough to have the strongest dynasty in Chinese history. However, surprisingly, the answer was negative.

“Why couldn’t my dynasty be the most powerful one in the Chinese history? I have already followed your suggestion and built a wall which is similar with the one in Germany?” Qin Shi Huang pointed to the prophet angrily with his wrinkly finger.

“What you did many years ago was wrong... The Berlin Wall in Germany not only separated Germany into two sides. It also separated the people of the country, cutting them off from almost everything important, their mothers, fathers, sons, daughters and friends... It worsened the relationships between the people in two sides. And later, they realised they were wrong and tore down the Berlin Wall. The fall of the wall opened a new chapter in world history. The people in Germany trust each other and the friends and families are reunited. They have freedom and a peaceful life again and their cooperation has strengthened their economy, leading Germany to have a say in the world in the 21st century. However, the Great Wall you built in China just repeated the mistake that Germany had made. With the sacrifice of so many of your people, the Great Wall now blocks China from other countries, blocks China from being a country with freedom and democracy and even blocks the heart of your people.”

“At that moment, Qin Shi Huang finally realised that nothing lasted forever but it was too late to regret... It is the true story of the Great Wall.” the girl ended her speech.

I was really shocked by what I had heard and asked the girl sitting in front of me, “Who are you? How can you know this story?”

“As you may guess, I am the prophet in the story and my last mission is to tell you the truth about the building of the Great Wall. Just keep it as a secret and now my mission is finished...”

When I awoke from the stroke, she had disappeared in a puff of smoke.



# Fiction Group 4

## The Two Sides

Jonathan Man Hon Leung, 16, St. Joseph's College

Long before the sun injected an irreplaceable vitality and warmth into the bleak and snowcapped moors and mountains and dissipated the frost, a candle had taken up its job for a family. A flame which seemed inconsequential was lit up, illuminating the dilapidated hut, marking the sign of another monotonous and gruelling day, accentuating three fatigued and blighted faces.

Oh! And he put on a grimacing face! Shivering, sneezing, murmuring, cowering at the far end corner of the bed, wrapping himself in a ragged, stinky and tiny blanket with holes letting the piercing wind attack his feeble body indiscriminately.

Two fragile and skinny arms encircled the boy, slowly, gently. 'Mama, mama...' The boy whispered with his dry, cracked, white lips, gasping for air at the same time. He could not feel safer and warmer than in his mother's embrace, of whose affection he had always felt but was never too much.

On the outside he was chilled to the marrow, his ears and nose were already suffering from frostbite, his jaw had stiffened, his body was numb with cold. But inside a fire was ignited, giving life to his spirit which once had the idea of giving up to put an end to a life of anguish and misery. The physical cold would never erode the spiritual warmth.

'Please, do not go, I beg you, please...' 'I go for you, my son.' 'No...stay with me...' They looked into each other's eyes without a word. No words were needed. Cicadas ceased making a noise, crows turned muted for a little while. She landed her trembling hand softly on the boy's coarse cheek and started to fondle it with her skinny thumb. A simple act of affection but full of emotion.

Her eyes already misted over when she was sitting on her bed, peeping in silence. She had that little moment to review her family's life and ruminated over the future. Nothing but a bleak prospect lay ahead. The clouds above the family's head were without silver lining. They were fed up with seeing people leading an insouciant life, wearing large and warm fineries in the winter, full to bursting all the time and not having to worry about money.

She was not lucky enough to sit in school and receive proper education, but this did not stop her from being a deep thinker. She was impoverished but rich in ideas and thoughts. She

did not want much, just a normal, dignified life but not a dog's life, and a healthy brother free from leukaemia.

She could not hold back her tears any more. Tears of compassion for her poor brother, sorrow for her family trickled down her dull cheeks like two little cascades. She wiped the tears away quietly with her bruised hands. All animals are equal but some are more equal than others.

Long after the sun had climbed up to the top of the azure sky, dispelling the chill taking away the vivacity of lives, brought away the darkness which had engulfed the town, a few men in tidy black suits made their way to a station on the other side of the Great Wall in a laid-back mood, exchanged words happily through the short walk.

Their destination was a small plain covered with withered grass trodden flowers, where the ground had countless cracks. The station was situated on the plain. The locals never stepped on it.

The station indeed provided a close view of the edifice, which generations have been throwing glances of admiration at and remained excessively breath-taking through the history of its grandeur and magnificence. Nobody could imagine the ancient Chinese constructing such an enormous wall, spanning over eight thousand and eight hundred kilometres like a wild serpent in times when technology was not so advanced.

It was all by labour, not by machines. It was by sweat and blood, not by easy presses on buttons.

Tourists would relish the view so much that words of genuine praises would keep pouring out of their mouths.

Photographers would be so electrified that every angle seemed to be a perfect shot of the Great Wall together with mountains and the sky as the background, so they simply took photos without much thought.

Travellers would goggle at the edifice, gape in amazement, shake their heads slightly with a 'wow' and be lost for words. Then they put on the big smile you will find on a child's content face after you give him a big candy and left without regret. No tourists, photographers and travellers were on the plain.

'The gates opened! The gates opened! Get up daughter, we have to hurry! Get up!' Locals who walked by were totally shocked by the outbreak of hysteria at the gates of the station. The reaction of the people at the gates was the perfect embodiment of the beastliness of humans in the locals' eyes. It was no different from a herd of ravenous wolves whose stomachs had been empty for a few days darting towards some plump sheep with fire in their eyes.

'Who are these beasts? They are insane! Why does the local government not prohibit them from entering our town?' A wealthy woman with a coruscating gold necklace and few diamond rings on her fingers grunted, giving stares of contempt and vehement disgust towards the 'insane' people.

'Probably from that village on the other side. I really cannot stand seeing them every day. Who can guarantee that they will not flock into our town one day and disturb the peace and order here? These barbarous people!' Another woman in a light pink silk dress, long brown boots and with a conspicuous yellow chignon replied. Together they swaggered down the street and continued to discuss how barbarous and annoying they thought the people were.

The people's faces were euphoric, their actions looked delirious, their eyes brimmed with hopes. Any green hand would be filled with consternation and perplexed and nonplussed at the sight: a large group people dashing like crazy towards you, an upsurge of uncommon fervency impelled by hours of anticipation. They had been sitting outside the gates at the very tiptoe of expectancy.

'Get my blood first! I came first! Get my blood first!'

'Nonsense! I came first! Do not listen to him! You should get my blood first! I really...'

'Shut up! I tell all of you to shut up! Line up now! Like a human! I do not care about you being a mad barking dog or a beast in your old, desolate village, but you must be a human here where we all behave like a human!'

'Rules and civilization are anchored in this town and we will not allow you to violate them! Now line up, quick!'

Although the mother and sister lavished for selling their blood just like any other person, they were too weak and slow to catch up with the pace. They were at the end of the long queue.

The daughter had learnt to be submissive and patient for long. She knew she could do nothing but wait. Wait, just wait. Drowsy and listless, she lay on her mother's legs and fell asleep.

She was immuned to the impatient and tiresome shouts and grumbles around her, something she knew clearly that would not even make an infinitesimal change to the toilsome and desperate reality where one could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. Her family had been walking in the dark since her birth and they had never seen any light in front. Instead the darkness seemed to be intensifying.

No light, no hope, no help, no change.

She liked dreams so much. Every day the same few hours of waiting allowed her to escape from the harsh reality and hide in her beautiful dreams. It was a temporary extrication from the real world which she never wanted to end. Dreams took her away from the abyss of despair and brought her to never-never land of bliss. She had always wished that she could stay in her dreams forever, and found herself being so naïve when she woke up.

'Baby, it is time to get up. It is our turn.' The calling from her mother spelled the end of her jovial virtual world and drew her back into the dreadful real world. Two hours had elapsed imperceptibly.

A man plugged the blood-contaminated needle into the daughter's hand without cleaning it. The needle had been plugged into at least a hundred people. Trickle of her blood quickly filled up a 500ml transparent bag. The man unplugged the syringe sloppily, delved into his left pocket, picked out a 100 dollar note which stunk of blood and threw it at the daughter without even giving her a glimpse.

A dumpy man with a reddish and radiant face came forward to the man, let out his chubby hand and shook hands with him with a hypocritical smile and an affectation of decorum.

'Nice job Mr. Wang. Keep it up. It is all going well and it seems that more and more people come every day.'

'Not without your assistance officer Chen. Let me express my gratitude towards the Shandong government on behalf of my company. Just think of how much we can get from selling the blood to hospitals.'

'Yeah it is such a lucrative business. Low cost, few manpower, no special technique needed, easy operation. Those people from villages on the other side must come anyway for that small amount of money. We earn profits, meanwhile patients can be benefited. How meaningful and great this business is!'

The daughter listened attentively. The word 'meaningful' left a haunting impression on her mind; the word 'great' filled her with sorrow. She caught a glimpse of the dirty note in her hand, a proof of the ugly part of humanity. With a heavy heart she left the station with her mother and made their way back to the other side.

Another two hours. Part of the daily routine. A tinge of sombreness hung in the air. White. It was all white. A sense of foreboding descended on her when she found herself in an all-white



world. The people were in white too. She turned her head round and round and found grey and black interspersed in white.

Trudging slowly with the help of a curved, delicate cane which might break anytime, she put in great effort to carry her body with her powerless legs. A pungent odour of medicine wafted into her nose and she covered it with much disgust. She continued her way to the counter.

She was made very uncomfortable by the unkind and peculiar looks from people waiting beside her. It was as if she was an immoral, guilty criminal who perpetrated a serious crime waiting for the sentence to be delivered by the judge.

She kept her head down, found a seat and sat down. A child beside her instantly stood up and looked at his dad.

'Dad she is so smelly! And look at her clothes? Is she a beggar?' The child yelled, pointing a finger at her.

'Change seat then,' his dad said stonily.

People around her gradually took the father and son as a cue and took up seats further from her. A few would rather stand. Merciless, mocking words drilled into her ears, disregarding her reluctance. Her head was kept down to make sure nobody could see her emaciated face, though knowing nobody would want to, until the nurse called her into the room for the last time.

The last few words had an unconscionably heavy weight on her heart. She was left wordless for a few seconds. She was looking for words to react and ended up questioning the authenticity of what the doctor told her repeatedly over ten times.

Finding her incredulous manner so wearisome, the doctor gave her the last warning, saying that if she insisted on asking the same stupid question again, she would call the security and drag her out of the hospital.

'Now leave immediately, I have other patients waiting for me outside.'

'Please, doctor, tell me it is not true. I...'

'Call the security now! Take this woman out!'

'No, doctor, no please! Please do the test for me again, you may have made a mistake!

Please doctor, I beg you...'

'I am sorry for you Mrs. Ho but it is an undeniable fact. You can blame nobody but yourself. Blame yourself, Mrs. Ho. Everyone with a common sense about hygiene knows that it is highly risky and unwise to engage in blood-selling, especially at those stations in this town where those guys have no regard for people's health.'

'Doctor please, I beg you! I will give you extra money for another test...'

'Come on it has nothing to do with money. On top of that what you lack most is money. Just go home. The technology we have currently is incapable of producing remedies for AIDS. Anyway, Ah Keung, please take this woman out and do not let her in.'

She was on her own.

The road had never seemed such long and hard, in spite of the innumerable footprints left by herself on it. Her walking pace slowed down. The footsteps got heavier.

Then it caught her eyes. She should be very acquainted with it. But she would like to see it again. She never had the time and mood to feast her eyes on it. She never rolled her eyes over every small detail of it. Surprisingly she found it particularly splendid under the gentle, golden sunlight which thrilled through rosy clouds. A gratified smile was hung on her face.

She was supposed to know exactly what scene would come up in front of her eyes in the next moment. But now everything in front seemed so odd. She could not recognise anything. Every grass. Every tree. Even the sky.

She started to think that the road was leading to her to somewhere unknown. She was frightened by the thought that she could not reach the destination. She dreaded never seeing her children again. She worried about her son's health. She was anxious about her daughter not being able to make a living. The picture of her son and daughter living forlornly without anybody looking after them was conjured up in her messy mind, giving her heart an invisible stab.

Staring at her small silhouette eventually mixing with the surrounding shadows to form a complete darkness discouraged her from going on. Now nothing left. No light. All darkness.

She stopped finally and fell down hard onto her knees. The cane dropped. Her knees were bleeding on the rugged road, but the pain did not matter now. Then she let out a long, deep sigh, fraught with grief and mourning.

She looked up and saw the Great Wall. She cried.

Long before he had come, she had been kneeling there for long. Her legs were totally numb now. Her eyes were glued to the few faint words engraved on the stone. That few words were the reason for the teardrops on the stone. She was convulsed with unceasing sobs.

'Sister.'

'Brother... you came,' she said with a wry smile which faded almost immediately. Tears on her face reflected the sunshine like sparkling dewdrops.

He held her tightly with his arms. Nothing was better than a genuine, consoling embrace from someone in propinquity with you. The warmth lightened her heart a bit, stopped her tears for a while, soothed her bleeding heart.

'Do not worry, sister. I promise you, you will never have to go there again. Never,' he said with a resolute tone.

'Next time when you are on the other side of the Great Wall, it will be because you can lead a decent and dignified life in the town.'

She grabbed his hands firmly. Their fingers were intertwined. So did their fates.

'Be aware of your health, brother, you just recovered.'

They sat side by side on a rock in front of the stone with their mother's name on it. They looked over the hills.

The Great Wall seemed closer to them than before.

## The Hidden Mission

Mary Shanet Mueller, 15, St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary and Primary School

“Dear Diary,

What an interesting day! Today is the 4th of April 2009. First of all, history class! It was surprisingly not the usual boring classes. I'm pretty shocked to say this but... today's history class was pretty interesting. Mr. Marshaw talked about the Great Wall of China. I've heard of it but I was never interested until this day. It has so much history; the way it was built, its size, which without a doubt makes it the longest man-made structure in the world, the events that happened during its making, etc. I was crept out to find out that some people call it 'The longest cemetery on Earth' due to the huge number of people who died during the building of the wall. We didn't cover that much content of the Great Wall today so I'm going to go on YouTube and see what I can find since I'm not much of a reader so Wikipedia wouldn't really help me. Anyways, Tata for now! I'll tell you about what I find later.”

Anastasia closes her diary and goes on YouTube to search for videos of the Great Wall. (Surprisingly, not a lot of videos that were related appeared. But finally, she found a video.) She excitedly clicks on one and waits for the video to begin. The video begins and she starts dazing off. She gets so caught up in the video that all of a sudden, her surroundings change and the next thing she knows, she's in the video! “Where am I? Am I where I think I am?... CHINA!?” She asks herself in excitement and disbelief. She rubs her eyes and pinches herself several times before finally giving up. She starts walking a few steps and starts to explore the place. “What beautiful scenery, I have never seen anything like this in my whole life! The mountains, the sky, the fresh air, just amazing,” she tells herself. After about an hour of strolling, she pauses and her jaw drops. “What... How silly of me! I've been walking on the Great Wall of China this whole time!” she shouts. She carefully studies the Great Wall by tapping the floor and touching it. She finally decides to sit on the side to take a rest. “Whoa! What an eccentric yet amazing dream I just had,” she says after waking up where she is seated in front of her computer back in her home in a small village called “Willowcomb”.

Everyday after school, because of her obsession with the Great Wall, she keeps going back to her “dream” of actually being in that place. She eventually spends almost all her time dazing off into the Great Wall in her dream. However one day, when she was back in the Great Wall, something unusual happened.

“Dear Diary,

You wouldn't believe what I have just encountered! Like normal, I went on YouTube and I was in the exact same dream as the past few days. There was no one there as usual but this time, there was a voice, which I couldn't figure where it was coming from. It said 'Anastasia, take caution when you are here. There is a mission destined for you and your brother, Clifford. Help us please!' I woke up immediately all stunned. It was such a strange dream because it felt so real!

At dinner, Anastasia and her family gather and start eating. Anastasia who is full of thoughts and information about the Great Wall couldn't resist and started telling her whole family about the Great Wall.

“What do you guys think? Isn't it fascinating?” asks Anastasia. Her parents uneasily nod and change the topic.

“Anyone up for apple pie with ice cream?”

“Dear Diary,

Just finished dinner! I don't understand. At dinner, I spent so much time talking about the Great Wall and all I got was a nod or two. Why were they uncomfortable when I was talking about it? I don't see any reason to be... ”

Suddenly, she heard a knock from her door. She quickly hides her diary and gets the door.

“Let me guess... I did not steal your Mars bar, okay?” she tells Clifford.

“It's not about that, we have to talk about something which I know I should've told you a long time ago but I wasn't sure if it was really something.

But first, wouldn't you kindly let me in, little sister?”

“Fine, but if this is a prank or anything, I get to have your part of dessert for 2 whole weeks. Deal?” Clifford rolls his eyes once more and shakes her hand. They both sit down and Clifford reveals everything he knows.

According to Clifford, he heard their parents talk about how they will never let Anastasia and Clifford go to China because they wanted them safe.

“Safe? What do they mean safe?” Anastasia says in confusion and sarcasm.

“Well, they said something about you being safe if you didn't have to fulfill your so-called 'mission', which I don't get.” Clifford says. Anastasia pauses and finally decides to tell her brother all about her dream especially the recent one.

Both of them go back and forth thinking.

Then suddenly Anastasia says, “We should go to China!”

“But Anastasia, how? Just to let you know, flying pigs do not exist. It's a big risk if we run away. Plus, all this may not mean anything”

“Yeah, I know it's a big risk. But how will we ever know what this is all about if we don't find out for ourselves? Wasn't it a sign when I experienced the same dreams over and over again especially the recent one I just had? That voice. That message. It must mean something.” After quite some time of thinking and persuasion, Clifford finally agrees that they should sneak out and find out what there really is in China.

That night, they both quickly packed their bags and got their passports and some money. They successfully sneaked out and they were finally in the plane.

“Hey Clifford, thank you”

“Hmm? Why?”

“Because you agreed to come with me”

“Ana, you’re my little sister and we might really have an obligation or mission. And if it was destined for us, then it is the right thing to fulfill it. Anyways, we had both better get some rest to fully charge our batteries.”

Meanwhile while Anastasia was sleeping, she was dreaming again. This time without even watching the video! “Am I here again? What am I doing here? Please help me understand what my brother and I have to do,” she says in her dream. She walks around a little and suddenly she hears that voice again. “I will guide you. Just be careful and follow your instincts. Don’t worry.”

Anastasia wakes up and surprisingly, Clifford was already awake and was planning how they would get to the Great Wall.

“Oh hey Ana! The plane’s going to land in about ..” says Clifford.

“Please fasten your seat belts. The plane is going to land soon.”

“Well, I guess there’s your answer.”

After getting out of the plane and taking a 2-hour bus ride to the Great Wall. They have finally arrived at the Great Wall.

“Whoa is this huge or what? I didn’t know it was long. I thought it was just an ordinary wall really,” says Clifford in astonishment.

“That’s what I was talking about over dinner! Hmm, guess someone wasn’t paying attention.” “Whoops sorry Ana, forgive me.”

“Well no time for that now. We have to try looking for... Umm yeah exactly. We don’t know what we’re looking for.” Both of them start walking towards the Great Wall.

“Why do I feel like we’re being followed?” asks Clifford. They both stopped and noticed that there was a little dog that was following them. They decided to take care of it and it might be a good idea that it keeps them company. It was getting dark so they decided to choose a spot on the long wall to rest.

While Clifford was sleeping, Ana was writing her diary. But she couldn’t really focus because the little dog that they have named Snowflake, as it was as white as snow, kept barking.

“Urgh, please stop barking. What do you want?” Snowflake quickly barked at her diary and pen. “What? You want this?”

“Woof!”

“But you cant, it’s my diary. It’s very special to me. But I can only let you see, is that okay?” “Woof!”

She gently showed Snowflake her diary when out of nowhere, Snowflake grabbed her pen and started writing. “No time left. We must keep moving on. We are almost there. Woof!” Anastasia immediately wakes Clifford up and shows him. It was around 2 in the morning and all three of them started their journey and followed Snowflake, the leader.

“Hey Ana, do you really think it’s a good idea to follow this dog? I mean he is a dog and we’re not even sure if it really knows where it’s going right?” says Clifford.

“Oh, come on Clifford! You saw what it wrote on my diary right? Dogs do not know how to write and this one here does. There is something special about this dog and my instincts say we should follow it.”

“WOOF!” barks Snowflake.

“Hey I think it found a little gate! I think it’s leading us to go INSIDE the Great Wall,” says Ana in surprise. And so, Snowflake really led them to a little gate by the Great Wall. All three of them entered and was surprised that the atmosphere had changed. Everything was really cold in the beginning however, there was fire lit up by the walls inside.

“What a strange place,” comments Ana. They continue on their journey inside the Great Wall until they all suddenly stopped by a little wooden door with a small lock. “Woof! Woof!” barks Snowflake while eyeing towards Ana’s bag.

“Give it your bag,” demands Clifford. Snowflake rapidly searches her bag and finally hands Clifford the pen Ana uses to write in her diary. Right away Clifford takes the pen and opens the lock. They all entered the little door and there, sat an old man with a long white beard.

“Good boy, good boy” says the old man while patting Snowflake.

“Umm hello there, my sister Anastasia and I, Clifford have come all the way here from Willowcomb but we don’t exactly know why we’re here... ”

“You have finally come. I have been waiting for you two for a very long time. My name is Dofoloid. Don’t worry, I will explain to you two why you’re here and what you will have to do. But first things first, you have to tell me, are you willing to do so?”

“Do what?” asks Ana.

“Well you see, a long time ago, there was a mission destined for a woman. However unfortunately, she didn’t succeed.”

“What was her name?” asks Clifford full of curiosity.

“Her name was... Anabelle,” he says while handing them a picture of her. Both of them gasp and their eyes open as if they’ve seen a ghost.

“She was our grandmother.”

“What?”

“Yes Ana, when I was still a child maybe 3-4 years old, I met her but that was the first and last time I’ve ever seen her”.

Dofoloid interrupts “I’m sorry to interrupt your moment. Now as I was saying Anabelle didn’t succeed in the mission. Now as you two are part of the family tree, the missions have been passed down to you two. I will only tell you what you will have to do if you are willing but if not, I cannot say a word.”

“Yes we will do it,” say both of them without hesitation.

“That’s the spirit! Okay, first of all throughout the Great Wall, there are 7 special red stones that have to be found. 7 because the Great Wall was built in 7000 B.C. However, you two will only have to find the last stone as your grandma had already found the first 6 stones. After collecting all 7, put them all together and recite these words that I give to you and you will see what your actual goal from collecting 7 rocks is. My advice is to trust your instincts and open up your mind. Now go and don’t waste time. You only have 64 days and the wall is obviously not that small”. Off Clifford and Anastasia went and of course, Snowflake came along too.

After a few days, Clifford questions Dofoloid “Ana, I’ve been thinking and I’m not sure how we can trust Dofoloid? I mean we don’t even know him and yet, we already trust him.”

“Actually Clifford I’ve been thinking too... and I haven’t told you this but my instincts tell me that we can trust him. He was... the voice in my dreams,” reveals Ana.

“I’m not quite convinced but I trust you,” replied Clifford.

“Dear Diary,

Man is this hard! It’s been about 2 weeks and we still don’t have a clue where or how to find that last stone. We have 6 weeks left. We cannot fail our mission. I believe that history cannot repeat itself! Wish us luck!”

After a few days,

“Dear Diary,

We’ve been walking this long wall for I don’t even know how long. We’re all tired but we cannot stop now. We have to keep our hopes and believe. I really wonder where that last stone is... ”

Days and weeks have passed. The last stone was much harder than they thought it would be. Only one and a half weeks was left for them to find it.

“Urgh where could the last stone be?!” says Anastasia in frustration.

“Come on Ana, we can’t give up just yet. We have one week and a half. We could be this close to finding it. We just have to believe and have faith in ourselves.”

That night, Ana dreamt again and heard that voice.

“Anastasia, don’t think too much. You are much closer than you think you are. Wash your head and you’ll see. Breathe”.

All of a sudden, Anastasia woke up.

“Dear Diary,

I just dreamt and that voice was there again! What does he mean by I’m closer than I think I am? What is that supposed to mean? I don’t get it! Help me..okay Anastasia, I have to breathe just as he said. Breathe, inhale 2, 3, exhale 2, 3..”

Instead of sleeping, Ana was up all night thinking about how the last stone could be found and finally she gave up and decided to sleep.

“Dear Diary,

Guess what? Today we actually found the red stone but it was in between two cobras! It was really terrifying but somehow, Clifford succeeded in getting it despite the danger of the two cobras! But then when we got it, we realised it wasn’t the right one... it was actually a pink stone. Urgh, how frustrating!”

For days, they’ve been searching as much and as deep as they could until finally there was only a day left.

“Guess history is probably going to repeat itself then,” says Ana in disappointment.

“Oh come on Annie, don’t be so pessimistic,” comforts Clifford.

“Woof Woof!” comes Snowflake barking and licking Ana’s face.

Ana pets Snowflake “Oh you little snowflake, aren’t you adorable?”

Before long Ana discovers something “How could I not know?! Clifford! It was with us this whole time! How could we not notice?!”

“What do you mean?”

“Snowflake’s collar! Look! There’s the last stone!”

“What are we waiting for then?” They quickly put all the 6 stones they found and when they were just about to get the stone from Snowflake’s collar, their parents showed up!

“Mum! Dad! What are you guys doing here?” asks Ana in surprise.

“Shouldn’t we be asking you two that? You two are coming home now.”

“Nooo! You can’t stop us now. We have almost finished our mission,” exclaims Clifford

“So I see you two have succeeded in that,” says their dad.

“Muahahahaha oh no they haven’t. We won’t let that happen, will we now?” chuckles their mum. “What are you saying? Who are you?! You aren’t our parents!” shouts Clifford.

“Oh no we aren’t. Finally you kids realised that! It’s been long enough that we’ve kept up our act!”

Their “parents” moved towards them and finally almost grabbed them until Dofoloid appeared behind them.

“We have finally met again, Stella and Robert. It’s been such a long time, don’t you agree?” says Dofoloid in confidence while admiring his nails.

“Oh yes yes it has, hasn’t it, Dofoloid?” replies Stella.

“NOW!” shouts Dofoloid. Behind them, while being distracted by Dofoloid, Anastasia and Clifford were smart enough to continue to join the 7 stones.

Everything froze. A burst of light struck and out of nowhere, in front of Anastasia and Clifford were there real parents. They realised that Snowflake was actually their mum and Dofoloid was there dad. They were put under a spell since they succeeded in inheriting a part of the Great Wall when Stella and Robert were desperate for it. Finally in the end, Stella and Robert disappeared but no one knows where.

“Dear Diary,

Phew! What a life I’ve been having. Can you believe that all these years, what Clifford and I thought were our parents were actually not our parents? Clifford and I succeeded in our mission! Plus we got our real parents back! It was one of the best moments of my life, I’m telling you. But that doesn’t end there, mum and dad told us that it wasn’t the end yet. We still have to find Stella and Robert but before that, we’re going on a family trip to explore the Great Wall especially since it is our property. Anyway I have to go now! See you soon!”



# The Wall

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## The Pacifist

Indulgence was intoxication – even more so for the unfortunate mouth with a most fastidious taste for excellent wine. Intoxication was the eternal dweller of our pacifist's mind – not a direct cause of the ethanol, of course. It was quite improbable for alcohol to be of any misdirection to his rather sedated mind; there existed a number of other causes of relentless insobriety, after all. It might have been that pleasing silk suit from Chang Xingkui for the Cuitaizi lands development tender, or the exquisite Qing vase from whosoever for a certain electroplating plant; but it could certainly not be this 1978 delicacy delivered especially from Heixin Caterings, just for our heroic pacifist to suffer the slight mishap of letting the unpleasant petition for an enquiry into the company's tainted foodstuff accidentally slip into his faithful paper shredder. Tainted foodstuff! He could have almost heard himself double over with hysterical laughter as the sound of paper grinding into oblivion reverberated inside his head. Why should people care about tainted foodstuff when they have double tourist figures from the elaborate reconstruction of the Laolongtou – the Old Dragon Head of the Great Wall? The pacifist heaved his bear gut off the handy leather chair (yet another benefaction) and proceeded to board his pet car, nothing less than a black Maserati. Uncanny extravagance, an inexperienced commoner with the simplest of minds might conjecture; but a certain level of intelligence would have been sufficient to acknowledge the necessity of materialism in the lives of those sharing a social stratum with our dear pacifist. Why, he deserved recognition for all he had done, in particular his refurbishing the Wall itself – the Wall which had always been, and would always be, dividing the city of Shanhaiguan into the East and the West. And here he was, travelling in his precious vehicle, musing over his competence and the multitudinous words of praise he shall receive in the opening ceremony shortly.

These thoughts, however, had hardly been scrutinised enough when the automobile halted ceremoniously in front of a specially tailored red carpet, with children in oddly coloured uniforms lining both sides as trees would along a boulevard, waving tufts of plastic flowers and chanting, 'Huanying huanying, relie huanying!' in precise monotone. Our pacifist stepped

out with a flush upon his turgid cheeks, simply unaffected by the paraphernalia surrounding his welcome, but rather the result of the disagreeably hot weather. This, however, hardly deterred him from receiving the scene with great ease, and he strolled casually but importantly along the scarlet walkway to the podium kindly reserved at his disposal. His speech had been succinct enough, and he left the podium with no less than a generous dose of courteous applause and self-righteousness. In that effect, our pacifist stepped across the faithful carpet again, and was about to enter his car when he heard a thunderous crash and a harrowing cry. He paused for an instant, perhaps wondering what the source of such a commotion may be; but he knew better to close the car door aside him and remain ignorant – and that was what he did.

So much for our pacifist.

\* \* \*

## The Absentee

That our absentee and her kind were the Omnipresence here, was almost an oxymoronic overstatement; however, they were the very blood, the very crux of the Wall – that flowed like viscous water along the elevated stones and disappeared spontaneously into thin air as water vaporises, never pausing enough for anything of insurmountable interest, never halting their hasting steps, never perhaps stationing their feet upon the rows of granite to ponder over the eternal separation of the two sides, East and West. For a giant portion of absentees like ours, the easy side was the East – their attention dutifully attracted by the mechanical lure of, '... And here, from the top of the Laolongtou, you can see the Gloria Holidays Villas which we will be staying in tonight. In the distance you may find the Shanhaiguan Shipyards. It is the largest shipyard in the region ...' which was followed by the stereotypical recital of figures nobody but our pacifist (if he had been alive, peace be with his poor soul) would have had the slightest interest. Our absentee, by nature, also followed the irresistible temptation and leant over the strangely well conditioned castellation, entirely absorbed by the radiant side of the East: how pleasing the highly organised neighbourhood of Nanjiangzhuang, how poignant the seamless sands of the Laolongtoutan, how warming the scenes of the streaming marine traffic! Such a vista of development, such a demonstration of civilization reached the retinas of our absentee that she felt nothing less than gratification.

This outburst of mild sentiment, however, was short-lived. No longer had our absentee glanced upon the wonders of prosperity when she was herded along by the temperamental tour guide forward along the Wall again, with the inevitable destination of a souvenir store in the reachable distance. As she trudged wearily along, very much in melancholy, her mind slipped away from the thought of the scenes which had embraced her previously as a lover would, and the stimulus which they had brought her slid away as romance fails to weave its magic on an absent mind. The new subject of interest had become the perpetual anticipation of what goods there really were in souvenir shops, amidst all the previous instalments of disillusion and cold hard realisation of the truth – as the company containing our absentee naively entered a certain souvenir shop with the general understanding of finding anything of memorable value, the distressing truth was the interior of this nook had in it a plethora of perfect nonsense: plastic models of the Wall painted gaily in blotches of red and beige; lopsided magnets featuring a section of the Laolongtou before a computer generated sky of negligible artistic value, under which the unfortunate inscription of, 'Huanying guanglin Laolongtou! Welcome to Old Dragon Head!' further deterred visitors from ever purchasing one; and finally the glassware flooded with scarlet letters of, 'Woai Laolongtou'; all of these available for the simple-minded

consumers who would probably regret purchasing them afterwards. Anyway, our absentee, being a cunning, calculating woman, declined the urge to drive the economy of Laolongtou, and stepped outside for a good dose of fresh air. No sooner had her feet touched the beautifully laid stones when she heard an enthusiastic clapping in the distance, and a crowd of people with smiles etched on their faces. Our absentee enquired the cause of this commotion, and her tour guide answered her good-humouredly, 'Oh, that is the opening of the restored section of the Wall, you know. Must be some official! No one but they can afford such applause ...' The tour guide allowed the explanation to trail away as our absentee craned her neck to catch a glimpse of this important official amongst the crowd of onlookers. Her attempt was interrupted in the shocking fashion of what seemed to be a thunderous crash and a harrowing cry. Snapping her head towards the source of this upheaval, she tried to peer past the rapidly growing audience around the far side of the Wall, but she distinguished nothing more than confused feet flitting round and clouds of disturbed dust.

What was this? The truth was not for our absentee to find out, as her tour guide obediently shuffled her along through the open space and trampled down the precisely engineered slope eastward to another place of interest. Just as all the other absentees before and after her, ours excelled in being ignorant to what took place at the feet of the Wall, but instead looked beyond what was real and at what was fabricated.

\* \* \*

#### The Pragmatist

Out from number 88, Fada Road, Bohaixiang east of the Wall, pounced a golden Lamborghini which then gave such a terrifying lurch forward that anyone who happened to be nearby could only see a streak of gold stream by. In this frenzied vehicle sat our pragmatist – in all his glory. He, like many of the inhabitants of this affluent neighbourhood, had a high affinity for material life, and was shameless enough to display it. Such a specially bred golden Lamborghini, shipped directly from Italy, delivered to our pragmatist's doorsteps; extravagance could hardly be more rampant than this. Our pragmatist, however, seemed to relish in all this as he craved for attention from the faces on the organised kerbs of downtown Shanhaiguan. This chariot of an automobile prowled majestically down the fresh bitumen, glistening radiantly in the overflowing sunlight; our pragmatist, housed in the crocodile-skin interior of this sports car, grinned eternally. Propped on the reptile-covered seat beside him was a bottle of 1978 Enchante port wine – not for his own consumption though. It was to be delivered particularly so as to exhibit the good will of a benefactor, and enjoy certain privileges of a beneficiary – 'with compliments from Heixin Caterings', as denoted on a handy tag attached to the cork. The bottle deserved so much attention that it even got to be belted up securely, just for the sake of it not having any chance of receiving even the slightest mistreatment. With all this care, the bottle resided quietly on the seat, and our pragmatist continued to direct his chariot across the scenic roads of the city centre.

His first station was, of course, the local government buildings at Tanwu Street. He let his pet car glide into rest in front of the architecturally odd establishment and emerged importantly, holding the bottle of precious liquid in his left hand. Passage into the building was of ease, as he was a rather frequent visitor of these parts, and when he discovered from a diligent report from the emotionless receptionist that his beneficiary was busy, he handed the bottle to the lady and bade her to take it to him as soon as he was ready. Thanking her for all her trouble and slipping a 100-Yuan note under the bottle for her, he swept out of the

place without haste and once again boarded the glamorous car, screeching away without a glance back.

During the lonesome drive on the state highway, he thought of how admirable it had been for him to rise up and become one of China's phenomenally rich people. It certainly did not begin very sensationally: only two decades ago, this area of Hebei was just a collection of villages with backward infrastructure and nothing much to exploit. He was one of the few entrepreneurs who had been eccentric enough to invest in such a dreary society, and over the years his business had grown from a shabby factory to a province-wide industry, supplying most of eastern Hebei and western Liaoning with food enhanced with all sorts of elements across the Periodic Table. But of course, who cared about that when no one knew? It was all about profit-making, was it not? Our pragmatist maximised his profits, our pacifist (if you still remember him) skimmed off his share, and people had the benefit of cheap food – who would denounce that? As long as nobody probed the shady operations of his industry, money would come pouring in, and he would continue with all his profligacy.

In thirty minutes he reached the base of the Wall, and he parked frivolously at the side of the road without regard to its legality. Today, he had had the good humour of walking down the Laolongtou and admiring the views he had been familiar with for so many years, before strolling to the reconstructed section to see his beneficiary officiate its opening. For the time being, however, he could afford to relax.

Advancing the well-maintained slope was not a chore, and our pragmatist began shuffling down the stones. It was amusing how everyone hailed this section of the Wall as of paramount importance, when no one could say for sure that one was seeing history. For example, the surfaces might have been refurbished – after so many centuries of trampling, it was hard to believe the good condition of this part of the Wall when many other parts were falling apart; but again, who would worry about that if the omnipresence were shielded from those parts? All they cared about was taking photographs of scenery they were too indolent to look at with their eyes, and then leaving with the clear conscience that they had been to the historical Wall. No one gave the interest of knowing whether it was authentic; everyone relied simply on the fact that the Wall existed, whether from past fortifications or from present architecture. A Wall there had always been, and a Wall there would always be. The Wall spanned not only the space, but in time: as decades weathered, humans built; and the Wall shall never fall.

His thoughts fell short as he was reminded by his elegant watch to watch the ceremony, and he strode quickly to the open space. In thirty minutes it was over, and he had the liberty of mind to walk back to his golden pet. He had hardly passed the crowds when he heard this thunderous crash followed by a harrowing cry. Travelling over to the source of mayhem, his curiosity was partially satisfied by the sight of a large section of the north castellations having collapsed in a puff of dancing dust. A slight complication, but such an imperfection would be mended by the government. Consoled by such a thought, our pragmatist left the scene without a care in the world and continued his walk to the lingering Lamborghini.

The Wall shall never fall.

\* \* \*

#### The Realist

Just west of the Wall, down where thick foliage shielded its presence from the untrained eye, slumbered the abominable village of Nanhaicun. Amongst its collection of ancient, derelict houses lived our last and least person of interest, the realist. She actually had nothing much

– she lived on her own, and her house was as barren as a prison cell – save for a table, a chair and her own self-respect. Being in such disheartening conditions, she had nothing much on her agenda but to obtain a meagre salary employed as a Wall sweeper, and return to her rundown residence waiting to be forcibly relocated – this part of the village was the last one which still had not been cleared for redevelopment, and there were already rumours circulating within the neighbourhood; rumours of the axe coming this Thursday, or next Monday. Rumours stayed rumours; for the time being, however, our realist had to continue her acquaintance with her life, and this day, the very day another reconstructed section of the Wall was to be officially opened, she had no other business to tend to but her occupation. Therefore, she pulled on the nauseating shirt Wall sweepers had to pull on, and set off wearily to sweep the Wall.

It was nearly understandable why nobody gave any regard to Wall sweepers like our realist; absenteeists were round too short to care, pacifists were round too long to care, and pragmatists were not entitled to care except for themselves. Ever since there was a Wall, they had been the ones to give way. They had been expected to obey orders from the government without question, and move aside upon request for development – if there were any. Development of any kind was scarce in the west, and early plans had heavily favoured that of the east. As a result, the rich east had gotten richer, and the poor west had gotten poorer; but nobody talked much about that. As long as people such as our realist stayed impoverished, they could not bargain and the world would go on turning. That was the spirit – keep them broke, no one spoke.

Being a Wall sweeper meant our realist had to tend to all the fantastic difficulties occurring along the Wall: this day, the first abnormality reported was the classical vomiting, perhaps a result of being overwhelmed by the view atop the Wall. Our realist submissively shoved a few faithful utensils in the janitor's cart and began trundling the awkward device towards the source of all this. What a nuisance! The body of the cart rattled violently over the uneven floor as she muttered under her short breath. And to had vomited somewhere so far north, where no one with the right mind would have gone to! The Wall soon turned nasty as well-furnished stone gradually morphed into untamed soil, generously interspersed with wild weeds and broken sections of the original Ming Wall – details our realist had no interest in. The object of her interest finally emerged as an artistic splash right at the median of the road. As the narrow path prevented her from placing the cart aside, she decided to overtake the cart by nimbly flitting beside it. What she did not expect was a conclusion of ill maintenance; the rocks had loosened after centuries of erosion, and these castellations were not equipped for further abuse; as soon as our ill-fated realist stepped on the jeopardous stones, they instantly crumpled as paper would, sending her spiralling down the Wall. She instinctively lunged at the cart for support, not realising in time the lethality of such an action. When she finally realised what was happening, she along with the cart were already plummeting towards their inevitable demise. As the cart collided with the side of the jagged, protruding stones with a thunderous crash and disintegrated into shards of plastic, a harrowing cry escaped from her twisted lips; the next moment, she laid cold and stark in a shroud of moss and polymer.

As random people began surrounding the scene, it was evident from their blank faces that this little incident had not many implications: firstly, one cannot really blame anyone for an accident like this; and secondly, one could always reconstruct any section of the Wall – one petty life could not cause the fall of the Wall, certainly.

## Hate U

Eirene Kar Lam Woo, 16, St. Mary's Canossian College

“Once upon a time, we swore not to say goodbye  
Something got a hold of us and we changed...”

Ethan took off his headphone gradually, staring at the Great Wall through the window of a tourists' coach; the Great Wall in Beijing glistened grandly as the sun rose above its stone horizon, showing its pride of having been so stable and solid for more than 2000 years. The stations stood static, as if they were soldiers on guard shoulder to shoulder, keeping a watchful eye over invading hordes. Its dignity and firmness were so breath-taking to Ethan, dumbfounded and transfixed. He couldn't look away, for the wall had held his gaze in a stony stare...

“Let's go up to the Great Wall now!” He exclaimed after all teens had left the coach. As an experienced guide of the study tour, he introduced the history of the Great Wall in great detail as if he was a Chinese history professor, “The Great Wall is built to... defend... the Chinese Empire against the invasion by nomadic groups. Originally, only several walls were built; they were joined afterwards and became bigger and ... stronger...” The whole group of adolescents looked at him with growing wonder, carried away by the possible reasons behind the frown so visible on his face and the twitching at the corner of his eye, which he was trying to suppress upon saying the words “defend” and “stronger”.

After regaling the students with the wall's long and glorious history, he gestured them to take a time off to appreciate this amazing piece of architecture freely. Meanwhile, Ethan started walking along the stairs. When he picked up his headphones and listened to his favourite song, he was utterly overwhelmed with memories...

\* \* \*

Many years ago, Ethan paid a visit to Beijing as a young student. When he was on the way to the hotel, he was extremely worried; “How come mum wants me to stay here for a month without friends?” His desperate murmur was responded with a light laughter. Suddenly, there was a hand waving in front of him. Before he could respond, somebody said, “Hi, neighbour, I'm Wylie. Don't worry. We'll have a joyful time here!” Ethan stared at the one sitting next to him with mixed emotions: surprise, embarrassment, uncertainties ... Suddenly, something popped into his mind and he slipped on the edge of the flight of stairs. The pain brought him back to the hidden memory.

“Oh! Are you Wylie?” He screamed.

Wylie burst out laughing, “Of course! I've just told you!”

“No! I mean – did you study in the Sunshine Kindergarten?” Wylie nodded.

“Were you in K1B?” Wylie nodded again, but with little bewilderment this time.

“Ethan! Don’t you remember me? The kid that took the seat next to yours in K1! Don’t you recall it?” His sudden enthusiasm scared Wylie off, until the childhood scenes flashed in his mind after so many years ...

“... I know! We were ‘neighbours’ for the WHOLE year! We scribbled on the tables and got a good scold from Miss Anderson!”

“How can I possibly forget your special name? Wait... what does it mean actually?”

“It means SMART! How about yours?” “Well... ‘Ethan’ means strong...” “Wow! Your name suits you best — no wonder you have grown so muscular!” He poked his chest playfully.

The “great wall” between them melted with their glowing passion about this new voyage of friendship setting sail ...

\* \* \*

Finally, they arrived. Since everyone was required to carry their own luggage to the lobby, Ethan and Wylie parted to complete their tasks. When Ethan was off for his baggage, he heard a distant melodious voice calling from his back, “Wait ... You’ve dropped your flick knife ...” He turned around to see a girl running hurriedly towards him. She was another student participating in the same tour, though Ethan did not notice her. How he could have missed her!! Her smooth hair radiated perfectly under the sunlight, as if there was a halo above her head, that of an angel’s; her milky rosy cheeks held him spellbound ...

Ethan’s feet stopped moving as if they had been turned steel. The closer she was, the more obviously he heard his rhythmic heartbeat. “Here it is.” The angel-like girl smiled with him remaining speechless. He did not want to take the knife back. He just wanted the whole world to pause long enough to let him admire every fine feature of her face. “...Thanks...” Sheepishly, he took his life-saving knife from her tender creamy hand. When she headed for the lobby, he was still gazing at her back in adoration ...

\* \* \*

“Can’t the tour guide be faster?” Wylie muttered restlessly in the lobby. Meanwhile, his hand automatically reached his guitar bag. He took out his guitar and played skilfully...

“Oh, her eyes, her eyes, make the stars look like they’re not shining

Her hair, her hair, falls perfectly without her trying

She’s so beautiful...”

“Gosh!” His intoxicating voice became rougher, “Why would my teammates choose this song for the upcoming singing contest? We can never express the message behind with NO EXPERIENCE OF LOVE —”

“Bang!” His eyes rolled over to where the noise was - a girl had tripped and fell over his guitar bag. Struggling to stand up, she obviously needed a bit of help, as her slender limbs didn’t seem to give her enough support. Wylie immediately took hold of her and asked gently, “Are you okay?” When she looked up, he was stunned by her absolute beauty; her ebony hair was smooth as silk. He could see a halo above her head, that of an angel’s; her milky rosy cheeks held him spellbound ...

“Thanks...” She smiled back in return for his kindness for helping her to balance before she left. He hummed fondly, the same song but with a lighter touch of the melody this time, while gazing at her back in adoration...

“... When I see your face, there’s not a thing that I would change

Cause you’re amazing, just the way you are

And when you smile, the whole world stops and stares for a while

Because girl you’re amazing, just the way you are...”

\* \* \*

“Sorry for being late! Everything’s settled now. Two of you will share the same room for the whole month, okay? The first group is...” The tour guide spoke softly in order not to disturb other tourists in the lobby. At the same time, each participant – including Wylie and Ethan – was waiting silently. The absolute silence – except the tour guide’s voice – in the lobby almost choked all people to death.

“... Group 13 is Wylie...and...” The tour guide held his glasses tightly, trying to comprehend his ugly hand-writing. Meanwhile, Ethan’s hand turned into a fist gradually without realisation...

“... Ethan.” After hearing that piece of great news, they took the key with a warm smile...

\* \* \*

Time flew. The day before the end of the study tour, the entire group was surrounded by sadness, dismay, unease... except Wylie and Ethan. They knew that there was nothing for them to do... except cherish each moment. Inside their room, they rested while packing for the visit at the Great Wall the following day.

“Smartie, I have something to ask you...” “Yes?” “...” After an abrupt pause, Wylie turned his sight from bags to Ethan’s blushed face. Soon, he cleared his voice and spoke in a purposeful manner, “Mr. Eth, are there any queries about your Miss Right?” Ethan’s face grew redder. “... I don’t even know what her name is... but she is fabulous...She smiles so warmly that makes me think of an angel...” He started praising her with strong admiration by describing every good thing that she had ever done.

“Wow! You are SO observant, aren’t you?” Wylie giggled wildly until he saw Ethan’s glare. He continued, “Okay, I’ll help you. Remember, girls love humorous guys! Also, show your strengths, like generosity, in front of her, naturally. She’ll definitely fall under your charm - your handsome look and fantastic personality.” Ethan, who lacked any kind of experience with girls, was amazed by his flawless strategies, “You are REALLY smart, mate! Anyway, do you have any ‘target’ here?” They smirked. “Well ... yes ... but I don’t know her name. She is the most beautiful girl in the world! I have tried every way to attract her but nothing seemed to work. What should I do?” Ethan hesitated a little, “... Maybe you can do some comic stuff to get her eyes on you!” “I’m afraid that my image will be ruined...” “At least I’d do the same thing to attract my angel...” When Ethan gazed around primly, Wylie was startled by his disgusting facial expression. Yet, Ethan ignored him and continued his lovely imagination, “Ai... How strong love is to let people ignore friendship...” Wylie sighed...

\* \* \*

The sun rose, both of them headed to the Great Wall after having breakfast. Though Ethan wanted to chat with Wylie, he slept as he had been thinking about his challenging target all night long. Ethan could do nothing but enjoying the scenery...



The Great Wall in Beijing glistened grandly as the sun rose above its stone horizon, showing its pride of having been so stable and solid for more than 2000 years. The stations stood static, as if they were soldiers on guard shoulder to shoulder, keeping a watchful eye over invading hordes. Its dignity and firmness were so breath-taking to Ethan, dumbfounded and transfixed. He couldn't look away, for the wall had held his gaze in a stony stare...

"Wow... It is so firm... It must be great help defending China against all foes ..." He murmured.

"Just like our ..." When he heard someone's response, he turned around his head. His eyes just matched with Wylie's. Then, they both giggled wildly, pleased to know each other's thoughts well...

\* \* \*

"Let's go up to the Great Wall now!" He exclaimed after all teens had left the coach. As an experienced guide of the study tour, he introduced the history of the Great Wall in great detail as if he was a Chinese history professor. After regaling the students with the wall's long and glorious history, he gestured them to take a time off to appreciate this amazing piece of architecture freely. Meanwhile, Ethan and Wylie started walking along the stairs.

"Hey! Don't mark anything on the wall! How come you boys are still so naughty?" When the tour guide's furious voice reached their ears, they looked at each other with cunning grin. They climbed up the stairs swiftly in order to stay away from the tour group. Finally, they stopped where the highest beacon stood ...

"Luckily, here're only a few people..."

"Because today's Wednesday, and it is still early now!" Wylie replied.

"What do you want to mark?"

"Today's the last day of our tour... let's mark...'friends forever' to commemorate our valuable friendship! Though it's a bit stupid ..." Wylie laughed in excitement and embarrassment.

Ethan said ambitiously, "Not really!" He started to carve the letter "f" on the wall with his army knife secretly while Wylie stood in front of him to block others' sight. Although it was extremely difficult to mark it and not to let others know they were doing so at the same time, they did it without getting noticed. They took turns to mark the words for nearly two hours... "Yes! We did it!" Ethan shouted gratifyingly. Wylie immediately covered his mouth, "Keep quiet, Eth!" Then, they looked at each other and smiled to their hearts' content.

The markings were perfectly done. Each word was engraved on the wall so deeply as if it would remain firm and strong regardless of time... When Ethan and Wylie touched the letters, their fingers could sense warmth that lit their hearts ...

"I'm sure that they can be as firm and strong as us and the Great Wall—" Ethan looked at them with pride.

"—and it can defend against all enemies regardless of time like us and the Great Wall!" Wylie added.

Then, their loud, sincere laugh echoed across the Great Wall...

\* \* \*

They climbed down the stairs so as to reach the rendezvous on time. Soon, all students were there and they went to have lunch. Meanwhile, Ethan and Wylie grabbed their last

valuable chance to talk face-to-face until they reached the Chinese restaurant with round tables. "Ethan, don't follow Wylie. There're too many people around that table," The tour guide looked around and led him to another table nearby.

When Ethan sat down, his handsome face was as red as rose. His angel was right beside him! He had tried to calm himself down by using millions of methods, but his breath became shorter and shorter instead.

"What's the matter? Why is your face so red?" When he saw her scowling with concern, he was speechless. "Oh—your face's even redder—"

While she placed her hand on his forehead, he said, "...so...so cold..."

"What?"

"I... I mean your hand..."

She chuckled, "You're funny. What is your name?"

"Ethan."

"Angel."

He stared at her dully, "It... it suits you...I mean it..."

"You are a funny one, aren't you?" Suddenly, he remembered what Wylie once said, "Girls love humorous boys!" After that, he started to brave himself and chatted pleasantly with Angel.

When everyone was eating, they whispered, they talked and they grinned. To Ethan, it seemed that there was no one except her in the restaurant. Each move of Angel was under his observation. He kept praying in his mind: please Lord, let me stay here with Angel forever...

"Ethan, it's time to leave!" Her delicate voice brought him back to the reality. "Hey! Can we exchange... phone numbers? I don't want to lose... a friend..." He asked tensely. After exchanging slips on which their phone numbers were written, she left for her buddies. Then, Ethan walked out of the restaurant alone, stepped into the car and sat next to Wylie, dreamily, not aware of Wylie's unusual silence...

On their way back to the hotel, Ethan's mind was flooded with Angel's images ... "Smartie... My angel..." Though Wylie ignored him, he was not worried at all...

Finally, when they went into their room to pack, Wylie threw his bag on the bed roughly. Frightened by his violent behavior, Ethan stared at him, motionless.

"Why did you lie to me?" Wylie growled. His sense of self-defense and control were already engulfed by all his destructive emotions – jealousy, hatred, mistrust ...

"Smartie... I don't understand..."

He laughed coldly, "Huh, you know I'm smart, right? So why did you lie? You made full use of my trust to tell you how to get a girl successfully... Don't deny! I've heard everything you said to MY GIRL during lunch... Since you know whom I like, you do not dare to tell me who your angel is—"

"I didn't know her name...until today..." In the face of Wylie's verbal and mental attack, Ethan became powerless, as if his heart had been shot directly by his best friend. He could feel his heart bleeding ...

There was a long silence before Wylie responded. While looking at Ethan's pale, lifeless face, he could feel nothing but guilt. Although he had expressed his anger openly, there was neither a trace of comfort nor enjoyment. He felt more confused. It seemed that scolding his best friend could not ease his sadness and jealousy, and yet pretending nothing had happened was out of the question ...

"Ring..." Ethan's phone broke the silence. The growing ringtone instantly stimulated Wylie's anger... Wylie's emotion went out of control again. He kept thinking if the one on the other side of the line, calling Ethan, was Angel. If yes, what would they talk about? He

murmured, "Can we exchange phone numbers? I don't want to lose a friend... Funny! He had lost a friend once he decided to betray me!"

"Liar, if you don't know her name, why would you name her "Angel"? Because .... she is Angel!"

"No—" He screamed desperately when he saw Wylie's glaring face.

"Shut up!" Wylie took his entire luggage immediately and left Ethan behind without turning his back...

Wylie was completely blind with rage. He could neither feel his tears rolling down helplessly nor see Ethan stretching out his arm, handing over the slip with Angel's cell phone number over his back...

\* \* \*

"I think I'm moving away,  
Sorry, the frustration's  
Got me feeling that way..."

When the mental picture about Wylie leaving determinedly popped into Ethan's mind, his sight gradually blurred...

Soon, Ethan reached the highest beacon of the Great Wall... He looked at the mark – "friends forever" blankly. They were as obvious as before, though fifteen years had passed... They were as firm and strong as the Great Wall... They could defend against all external difficulties and enemies regardless of time like the Great Wall...

"Ai... How strong love is to let people ignore friendship... and forget how to defend 'internal enemies'..." Ethan laughed at himself and his ex-best-friend bitterly while wiping his tears away. Suddenly, he could see two shadows approaching him. When he looked up, his mind went completely blank. He pressed the "stop" button of his phone.

His voice shook with surprise, "You are smart... Wylie?" He could never imagine that Wylie would come to that Great Wall again to witness their firm and strong mark! Though he had been and waiting for that moment for more than fifteen years, he could never expect himself to be so thrilled ...

"Oh! You are Ethan, right? We haven't seen each other for ages!" Ethan felt more uncomfortable in the face of Wylie's evil-like smile, "She's..."

"She's my wife! Where is yours? Aren't you good at flirting with girls?" Wylie laughed hysterically with scornfulness and hatred.

There were lots of Wylie's faces with different smiles in Ethan's mind, but they were in total contrast to what was in front of him... He felt so strange, unfamiliar with the man who was once his BEST friend... He also hated himself for expecting so much from a 'stranger'...

Sadly, Ethan turned around, pressed the "play" button on his phone and left Wylie behind without turning back...

"Hey! What're you doing? What're you listening to? Can't you hear me?" Wylie's voice became more and more distant.

"Hate U..."

\* \* \*

"Once upon a time, we swore not to say goodbye  
Something got a hold of us and we changed..."



# Fiction

## Students with Different Learning Abilities

# New Tales of The Great Wall

Ocean Chak Hei Huang, 11, Ying Wah Primary School

## Chapter 1

Edward Albus Trotter

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Edward Albus Trotter. He had big, ocean-blue eyes, deep brown hair and a slim fit figure. He was a brilliant genius. When you stared at him, you might find there was an indistinct blue trident mark on his forehead.

Edward lost his father and mother when he was born. He lived with his Uncle's family in California now. They treated him very well.

Many people said that Edward's parents were killed by illness, but little Edward didn't believe that. People said that he was ignorant but he knew he was different from the others.

## Chapter 2

The Jade Emperor's Visit

One night, Edward had a dream. There was an old Chinese man standing behind his bed, 'Hi, Edward.'

'Who are you?' Edward murmured with an astounded look.

'I am the Jade Emperor. I am the king of gods in China.' the old Chinese man answered.

'Edward,' the Jade Emperor said, 'I know that you miss your parents. They aren't killed.

Your mother was caught by Herobrine, a devil, and your father was Poseidon, the lord of the seas.'

Edward was shocked to hear that his father was Poseidon, the one of the Big Three.

'Young hero, you have a quest of Hades' sword, Zeus' diamond, the Olympus' stone, and your father's weapon, a shimmering gold trident. All of them have been stolen. The Big Three suspected each other. But they all disclaimed resolutely.' The Jade Emperor said, 'Now they suspected me.'

'Then who did it?' Edward asked.

'Herobrine did it. I'm going to prove it so I call you here to help me defeat Herobrine and take back the weapons for the Big Three. Edward, here is the thing that I will give you, the Wavecrusher sword.'

The Wavecrusher sword was made of celestial bronze. Both its edges were gold and glittered.

'It is a gift from your father. It can help you kill monsters and sinister immortals. Your foe is in Great Wall. He is ruling the whole China. I hope you can eliminate him soon and save your mother.'

'Thank you. I swear I will defeat Herobrine.'

'Good luck, young hero.' The Jade Emperor grew to his Immortal form and faded away.

The next morning, when Edward woke up, he found that there was a sword lying on his table. It was the weapons that the Jade Emperor gave him in his dream.

Edward got dressed quickly. He took his weapon and went to the backyard. He took his pet, Silversmith, a young white Pegasus. Then he rode on it and vanished in the air...

## Chapter 3

At the Great Wall

Lighting cracked, beneath the sky was the famous marvellous Great Wall. The thunder cloud was as black as coal while brilliant gold lighting smash violently. The Great Wall was like an endless tremendous dragon lying on the country border of China.

Edward landed on a mountain beside the Great Wall. He led Silversmith to a mountain full of grass and fed him. While Silversmith was having its delicious meal, Edward walked down the green path. He looked at the dark sky. He missed his hometown. In California, he loved to play with his friend at school. He missed his friends and his uncle's family. He missed everything, just alone.

All of a sudden, he heard a huge army marching with a quick galloping. Edward wanted to conceal himself behind a bush, but he was curious what was happening. When he looked back, he was shocked...

## Chapter 4

James Galloper the Centaur

Edward saw a boy whose age was as similar as him. The boy had brown hair and deep brown eyes. His body was a deep-red pony instead of a human body. From Edward's knowledge in his myth class, it was a centaur. The centaur galloped to him and grabbed him.

'Hey, run!' He put Edward onto his back. Silversmith sensed that they were in danger. It chased after the centaur in haste. The centaur brought them to a gloomy cave and put Edward on the ground.

'Who are you?' asked Edward.

'I'm James Galloper. Nice to meet you, and who are you?' asked the centaur.

'I'm Edward Trotter. I come from California.' Edward mumbled.

'It's you! I found you.' James the centaur shouted suddenly.

Just then, a familiar voice appeared, 'Hello, Edward.'

Then Edward saw an old tall Chinese man with a golden traditional Chinese dragon cloak and a golden Chinese crown.

'The Jade Emperor,' Edward gasped.

The Jade Emperor nodded, 'Edward, James is a junior guardian from the Demigod Camp. Your mission is very serious. I'm a bit worry about you, so I called James to help you. I have something to remind you. Your sword, Wavecrusher, can only hurt immortals but not mortals because your sword's metal was come from Aether. You do think that it is hard to carry a two meter sword. You can see that there is a sapphire on the hilt, press it and see what will happen.

Edward pressed the sapphire. Then he found that the long sword turned into a small iron knife. When he pressed the sapphire again, it returned to a long bronze sword again.

'How awesome it is!' Edward could not refrain from gasping. Then he put the knife into his pocket.

'Thanks that you have saved me just now.' He looked at James while James was staring at him with a gleeful mug.

'James, take care of you during this journey. Please lead Edward to the Palace to meet the Emperor of China.' The Jade Emperor preached to James solemnly.

Edward and James departed from the Jade Emperor and flew to the Palace.

## Chapter 5

### The Palace

They soon arrived at the Palace. It was a resplendent and magnificent building.

'It's real great and marvellous!' they yelled with one accord.

They saw many Chinese soldiers guarding in the corridors. Finally, they reached a grand golden room. In the centre of the room where sat a Chinese man with beard and similar costume as the Jade Emperor.

The man was not curious when he saw them.

'Greetings, young hero, I heard that you came to defeat Herobrine and save our country.' The man said. 'I know who you are. China is under control of Herobrine. He was a human-like devil with glowing white eyes and vigorous sharp teeth. He went to the villages and gulped down all the creatures such as villagers and livestock. I have already sent a lot of soldiers to protect the villagers but they all gone never to return. Later, I know that they have been eaten by Herobrine.'

'Now, he is going to bring his demon army to attack us and occupy the Great Wall. I can't let him do it. The Great Wall was constructed by trillions of Chinese people. It is the final zone of defence of our country. I hope you can help us.' The man said again.

That night, as Edward was in bed, he could not fall asleep. Then he stepped on to the Great Wall and looked up to the starry sky.

'I must not allow Herobrine to destroy the Great Wall in a violent war.' Edward murmured to himself.

He determined to defeat Herobrine, get back the three gems for the Big Three and save his mother.

In the following month, Edward learnt the swordsmanship and practiced it so absorbed as to neglect sleep and meals with James. He also practiced how to keep balance when riding on Silversmith in a battle. He wanted to become a brilliant and outstanding swordsman.

## Chapter 6

### The Battle of the Great Wall

That night before the battle, Edward had a strange dream:

He was standing in the middle of the Ocean, where a tall, handsome man was smiling at him. He patted Edward's shoulders and whispered to him, 'My little boy, do your best. It's a significant drill for you.' A genial beam surrounded Edward. He felt warm, relaxed and powerful instantly.

Edward woke up in a roar of the thunder. He wore his armour and brought his Wavecrusher knife and went to the backyard where James the centaur was absorbed in polishing his bronze sword.

'Good morning, James.' said Edward.

'Good morning, Edward. Are you ready for the battle?' asked James.

'Yes.' replied Edward. 'I'm sure that I'm ready.'

The wind was howling. The dark clouds grew ominous. As lightning cracked, a curtain of rain beat down from the heavens. It was the time for the battle.

A crow of demons flew past Edward. Edward rode on the back of Silversmith. He activated the Wavecrusher sword and slammed through the bodies of the demons. The demons glowed and exploded and disappeared. The demons were more and more. Edward was even braver after each fight. A group of trolls block their way, Silversmith was swift down smartly and knocked the trolls down with his hooves.

'Well done, boy.' Edward cried.

They landed on the Great Wall to meet James. There were dead warriors lying on everywhere but not many monsters were killed.

'Are you injured?' asked James.

'I'm fine.' Edward replied.

Suddenly, a mass of black cloud burst out between the thunderclouds...

## Chapter 7

### Duel with Herobrine

The cloud turned into an enormous devil. It was Herobrine! Edward and James gasped. Herobrine was in a huge black cloak with a sword. He had bat-like long ears, sharp teeth and glowing white eyes.

'Oh, I see. The little brute Edward Albus Trotter is you!' Herobrine screeched the Edward and the others had to cover their ears.

Then Herobrine drew his sword out from the scabbard. Edward gasped again. The sword belonged to Hades which was made of stygian iron. Edward slashed Herobrine with Wavecrush bravely. He failed to get his wants as Herobrine was alert and powerful.

'How can you this little crumbly weasel do?' He laughed at Edward grimly.

Edward tried his best hacked Herobrine with his sword.

'Clank!' Edward's sword hit the hilt of Herobrine's. Herobrine could not hold his sword as he underestimated Edward. His sword was flung into the air. James leapt into the air and grabbed it immediately.

'You two are just sucklings!' Herobrine roared furiously.

He took out a huge shimmering diamond and a glistened gold trident in his hands. After that he muttered some spells. In a split second, the thunderstorm and a bolt of lightning slammed to Edward.

Edward had to calm down. He stood silently still. His eyes and the trident mark on his forehead began to grow in blue. He rose into the air slowly. There were on the images of blue sea and the gentle smile from the man in Edward's dream.

'Bang', the downpours became mountainous waves and rushed to Herobrine. The waves slammed Herobrine miles away. He lost the diamond and the trident. Finally, he faded away with piteous cries.

Awhile, all was quiet. A golden glow spread across the sky as the sun chased the dark clouds away. The Great Wall was intact lying on the border tranquilly.



## Chapter 8

### Got Back the Weapons

Edward picked up the diamond and the trident. Now he had got back all the three weapons for the Big Three. At the moment, the Jade Emperor emerged from the gate of the Great Wall.

'Well done, young hero. And James, you too.' the Jade Emperor smiled as brilliant as the sun.

'Now, I have to rescue my mother. Can you tell me where she is?' Edward asked with worry.

'Don't worry, boy. Your mother was saved by the Emperor's troops while you were duelling with Herobrine.' the Jade Emperor comforted him.

'Now I'm going to return these three weapons to the Big Three. You can go to reunite with your mother at once.' the Jade Emperor said again.

'When I can meet my father?' asked Edward.

'You will meet him very soon.' replied the Jade Emperor.

## Chapter 9

### The Reunion

The Jade Emperor led Edward to a tower, and then he took out a pearl and dropped it onto the ground. When it hit the ground, it began to grow a glittery beam, Edward felt very dizzy. When he opened his eyes, he found that he was standing in a splendid palace. He saw his parents were standing there and smiling at him. His mum gave him a big warm hug. There were different feelings well up in Edward's heart.

Poseidon said, 'Great job, my son. Please always remember that we can only success if our hearts are strong.'

Edwards never forgot his father's words. He made a decision to be a vigorous man like the Great Wall guarding its country.