Mr Lim was invited on stage, where he received the medal of courage from the principal. As I watched, tears glistened in my eyes while vivid memories filled my mind. Standing up, I applauded as loudly as I could. Mr Lim truly deserved this award. As the hall was filled with cheers, my mind flashed back to that fateful day…

It was a typical Monday morning. My form teacher, Mrs Tan, was droning on and on, going through our exam questions. Stifling a yawn, I jotted down some notes and did my corrections.

“Riiiiiiinnggg!” A shrill sound pierced through the air like a knife. Covering my ears in annoyance, realisation dawned on me. It was the fire alarm! While I encouraged others to remain as cool as a cucumber, it was futile. My classmates were all screaming and running around in a frenzy.

“Calm down everyone! Please queue up in an orderly manner! We have practised this in the fire drills!” instructed Mrs Tan, sounding exasperated.

The class ignored her and continued hollering at the top of their voices. One student even broke down in a fit of hysteria. Grumbling, I rushed around the class, asking all my fellow students to settle down while waiting for further instructions.

A solemn voice soon announced from the speakers in every class, capturing our attention. “All students are to follow their teachers and evacuate the building in a calm and organised manner. The fire may have been caused by a gas explosion in the canteen, do not go near there!”

Mrs Tan finally managed to calm the frantic class down. In a strict voice, she told us that we were to use the evacuation route to Gate 6. Hastily, she arranged the pupils in a neat straight rows and led us out of the classroom.

Upon taking my first step out of the classroom, the sight of the school that greeted me made my jaws fall slack instantly. The surroundings were hazy as thick smoke billowed from the canteen. Choking, I instinctively covered my nose as the smell of charred wood invaded my nostrils. To make matters worse, the ash from the
smoky surroundings stung my eyes. Spluttering anxiously, I squinted and tried to see my teacher in the lead, but the air was too hazy to see anything clearly. Instead of moving in an organised manner, the students all burst into a sprint. I felt bodies brushing and bumping against me. Within less than a minute, I lost sight of my class and teacher amidst the chaos.

Fear overwhelmed my entire being and a wave of anxiety washed over me. What should I do now? Where did my class go? A thousand questions flashed through my mind as I dashed towards the nearest staircase. To my horror, a furnace of blistering flames erupted in front of me. Screaming in terror, I scrambled off in the opposite direction. No matter how much I ran, I could not find the glowing green exit sign of Gate 6. Quivering uncontrollably, I crouched down, feeling the cold concrete ground beneath me while I crawled under the smoke.

“Don’t panic!” I said to myself. I tried to remain calm despite the erratic pounding of my heart...

Just then, a beam of light shone through the haziness. The figure of Mr Lim waving a torchlight appeared from the smoke. A spark of hope was ignited in my palpitating heart. I was finally rescued!

“Get on your feet!”

Stretching out his arm, Mr Lim grabbed my hand and pulled me through the thick black smoke. Together, we hurried towards the exit.

Running as fast as our legs could carry us, Mr Lim and I sprinted to the exit. I channelled all the energy I had left despite the pain searing through my legs. Upon reaching the grassy field near my school, I collapsed in exhaustion. I inhaled the fresh air desperately. Upon closer look, I noticed that my hero’s clothes were covered in soot and his face was blackened due to the ash. Mr Lim had demonstrated immense courage. Although I was not his pupil, he risked his life for me and ran back to save me. As tears of gratitude rolled down my cheeks, I thanked Mr Lim profusely for saving my life.

Mr Lim’s eyes twinkled as he replied, “I was just doing what was right…”
Mr Lim's courageous act made that incident unforgettable for me. If not for his heroism, I would not have escaped from the burning inferno. He indeed deserved that medal of valour.

By Rachel Lee, P5