

Winning Entry 2010 Creative Writing Contest

The American Immigration Council is happy to announce the winner of the 2010 National Creative Writing Contest.

Julia Culbert a fifth grader from Santa Clara Valley was selected from thousands of entries with her piece, "America's Fried."

America's Fried

by Julia Culbert

The mice gathered in their cave, lingering in the illuminated abyss. They often discussed politics and all had very definite opinions. Disagreements led to arguing, and arguing led to fighting.

Tonight they were discussing dinner, though. Anna, a girl mouse, was having fried rice. Her sister Adelaide was enjoying her steamed rice. Rice was really a fine feast, when it passed the holidays, and the mice loved it.

"My steamed rice is delicious. All one flavor, all the same. I'd never dare mix it with Vermeer's egg. How lush it is in my mouth," Adelaide whispered as the steam filled her round glasses.

Anna just had to speak up, "Now see here! Your rice is a bland mixture, all the same, like some countries in the world. My fried rice is mixed, like with each person immigrating here, and it tastes better with a little bit of each, like all the different cultures in America."

"Not true!" squeaked Mabel, "People have different ways! How could it all fit together?"

"America is how. If you add soy sauce to that rice, it will taste a little better. But you need all the vegetables in order to get the best flavor you can," explained Anna. She was now full-out ready to explain it.

She sorted out all of the ingredients into little piles, taking some of Mabel's sauce and Adelaide's rice.

"Now," she commanded to all the other mice, "try some carrot."

Each mouse took a cube of carrot, shrugged and popped it into their mouths. Their expressions didn't change, so Anna pushed further.

"Take some soy sauce," she again directed the mice. This time they all spit it out and grabbed paw-fulls of rice, gulping water and gasping.

"This is a country at war," Anna said solemnly, staring at the dirt, "For it will never come together." Anna was ready to give her final instructions.

In order to complete the fried rice, she had to ask for everyone's dinners. They reluctantly handed it over when she demanded it. Chopping, mixing, frying and scooping, she began to mix what was really an example of America. Stepping away from the stove with the bowls along her arms, she handed them out to her fellow mice.

"What is not there is what we decided not to mix," she concluded. All of the other mice stared at her, waiting for instruction. She sat down with her own bowl, looking at them. "Have a bite," she directed.

All the mice looked at their plates, but did not eat. "Why does it all look so wrong and so mixed up?"

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asked Mabel.

"We are all different, but isn't it more pretty when we are together?" Anna questioned. Mabel nodded, so all the mice took a bite.

"Incredible! Amazing!" "Way better than just carrots." Comments spouted from all around.

"I guess you were right," admitted Adelaide, "it's better mixed together. No wonder 25 million people immigrated here."

"So, shall I make fried rice again tomorrow?" Anna giggled.

"Definitely!"

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