

## **Space**

It was a fight for space.

Hands akimbo, Mr. Lim Chew stood in front of his house. It was a very old bungalow, a remnant of the old city. Patches of paint had peeled off from the walls and the roof was covered with a thick layer of dust. His house was an eyesore to the passers-by. In fact, Mr Urn's bungalow was the only remaining house in this area. Nearly a decade ago, Wang Fu Town Council had resettled all the other residents in a newly built block of flats in order to develop the district. Yet, Mr. Um refused to move.

Now, he lived in the Central Business District Area. His house, dividing Wang Fu Street into two halves, also became famous on the Internet. They had called him "The Most Resolute Owner". Many curious youths also came to visit and take photographs in front of his house. Mr Urn, on the other hand, was not disturbed at all. The more waves he made the closer he would be to his goal of exchanging his bungalow for a more spacious house.

The speeding cars whizzed past him like wind. Impatient car horns blasted in the distance. "Soon everything will come to an end", he thought, the corners of his lips curling up into a smirk. The noise; the polluted air; the blinding neon light from nearby shopping malls. Everything.

Moments later, two officers from Wang Fu Town Council arrived to have their nineteenth meeting with Mr. Lim.

"Only if you agree to give me a house of two hundred square metres, or else, there is no room for negotiation!" Mr. Urn snapped peevishly, even before they had greeted each other.

Drawing a deep breath, one officer stepped forward with a matter-of-fact look and said, "In fact, Mr. Urn, we just came to inform you that a new housing policy has given us the right to resettle every single resident in designated areas. Now you must move."

Startled, Mr. Urn erupted into furious shouting, his voice coarse and deafening. "What? Where do you expect me to live?"

"The last house left in that apartment block, sir, which is about sixty square metres," the other officer replied politely, "just to let you know, Mr. Urn, if you don't move at the end of this month, you will probably receive a court summons."

Defeated, Mr. Um slumped to the ground and watched the officers walking out of his bungalow, his only property. His ten years of insisting, protesting and suffering had been flushed down the drain. Now the space he was getting was even smaller than the other residents.

"Why?" Mr. Urn shrieked, his fists banging heavily on the hard concrete floor. He had lost his ten-year battle for more space.

**461 words**

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