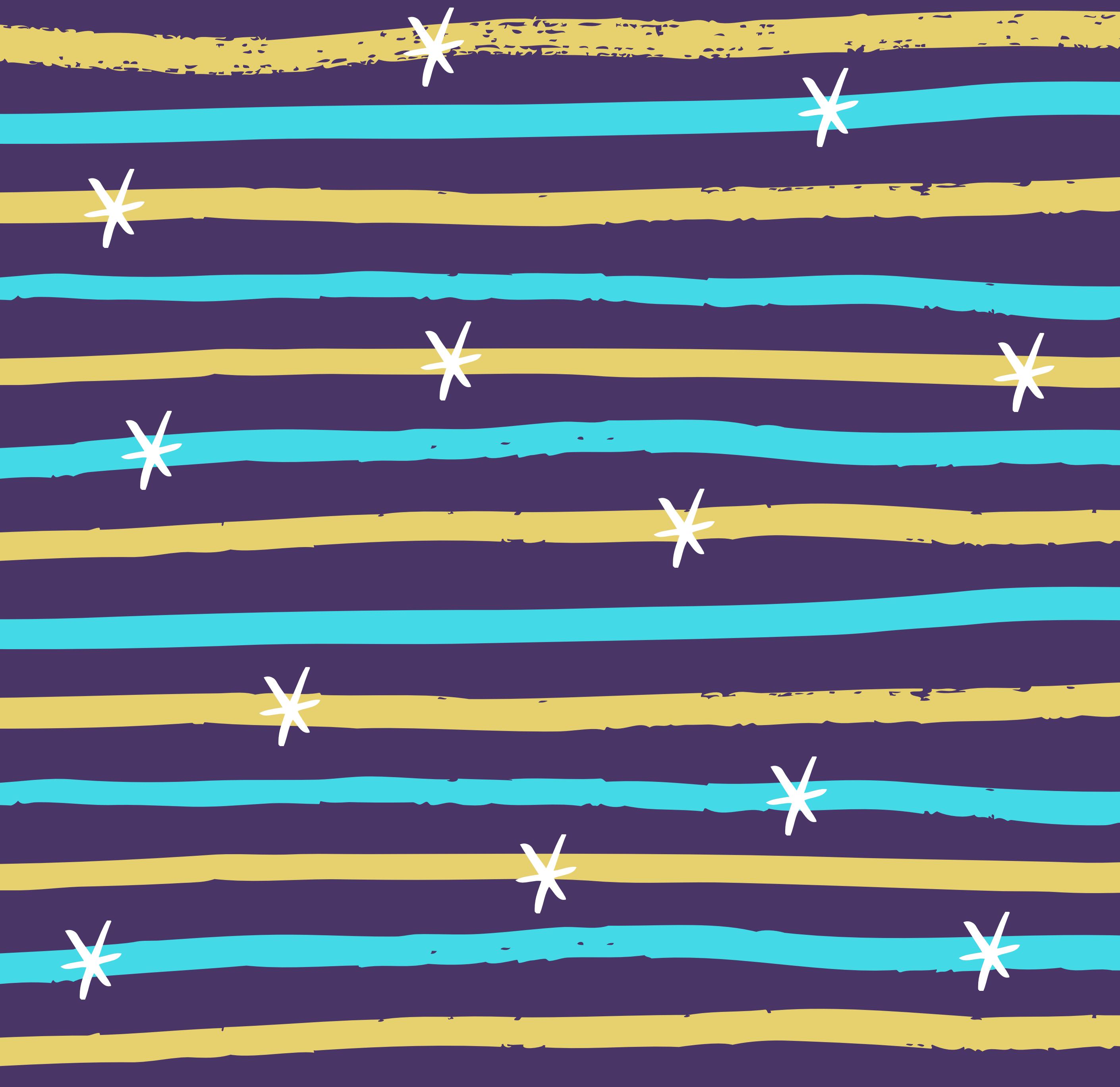


For kids who love

Bedtime Stories

Translation Practice English - Indonesian (Class A)



This book is dedicated to

English Literature - UIN Sunan Kalijaga

And

Kids who love bedtime stories.

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Translating children literature are harder than we thought and more rewarding than we could imagined. None of this would have been accomplished without our beloved lecturers at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and our favorite writers. We are eternally grateful to you all, who gave us insight, wisdom, and knowledge. This is also our little contribution to add other translated short story collections for kids.

We realized that nothing is perfect, so we would be very glad if you let us know what things we need to revise or improve.

Warm Regards,

The Translators

HANUMAN AND I

Preparations had begun for our school annual day. Two plays were to be staged. The senior section was to enact 'Merchant of Venice' and the junior section, 'The Story of Rama'. I was hoping with all my heart that the drama teacher would include me in die cast. I had never acted in a play but was sure that once on stage I would give a brilliant performance.

Radhika, the prettiest girl in our class, would certainly get Sita's role. Since I was shorter than Radhika and had a shrill voice I could not hope to be Rama. But I wouldn't mind being Rama's brother Laxmana, I decided. I went around for a few days, imagining myself on stage with a bow and arrow slung on my shoulders, giving a brilliant performance as Laxmana. How surprised my parents would be! I could almost hear my father saying, "Imagine we had such a talented daughter and we didn't even realize it."

I was terribly disappointed when the drama teacher smiled and said, "I have a role for you. You'll be one of the monkeys in the *Vanar Sena*¹"

"Can't I at least get the role of Hanuman," I asked

¹ Monkey brigade that helped Lord Rama.

timidly.

"No, your voice is too squeaky," was the teacher's reply.

Our rehearsals began the next day. All I had to do along with seven other girls was to jump up and down and shout, "Jai Rama", "Jai Hanuman"² in a chorus.

Finally, the great day arrived. We were all very excited. I had to wear a red shirt, red pants, red vest and a monkey mask.

We were dressing up when the *chaukidar*³ handed a note to the teacher. She read it aloud. "Dear Madam, I am very sorry to inform you that Alka has contracted measles and has been running a high temperature since morning. Sorry, she will not be able to act in the play."

Alka was to play Hanuman. The teacher looked round in dismay and her eyes fell on me. "Look here," she said doubtfully, "You wanted to be Hanuman? You think you can manage?" My dream was suddenly coming true! I was quite overwhelmed. "Of course I can," I said confidently. "Even if I forget, I can always think up something else."

² Victory to Lord Rama, Victory to Lord Hanuman.

³ Watchman.

"Oh no," she said, "You shall certainly not do any such thing. I shall be prompting from the wings. All you have to do is repeat what I say and, for god's sake, don't mumble. Speak as loudly as you can."

As the curtains went up for the third scene I was pushed on stage to the accompaniment of drums. I almost fell on my face. For some time, I could not see a thing. The drums were echoing in my ears and my hands and feet were cold and numb. I opened my mouth to say my lines but my throat was dry and I couldn't remember them. Thankfully I heard my teacher reading out my lines again and again. I began repeating whatever she said without realizing what I was saying. I kneeled in front of Rama telling him with folded hands that I was his faithful servant. I would gladly die for him. "Oh, my Lord", I repeated loudly what my teacher was saying, "you have forgotten to pin your tail." "Don't be silly," hissed Rama, "I am not supposed to have a tail. You've forgotten yours." I touched the spot where the tail should have been. "I am sorry, my Lord," I said trying to make up for my mistake. "I meant my tail, I have forgotten to pin on my tail."

The teacher now whispered, "Jump, jump," I shouted, "Jump."

"You jump," Rama shouted at me. Then realizing

my second mistake I began to jump like mad and the curtains came down to the sound of laughter.

There and then the teacher cut short my role as much as possible, but I had to be on stage in the last act.

I was feeling less nervous now and said my lines well. I showed Rama's ring to Sita to convince her that I was Rama's messenger. Sita said some beautiful lines about Rama's greatness and how much she missed him. She hid her face in her hands and began to weep. Suddenly I realized that the teacher was prompting while Sita kept sobbing. Since Sita was not saying anything I decided that it was my turn to speak.

"My beauty is my bane," I said grandly. "It is because of my beauty that the wicked Ravana wants to marry me."

"What?" said Sita looking startled.

"Not you, you idiot," I repeated what the teacher said. Seeing the startled expression of the whole cast I bit my tongue, realizing my mistake too late.

Just then everyone on stage began shouting, "*Maharaja*⁴ is coming, Ravana the Great is here!" I was struck dumb by the huge figure in six-inch heels, which I didn't know about until that time,

⁴ king

bearing down on me with a shining sword in hand. He said in a thunderous voice that made me tremble. "Who is this puny creature who dares to intrude into my kingdom?" I was supposed to answer in a proud voice that I was the son of Pawandev, the wind God, the worshipper of Rama, the immortal Hanuman. But Ravana was towering over me. He raised his sword and I screamed in terror, "Don't kill me, I am not Hanuman." I pulled off my mask as I spoke. By now the audience was rolling with laughter. The sound of laughter became louder when an infuriated teacher came on stage and unceremoniously dragged me away.

AKU DAN HANUMAN

Persiapan acara tahunan sekolah telah dimulai. Ada dua drama yang akan dipentaskan. Para senior akan memainkan sebuah drama dengan judul 'Pedagang Venice', sedangkan para junior memainkan 'Kisah sang Rama'. Aku sangat berharap bahwa guruku akan memberiku peran utama. Aku belum pernah tampil dalam sebuah drama, tapi aku yakin sekali di atas panggung aku pasti bisa memberikan penampilanku yang sangat hebat.

Radhika, siswi paling cantik di kelas kami, sudah pasti akan mendapatkan peran Sita. Karena aku lebih pendek dari Radhika dan suaraku kecil, aku tidak bisa berharap bias berperan menjadi Rama. Tapi aku tidak keberatan menjadi Laksmana, saudaranya Rama, kuputuskan demikian. Berhari-hari aku bertingkah kesana kemari, membayangkan diriku berada di atas panggung dengan sebuah busur dan anak panah menggantung di pundakku, memberikan penampilan yang hebat sebagai Laksmana. Orang tuaku pasti terkejut! Ayahku juga akan berkata, "Bayangkan, kita memiliki putra yang berbakat, dan bahkan selama ini kita tidak menyadarinya."

Tapi, aku begitu kecewa ketika guru dramaku tersenyum sambil berkata, “Aku punya satu peran untukmu. Kamu akan menjadi salah satu monyet di Vanar Sena⁵.”

“Tidak bisakah setidaknya aku mendapatkan peran Hanuman?” tanyaku malu-malu.

“Tidak, suaramu terlalu melengking,” kata guruku.

Keesokan harinya latihan kami pun dimulai. Semua yang harus aku lakukan bersama tujuh anak lainnya hanyalah meloncat-loncat dan berteriak, “Jayalah Rama”, “Jayalah Hanuman” dengan satu suara.

Akhirnya hari besar itu pun tiba. Kami semua sangat gembira. Aku harus mengenakan baju merah, celana merah, rompi merah, dan sebuah topeng monyet.

Ketika kami sedang berdandan, seorang penjaga menyerahkan sebuah surat kepada Bu Guru. Dia membacanya dengan lantang, “Ibu Guru yang terhormat, saya sangat menyesal untuk memberitahu Anda bahwa Alka sedang demam dan badannya panas sejak tadi pagi. Mohon maaf, dia tidak bisa bermain dalam drama tersebut.”

⁵ Pasukan monyet yang membantu Tuan Rama

Alka seharusnya berperan sebagai Hanuman. Sang guru melihat sekeliling dengan cemas dan matanya berhenti padaku. "Oke, lihat sini," katanya ragu, "kamu ingin jadi Hanuman kan? Apa kamu yakin bisa melakukannya?" Impianku tiba-tiba menjadi kenyataan! Aku merasa begitu gembira.

"Tentu saja aku bisa," kataku penuh percaya diri. "Bahkan jika aku lupa dialognya, aku juga bisa berimprovisasi."

"Jangan," katanya. "Kamu pasti tidak dapat melakukan hal semacam itu. Aku akan membisikimu dari samping panggung. Yang harus kamu lakukan adalah mengulangi apa yang aku katakan dan, demi Tuhan, tolong jangan berbisik. Bicaralah dengan lantang."

Saat tirai naik untuk adegan ketiga, aku didorong ke atas panggung bersama irungan bunyi drum. Aku hampir terjatuh. Beberapa saat aku tidak bisa melihat apapun. Suara gemuruh drum itu bergema di telingaku, tangan dan kakiku terasa dingin dan mati rasa. Aku buka mulutku untuk mengucapkan dialog, tapi tenggorokanku kering dan aku tidak bisa mengingatnya.

Untungnya, aku mendengar guruku membacakan dialogku berulang-ulang. Aku mulai mengulangi apapun ucapannya tanpa menyadari

apa yang aku ucapkan. Aku berlutut di depan Rama dengan melipat tanganku dan memberitahunya bahwa aku adalah pelayannya yang setia. Aku bahkan rela mati untuknya.

“Oh, Tuanku,” aku mengulangi ucapan guruku dengan lantang. “Anda lupa menyematkan ekor Anda.” lanjutku.

“Jangan konyol,” desis Rama, “aku tidak seharusnya memiliki ekor. Kamu yang melupakan ekormu.”

Aku menyentuh tempat di mana ekorku seharusnya berada.

“Saya minta maaf, Tuanku,” kataku, mencoba menebus kesalahanku. “Maksudnya, ekor saya, saya lupa menyematkan ekor saya.”

Sang guru sekarang berbisik lagi, “Lompat, lompat.”

Aku juga berteriak, “Lompat. Lompat.”

“Kamu yang lompat,” Lagi-lagi Rama berteriak padaku.

Menyadari kesalahan keduaku, aku mulai melompat seperti orang gila dan tirai turun beserta suara tawa penonton.

Di sana kemudian Bu Guru memotong adegan peranku sependek mungkin, tapi aku harus tetap bermain pada adegan terakhir.

Aku merasa harus lebih percaya diri sekarang dan mengucapkan dialogku dengan baik. Aku menunjukkan cincin Rama ke Sita untuk meyakinkan dia bahwa aku adalah utusan Rama. Sita mengucapkan beberapa dialog indah tentang kebesaran dan kehebatan Rama dan betapa ia merindukannya. Dia menyembunyikan wajahnya dengan tangannya dan mulai menangis. Tiba-tiba aku sadar bahwa Bu Guru sedang berbisik ketika Sita menangis terisak-isak. Karena Sita tidak mengatakan apapun, aku putuskan bahwa itu mungkin adalah giliranku untuk berbicara.

“Kecantikanku adalah kutukanku,” kataku dengan agung. “Ini semua karena kecantikanku, sehingga Rahwana yang jahat ingin menikahiku.”

“Apa?” kata Sita kaget.

“Bukan kamu,” aku mengulangi apa yang Bu Guru ucapkan di samping panggung.

Melihat ekspresi kaget dari seluruh pemain, aku menggigit lidahku, terlambat menyadari kesalahanku.

Kemudian semua orang di panggung mulai berteriak, “Maharaja akan datang, Rahwana yang Agung ada di sini!”

Aku dikejutkan oleh sosok besar dengan tumit selebar enam inci, yang tidak kuketahui sampai saat

itu, mendatangiku dengan pedang mengkilat di tangannya. Dia berkata dengan suara menggelegar bagaikan guntur yang membuatku gemetar. "Siapa makhluk lemah yang berani masuk ke dalam kerajaanku tanpa izin?" Aku seharusnya menjawab dengan suara bangga bahwa aku adalah putra Pawandev, Dewa angin, penyembah Rama, Hanuman yang abadi. Tapi Rahwana menjulang tinggi di atasku. Dia mengangkat pedangnya dan aku berteriak ketakutan, "Jangan bunuh aku, aku bukan Hanuman." Aku melepas topengku saat berbicara. Sekarang penonton tertawa terbahak-bahak. Suara tawa semakin keras ketika Bu Guru datang dengan wajah geram dan tanpa basa-basi menarikku keluar dari panggung.

THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were — Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter.

They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree.

"Now, my dears," said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, "you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor."

"Now run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out."

THEN old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.

Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries;

But Peter, who was very naughty, ran straight away to Mr. McGregor's garden and squeezed under the gate!

First he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes;

And then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.

But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor!

MR. McGregor was on his hands and knees planting out young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, "Stop thief!"

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way back to the gate.

He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes.

After losing them, he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away altogether if he had not unfortunately run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

Peter gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement, and implored him to exert himself.

Mr. McGregor came up with a sieve, which he intended to pop upon the top of Peter; but Peter

wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him.

And rushed into the toolshed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in, if it had not had so much water in it.

Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the toolshed, perhaps hidden underneath a flower-pot. He began to turn them over carefully, looking under each.

Presently Peter sneezed — "Kertyschoo!" Mr. McGregor was after him in no time,

And tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter. He went back to his work.

Peter sat down to rest; he was out of breath and trembling with fright, and he had not the least idea which way to go. Also he was very damp with sitting in that can.

After a time, he began to wander about, going lippity — lippity — not very fast, and looking all around.

found a door in a wall; but it was locked, and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

An old mouse was running in and out over the stone doorstep, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood. Peter asked her the way to the gate, but she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer. She only shook her head at him. Peter began to cry.

Then he tried to find his way straight across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled. Presently, he came to a pond where Mr. McGregor filled his water-cans. A white cat was staring at some gold-fish; she sat very, very still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive. Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.

He went back towards the tool-shed, but suddenly, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—scr-r-ritch, scratch, scratch, scritch. Peter scuttered underneath the bushes. But presently, as nothing happened, he came out, and climbed upon a wheelbarrow, and peeped over. The first thing he saw was Mr. McGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned towards Peter, and beyond him was the gate.

Peter got down very quietly off the wheelbarrow, and started running as fast as he could

go, along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes.

Mr. McGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate, and was safe at last in the wood outside the garden.

Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds.

Peter never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir-tree.

He was so tired that he flopped down upon the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit-hole, and shut his eyes. His mother was busy cooking; she wondered what he had done with his clothes. It was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight!

I am sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening.

His mother put him to bed, and made some camomile tea; and she gave a dose of it to Peter!

"One table-spoonful to be taken at bed-time."

But Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail had bread and milk and blackberries, for supper.

KISAH PETER SI KELINCI

Pada zaman dahulu, hiduplah empat ekor anak kelinci yang bernama Flopsi, Mopsi, Ekor-Kapas, dan Peter.

Mereka tinggal bersama sang Ibu di dalam sebuah lubang pasir, di bawah akar pohon cemara yang sangat besar.

“Sekarang, anak-anakku,” kata Ibu Kelinci di suatu pagi, “kalian boleh pergi ke ladang atau turun ke desa, tapi jangan pergi ke kebun milik Mr. McGregor: Ayah kalian mengalami kecelakaan di sana, dan dia dijadikan kue pai oleh Mrs. McGregor.”

“Sekarang pergilah, dan jangan nakal. Ibu juga harus pergi.”

Lalu Ibu Kelinci mengambil keranjang beserta payungnya dan pergi ke tukang roti. Ibu membeli sebuah roti cokelat dan lima kue kismis.

Flopsi, Mopsi dan Ekor-Kapas adalah anak-anak yang baik; mereka pergi ke desa untuk mengumpulkan buah *blackberry*.

Tetapi Peter adalah anak yang nakal. Dia berlari menuju kebun Mr. McGregor dan menerobos masuk melewati bawah pagar!

Awalnya, dia memakan beberapa daun selada dan buncis; lalu dia juga memakan beberapa lobak.

Setelah itu, karena merasa sedikit mual, dia pergi mencari beberapa daun peterseli.

Tetapi di sekitar ujung barisan tanaman mentimun, dia bertemu dengan Mr. McGregor!

Mr. McGregor sedang berjongkok menanam benih kubis, tetapi dia langsung melompat berdiri dan mengejar Peter; dia mengibaskan garukan tanah sambil berteriak, "Berhenti, pencuri!"

Peter benar-benar terkejut; dia berlari mengitari seluruh kebun karena dia lupa jalan kembali ke pagar tadi.

Salah satu sepatu Peter hilang di antara tanaman kubis, dan yang satunya lagi hilang di antara tanaman kentang.

Setelah Peter kehilangan sepatunya, dia berlari lebih cepat dengan empat kaki sehingga dia mungkin berhasil lolos jika saja dia tidak menabrak jaring tanaman buah ceremai dan kancing jaketnya

yang besar tidak tersangkut disana. Jaket itu masih baru dan berwarna biru dengan kancing kekuningan.

Peter sudah menyerah dan menangis; tetapi isak tangisnya terdengar oleh beberapa burung pipit yang baik hati. Mereka terbang ke arah Peter dengan riang gembira, mendesak Peter untuk berusaha lebih keras.

Mr. McGregor datang dengan sebuah jaring dan berniat untuk muncul di atas Peter. Namun, Peter lolos tepat waktu setelah melepaskan jaketnya. Dengan terburu-buru, Peter masuk ke dalam gudang dan melompat ke dalam sebuah kaleng. Kaleng itu bisa menjadi tempat yang tepat untuk bersembunyi jika tidak ada banyak air di dalamnya.

Mr. McGregor sangat yakin bahwa Peter ada di suatu tempat di dalam gudang. Mungkin dia bersembunyi di bawah pot bunga. Karena itu dia mulai membalik pot bunganya secara perlahan dan mencari ke setiap sudut.

Tiba-tiba Peter bersin "Hat-ci!" Mr. McGregor segera menghampirinya dan mencoba menginjak Peter yang justru melompat keluar jendela dan merusak tiga tanaman.

Jendelanya terlalu kecil untuk Mr. McGregor dan dia pun lelah berlari mengejar Peter. Lalu, dia memutuskan untuk kembali ke tanamannya.

Peter duduk untuk beristirahat; dia kehabisan nafas dan gemetar ketakutan; dan dia sama sekali tak tahu ke mana harus pergi. Dia juga merasa sudah pengap meringkuk di dalam kaleng.

Setelah beberapa saat, dia mulai beranjak pergi sembari melihat sekeliling. ‘Hop, hop!’ Dia menemukan sebuah pintu; tapi pintu itu terkunci dan tidak ada tempat bagi kelinci kecil gemuk untuk berdesakan di bawahnya.

Seekor tikus tua berlari masuk dan keluar melewati tangga batu; Dia membawa kacang polong dan kacang panjang untuk keluarganya di hutan. Peter menanyakan jalan ke gerbang, tapi di mulutnya terdapat kacang besar sehingga tikus tua itu tidak bisa menjawab. Dia hanya menggelengkan kepalanya dan Peter mulai menangis.

Lalu dia mencoba mencari jalan keluar dengan melintasi kebun, tetapi dia justru semakin bingung. Kemudian, dia datang ke kolam tempat Mr. McGregor mengisi kaleng airnya. Seekor kucing putih sedang menatap ikan mas; dia duduk dengan tenang, tetapi kemudian ujung ekornya berkedut

seolah-olah hidup. Peter berpikir sebaiknya pergi tanpa berbicara dengannya; dia telah mendengar tentang kucing dari sepupunya, Benjamin Bunny kecil.

Dia kembali ke gudang, tetapi tiba-tiba dia mendengar suara gaduh. Peter bersembunyi di bawah semak-semak. Ketika merasa sudah aman dan tidak terjadi apa-apa, dia keluar dan naik ke atas gerobak dorong untuk mengintip. Hal pertama yang dia lihat adalah Mr. McGregor yang sedang mencangkul tanah berisi bawang. Dia membelakangi Peter, dan di seberangnya adalah pintu gerbang!

Peter turun dari gerobak dorong dengan perlahan dan mulai berlari secepat yang dia bisa di sepanjang jalan lurus di balik semak-semak hitam.

Mr. McGregor melihatnya di sudut, tetapi Peter tidak peduli. Dia menyelinap di bawah gerbang, dan akhirnya selamat. Kemudian dia keluar dari kebun dan pergi ke hutan.

Mr. McGregor menggantung jaket kecil dan sepatu, menjadikannya orang-orangan sawah untuk menakuti burung hitam.

Sedangkan Peter terus berlari tanpa sekalipun menoleh ke belakang sampai dia tiba di rumah pohon cemara besar.

Dia sangat lelah; dia menjatuhkan diri di atas pasir yang lembut di lantai lubang kelinci dan menutup matanya. Ibunya sibuk memasak; dia bertanya-tanya apa yang telah dia lakukan dengan pakaianya. Itu adalah pakaian kedua yang telah Peter hilangkan dalam dua minggu terakhir!

Peter jatuh sakit di sore harinya.

Ibunya menidurkannya dan membuatkannya teh *chamomile*. "Satu sendok makan untuk diminum sebelum tidur."

Tapi Flopsi, Mopsi, dan Ekor-Kapas diberi roti, susu, dan *blackberry* untuk makan malam.

WHEN PAPA SCOLDED ME

"Baby, come for breakfast. Your milk is getting cold," called *Bhaiya*⁶.

I quickly put on my slippers, picked up my favorite doll, Beeta, and rushed out into the verandah. It was a beautiful day. The morning air was most refreshing. "Ah, how lovely!" I said aloud, taking a deep breath. I ran across the verandah, with Beeta tucked under my arm. While I gulped down the milk, I heard Papa calling out to the driver.

"Papa is still here, *Bhaiya*. He hasn't gone to the clinic, today," I said overwhelmed with joy.

Being engrossed in a magazine, *Bhaiya* did not reply, but I could see Papa talking to someone in his room, which was opposite the dining hall facing the verandah.

"Papa! Papa! I don't have to go to school, it's a holiday. Do you have a holiday, too? Look, Beeta has got fever," I said, all in one breath.

"No, my dear child, I don't have a holiday today. You go and play while I talk to Mr. Singh. He is very ill. I'll ask the compounding to give your doll some medicine," Papa said lovingly.

⁶ Elder brother

It was quite unusual to find my father at home at that time. Normally he was in his clinic before I woke up. So I was very happy. My father wiped his spectacles with the kerchief as he listened to his patient carefully.

I was on the balcony when I heard, "Baby! Baby! Come here, see this." It was my brother from the verandah. He had spread himself on an easy chair and our dog, Tom, was dancing round on his hind legs. I burst out laughing.

"Papa will give medicine to Beeta," I said, showing off.

"And I'll ask Papa to give some medicine to his darling daughter, because. . . .because she laughs and laughs," said *Bhaiya*, tickling me and sending me into fits of laughter. Being the youngest child in the family I received everyone's attention and affection. Papa of course, was the most affectionate.

I ran from one end of the verandah to the other and then onto the balcony, staying close to Papa's room to attract his attention while I played. I swung on the curtain, thumped on the door, tapped on the table, pulled and pushed the chair. "Look, *Bhaiya*, what a variety of sounds they make," I said, pulling the chair, then leaping up and rapping on the door, clapping my hands, jumping all the while.

"Don't," pleaded *Bhaiya*, not taking his eyes off the book in his hand.

Racing back to the window of Papa's room, I saw him still busy with the patient. I loved to see him there before me, while I played. 'He must be liking it, too,' I thought, 'to see me play around in his room.'

I dragged a chair and climbed onto the table. This at last drew Papa's attention.

"Baby, be careful, you'll fall down," he said tenderly.

"Look, Papa, I am taller than everyone," I grinned from ear to ear making my eyes disappear. All one could see was a set of white teeth and chubby cheeks.

Both Mr. Singh and Papa smiled. Papa did not look convinced. So I said again raising my hands above my head. "Papa I'm a big girl, now."

He nodded with a smile and continued talking to the patient.

I touched all that I could reach with my hands till I got to the black switch. 'No, you should not touch it.' I was imagining what my mother would have said.

'If you touch it, you'll get hurt,' *Bhaiya* had told me once. This was a 'forbidden' article for me, but

how attractive it looked — black against the light blue wall. Unable to resist the temptation to touch it, I pressed the switch and the light came on. I immediately switched it off.

I was scared, I looked at Papa with large anxious eyes, but he was busy writing. He did not see me. I looked at Papa again and then at the switch which begged my hands to touch it again.

'I'll do it just once more, okay?' I said softly to myself. I repeated the mischief once more and was unable to stop myself from doing it again and again. I seemed to have disturbed Papa who was concentrating on the patient's problem. Without looking up from the book, he said in a serious voice, "Don't do that, you might get a shock."

The klick-klack of the switch and the glowing bulb fascinated me, "Baby, come here, let Papa do his work," called my brother.

I ignored everybody. This was the most fascinating game for me at the moment.

'How fantastic! I press — the light is on, I push — the light goes off', I muttered.

The patient, obviously, had some serious problem. My father sat with four books open in front of him. My running around had certainly disturbed him. Completely exasperated, he put

down his pen and spectacles and shouted at me, "You're not listening to me. GET DOWN FROM THERE!"

His loud voice broke my trance. I gaped at him wide-eyed. He fixed his gaze on me, expecting to be obeyed instantly. I was shocked at being scolded so loudly by him — scolded by Papa. Papa, a very soft spoken person, who was known never to raise his voice, had SHOUTED in anger at his darling daughter. I was very angry with him.

I jumped down from the table with a loud thud and raced up and down the balcony. My breath quickened, my face went red with anger, and my eyes felt hot with unshed tears. Throwing my hands about, I raced up and down wanting to destroy everything that came in my way.

Hearing the commotion *Bhaiya* came out. "What is it?" he asked. My fury found a ready victim and I ran towards him and pushed him. I felt like bursting into tears. I rushed and pulled at the curtain in Papa's room, which came down with the force. I saw Papa talking to the patient with his usual patience.

How unthoughtful of him! He is not a bit bothered about my being so angry with him. I was fuming all the more.

I went back into the room, stamping my feet noisily in anger. Standing close to Papa, I raged vehemently, "Why couldn't you say it softly? Why did you speak so loudly to me?"

The next moment I came out on the balcony and stood beside the money-plant pot. My eyes were now full of tears. I plucked a leaf and shredded it to pieces. The sound of a chair being pushed in Papa's room reached my ears and then I heard his footsteps coming closer to me. I tried to run away in annoyance, but Papa caught me. He pulled my face towards his and picked me up. Tears came rolling down my plump cheeks. He patted my head lovingly and wiped my tears.

"Oh, you big cat!" said Papa, ruffling my hair.

This affectionate gesture melted my wrath. A moment later I was once again happy playing round the house.

KETIKA PAPA MEMARAHIKU

“Sayang, ayo sarapan! Susunya sudah mulai dingin,” panggil *Bhaiya*⁷.

Aku memakai sandal dengan cepat, mengambil boneka kesayanganku, Beeta, dan bergegas keluar menuju beranda. Hari yang indah. Udara pagi selalu menyegarkan. “Ah, menyenangkan sekali!” kataku lantang sambil menarik nafas dalam-dalam. Aku berlari melintasi beranda, dengan Beeta yang terselip di bawah lenganku. Ketika aku meminum susu, aku mendengar Papa sedang menelepon sopir.

“Papa masih di sini, *Bhaiya*. Dia belum berangkat ke klinik hari ini,” kataku gembira.

Bhaiya tidak menjawab; dia asyik dengan majalahnya, tetapi aku dapat melihat Papa berbicara dengan seseorang di ruangannya, di balik ruang makan dan menghadap ke beranda.

“Papa! Papa! Aku tidak ke sekolah, hari ini libur. Apa Papa libur juga? Lihat, Beeta demam,” kataku dalam satu tarikan napas.

⁷ Panggilan kakak laki-laki yang lebih tua dalam Bahasa India

"Tidak, sayang. Papa tidak libur hari ini. Pergilah bermain sementara Papa akan berbicara dengan Mr. Singh. Dia sedang sakit parah. Papa akan meminta apoteker mengambilkan obat untuk bonekamu," kata Papa dengan penuh kasih sayang.

Tidak biasanya aku melihat Papa masih di rumah pada jam itu. Biasanya dia sudah di klinik sebelum aku bangun tidur. Jadi aku sangat senang. Papa membersihkan kacamatanya dengan saputangan sambil mendengar pasiennya dengan saksama.

Aku sedang berada di balkon ketika aku mendengar, "Sayang! Sayang! Kemari. Lihat ini." Itu adalah suara kakakku dari beranda. Dia sedang bersandar di kursi, dan anjing kami, Tom, berputar-putar di sekitar kakinya. Aku tertawa terbahak-bahak.

"Papa akan mengobati Beeta," kataku sambil memamerkan bonekaku.

"Aku akan meminta Papa mengobati putri tersayangnya juga, karena... karena dia terus tertawa dan tertawa," kata *Bhaiya* sambil menggelitikku dan membuatku tertawa. Sebagai anak paling kecil di keluarga ini, aku sangat diperhatikan dan disayangi semua orang. Tentu saja Papa yang paling menyayangiku.

Aku berlari dari ujung beranda yang satu ke ujung yang lain dan kemudian ke balkon, berdiri di dekat ruangan Papa untuk menarik perhatiannya ketika aku bermain. Aku mengayunkan tirai, mengetuk pintu dan meja, menarik dan mendorong kursi. "Dengar, Bhaiya, banyak sekali kan bunyinya," kataku, menarik kursi, lalu melompat dan mengetuk pintu, bertepuk tangan, dan melompat-lompat.

"Jangan," pinta Bhaiya, tanpa mengalihkan pandangannya dari buku di tangannya.

Kembali ke jendela ruangan Papa, aku melihat Papa masih sibuk dengan pasien. Aku senang melihat Papa ketika aku bermain. Papa juga pasti senang melihatku bermain-main di ruangannya, pikirku.

Aku menyeret kursi dan naik ke meja. Hal ini akhirnya menarik perhatian Papa. "Sayang, hati-hati, kamu bisa jatuh," katanya lembut.

"Lihat, Papa, aku lebih tinggi dari semua orang," aku tersenyum lebar sampai membuat mataku menghilang. Yang bisa dilihat hanyalah sederet gigi putih dan pipi yang tembem.

Mr. Singh dan Papa tersenyum. Papa terlihat khawatir. Jadi aku berkata lagi sambil mengangkat

tanganku di atas kepala. "Papa, aku sudah besar sekarang."

Papa mengangguk sambil tersenyum dan lanjut berbicara kepada pasien.

Aku menyentuh semua yang bisa kuraih dengan tanganku sampai aku tiba di sakelar hitam. "Jangan, kamu tidak boleh menyentuhnya." Aku membayangkan apa yang akan dikatakan Ibu.

"Jika kamu menyentuhnya, kamu akan terluka," *Bhaiya* pernah memberitahuku sekali. Ini adalah hal terlarang untukku, tapi benda ini terlihat menarik bagiku - warnanya hitam pada tembok yang berwarna biru muda. Tak tahan lagi, aku langsung memgangnya, aku menekan tombol dan lampu pun menyala. Aku langsung mematikannya.

Aku takut, mataku terbuka lebar melihat papa dengan cemas, tapi Papa sedang sibuk menulis. Dia tidak melihatku. Aku melihat Papa lagi, dan kemudian aku melihat tombol yang seakan-akan memintaku untuk menyentuhnya.

"Aku akan melakukannya sekali lagi, oke?" Aku berkata pelan pada diriku sendiri. Aku mengulangi kenakalanku dan itu membuatku tidak bisa berhenti melakukannya terus menerus. Sepertinya aku telah

mengganggu Papa yang sedang berkonsentrasi tentang masalah pasiennya. Tanpa melihat buku, dia berkata dengan suara yang serius, "Berhentilah melakukan itu. Kamu bisa tersetrum."

Bunyi klik-klak dari sakelar dan lampu yang menyala membuatku tergoda. "Sayang, kemari, Papa sedang bekerja," panggil kakaku.

Aku mengabaikan semua orang. Ini adalah permainan yang sangat menarik untukku.

Wow, menakjubkan! Tombol ditekan, lampunya menyala. Tombol didorong, lampunya mati, aku bergumam.

Pasien Papa pasti mempunyai masalah yang serius. Papa duduk dengan empat buku terbuka di depannya. Kehadiranku tentu saja mengganggunya. Sepertinya dia benar-benar jengkel, dia meletakkan pena dan kacamatanya, lalu berteriak padaku, "Kamu tidak mendengarkan Papa. TURUN DARI SANA!"

Suaranya yang keras mengagetkanku. Aku menatapnya dengan mata terbelalak. Dia menatapku, berharap aku mematuhi apa yang ia katakan. Aku terkejut karena ia begitu keras memarahiku, a-k-u d-i-m-a-r-a-h-i p-a-p-a. Papa

adalah orang yang lemah lembut, yang dikenal tidak pernah menaikkan suaranya, telah BERTERIAK marah kepada putri kesayangannya. Aku sangat marah padanya.

Aku melompat turun dari meja dengan bunyi keras dan berlari turun ke balkon dengan cepat. Nafasku bertambah cepat, wajahku memerah karena marah, dan mataku terasa panas dengan air mata yang tak tertahan. Aku berlari dari atas ke bawah, dan tanganku serasa ingin menghancurkan semua yang menghalangi jalanku.

Bhaiya keluar karena mendengar keributan. "Ada apa?" tanyanya. Aku marah dan berlari ke arahnya serta mendorongnya. Rasanya aku ingin menangis. Aku bergegas dan menarik tirai ruangan Papa yang diturunkan paksa. Aku melihat Papa berbicara dengan pasien dengan sabar seperti biasanya.

Betapa kejamnya Papa! Dia tidak peduli dengan keberadaanku yang sangat marah padanya. Aku benar-benar sangat kesal!

Aku kembali ke ruangan Papa dan berjalan dengan hentakan keras. Berdiri dekat dengan Papa, dengan keras aku bertanya, "Mengapa Papa tidak bisa berbicara dengan pelan? Kenapa Papa berbicara dengan keras padaku?"

Kemudian aku keluar ke balkon dan berdiri di samping pot sirih. Sekarang mataku dipenuhi air mata. Aku mencabut sehelai daun dan menyobek-nyobeknya sampai terbelah berkeping-keping. Suara dorongan kursi di ruangan Papa terdengar sampai ke telingaku. Lalu aku dengar langkah kakinya mendekatiku. Aku menghindarinya karena jengkel, namun Papa menarik wajahku ke arahnya dan mengangkatku, air mataku menetes di pipiku yang tembam. Dia mengusap kepalaiku dengan penuh kasih dan menghapus air mataku.

“Oh, anak manis!” kata Papa sambil mengacak-acak rambutku. Kasih sayang yang Papa berikan meruntuhkan kemarahanku. Beberapa saat kemudian, aku kembali bermain-main dengan riang.

RAPUNZEL

There were once a man and a woman who had long in vain wished for a child. At length the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire. These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen, which was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to an enchantress, who had great power and was dreaded by all the world. One day the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (rapunzel), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, and had the greatest desire to eat some. This desire increased every day, and as she knew that she could not get any of it, she quite pined away, and looked pale and miserable. Then her husband was alarmed, and asked, "What aileth thee, dear wife?" "Ah," she replied, "if I can't get some of the rampion, which is in the garden behind our house, to eat, I shall die." The man, who loved her, thought, "Sooner than let thy wife die, bring her some of the rampion thyself, let it cost thee what it will." In the twilight of the evening, he clambered down over the wall into the garden of the

enchantress, hastily clutched a handful of rampion, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it with much relish. She, however, liked it so much--so very much, that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening, therefore, he let himself down again; but when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the enchantress standing before him. "How canst thou dare," said she with angry look, "to descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? Thou shalt suffer for it!" "Ah," answered he, "let mercy take the place of justice, I only made up my mind to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not got some to eat." Then the enchantress allowed her anger to be softened, and said to him, "If the case be as thou sayest, I will allow thee to take away with thee as much rampion as thou wilt, only I make one condition, thou must give me the child which thy wife will bring into the world; it shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother." The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman was brought to bed, the enchantress appeared at

once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child beneath the sun. When she was twelve years old, the enchantress shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door, but quite at the top was a little window. When the enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath it and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair to me."

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress she unfastened her braided tresses, wound them round one of the hooks of the window above, and then the hair fell twenty ells down, and the enchantress climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the King's son rode through the forest and went by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound. The King's son wanted to climb

up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it. Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair."

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the enchantress climbed up to her. "If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I will for once try my fortune," said he, and the next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair."

Immediately the hair fell down and the King's son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her; but the King's son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred that it had let him have no rest, and he had been forced to see her. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and

handsome, she thought, "He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does;" and she said yes, and laid her hand in his. She said, "I will willingly go away with thee, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with thee a skein of silk every time that thou comest, and I will weave a ladder with it, and when that is ready I will descend, and thou wilt take me on thy horse." They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day. The enchantress remarked nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said to her, "Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up than the young King's son--he is with me in a moment." "Ah! thou wicked child," cried the enchantress "What do I hear thee say! I thought I had separated thee from all the world, and yet thou hast deceived me." In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day, however, that she cast out Rapunzel, the enchantress in the evening fastened the braids of hair which she had cut off, to the hook

of the window, and when the King's son came and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair,"

She let the hair down. The King's son ascended, but he did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the enchantress, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks. "Aha!" she cried mockingly, "Thou wouldest fetch thy dearest, but the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest; the cat has got it, and will scratch out thy eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to thee; thou wilt never see her more." The King's son was beside himself with pain, and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell, pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did nothing but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife. Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and when he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear

again, and he could see with them as before. He led her to his kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time afterwards, happy and contented.

RAPUNZEL

Dahulu kala ada sepasang suami-istri yang sejak lama mengharapkan kehadiran seorang anak. Sudah lama sang istri berharap agar Tuhan mengabulkan permintaannya. Mereka memiliki jendela kecil di belakang rumah, dan dari sana mereka bisa melihat kebun yang dipenuhi dengan bunga-bunga indah dan tanaman rempah. Akan tetapi, kebun itu dikelilingi oleh dinding yang tinggi, dan tidak ada yang berani masuk ke dalamnya karena kebun itu milik seorang penyihir wanita, yang berkekuatan hebat dan sangat ditakuti oleh dunia. Suatu hari sang istri berdiri di dekat jendela dan melihat ke arah kebun. Dia melihat hamparan kebun yang ditumbuhi dengan banyak selada berjenis rapunzel yang segar dan hijau, sehingga dia teramat sangat ingin mencicipinya.

Keinginannya bertambah setiap hari, dan dia tahu bahwa dirinya tidak bisa melakukannya, dia sangat menderita, tampak pucat dan menyedihkan. Suaminya cemas dan bertanya "Ada apa, istriku?" "Ah," istrinya menjawab, "jika aku tidak bisa mendapatkan beberapa selada yang ada di kebun belakang rumah kita untuk dimakan, aku akan mati." Suami yang mencintainya berpikir, "Daripada

membiarkan istriku menderita, lebih baik kuambilkan dia beberapa selada berapapun harga yang harus dibayar."

Pada sore hari menjelang malam, sang suami memanjat dinding kebun, mengambil segenggam selada dengan terburu-buru, dan menyerahkannya ke istrinya. Dia sesekali membuat salad dan memakannya dengan sangat nikmat. Namun, dia sangat menyukainya hingga esoknya dia menginginkan tiga kali lebih banyak dari sebelumnya. Ketika sang suami hendak beristirahat, ia memilih untuk turun lagi ke kebun. Pada malam yang gelap, ketika dia memanjat dinding, dia sangat takut karena si Penyihir telah berdiri di depannya. "Berani sekali kau," kata si Penyihir dengan tatapan marah, "masuk ke kebunku dan mencuri seladaku. Kau akan menderita karena itu!" Lalu laki-laki itu menjawab "Ampunilah aku. Aku terpaksa. Istriku melihat seladamu dari jendela, dan merasa sangat menginginkannya sehingga dia akan mati jika tidak memakannya."

Kemudian si Penyihir membiarkan amarahnya melunak, lalu berkata kepadanya, "Jika apa yang kau katakan benar, aku akan mengizinkanmu untuk mengambilnya sebanyak yang kau mau. Tapi, ada satu syarat; kau harus memberiku anak yang akan

dilahirkan istrimu; aku akan merawatnya dengan baik seperti ibunya sendiri.” Pria yang terancam itu menyetujuinya, dan ketika istrinya melahirkan, si Penyihir muncul, memberi nama anak itu Rapunzel, dan membawanya pergi bersamanya.

Rapunzel tumbuh menjadi anak tercantik di dunia. Ketika dia berumur dua belas tahun, si Penyihir mengurungnya di menara yang ada di hutan dan tidak memiliki tangga atau pintu, hanya ada sebuah jendela kecil di atas. Ketika Penyihir ingin masuk, dia berdiri di bawah jendela dan berteriak.

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Turunkan rambutmu untukku.”

Rapunzel memiliki rambut panjang yang indah, halus seperti benang emas, dan ketika si Penyihir memanggilnya, dia melepaskan rambutnya yang dikepang, melilitkannya pada salah satu kait jendela, dan menjatuhkannya dua puluh hasta ke bawah, dan Penyihir memanjatnya untuk naik ke atas.

Beberapa tahun kemudian, masuklah seorang pangeran ke hutan dan pergi ke menara. Terdengar sebuah lagu yang begitu merdu sehingga dia terdiam dan mendengarkannya. Lagu itu berasal dari suara Rapunzel, yang dalam kesendirianya menghabiskan waktu dengan membiarkan suara

merdunya menggema. Pangeran ingin naik untuk menemuinya, dan mencari pintu dari menara itu, tetapi dia tidak dapat menemukannya. Pangeran pun pulang, tetapi nyanyian Rapunzel menyentuh hatinya sehingga setiap hari dia pergi ke hutan dan mendengarkan suara merdu Rapunzel.

Suatu ketika dia berdiri di belakang pohon, dia melihat seorang wanita Penyihir datang ke sana, dan dia mendengar bagaimana dia berteriak.

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Turunkan rambutmu.”

Kemudian Rapunzel menurunkan rambutnya yang dikepang, dan si Penyihir itu naik ke atas menggunakan rambut Rapunzel. “Jika itu adalah satu-satunya cara untuk sampai ke atas, aku akan mencobanya nanti,” ujarnya. Keesokan harinya ketika hari mulai gelap, dia pergi ke menara dan berteriak.

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Turunkan rambutmu.”

Dengan segera rambut itu turun dan pangeran naik ke menara.

Pada awalnya Rapunzel sangat ketakutan ketika seorang pria yang belum pernah dia lihat sebelumnya mendaratanginya, tetapi pangeran mulai berbicara kepadanya dengan halus seperti seorang

teman, dan memberitahukan bahwa hatinya tersentuh sampai dia tidak dapat tidur dengan nyenyak, dan merasa harus menemui Rapunzel. Rapunzel sudah tidak takut lagi, dan pangeran pun melamarnya. Rapunzel memandangi pangeran yang muda dan tampan itu dan berpikir, "dia akan lebih mencintaiku daripada ibu angkatku," dan Rapunzel mengiyakan sang Pangeran, lalu memegang tangannya. Rapunzel berkata, "aku akan pergi denganmu, tapi aku tidak tahu bagaimana caranya untuk turun. Bawalah seikat sutera setiap kali kau datang, dan aku akan meggabungkannya dengan tangga, dan ketika sudah siap aku akan turun, dan kita akan lari dengan kudamu." Mereka sepakat bahwa pangeran akan datang ke menara setiap malam, karena si Penyihir tua pasti datang di siang hari. Penyihir itu tidak mengetahui apapun tentang ini, sampai suatu saat, Rapunzel berkata kepadanya, "beritahu aku, Ibu, mengapa saat aku menarikmu naik, Ibu lebih berat dibandingkan sang Pangeran?" "Ah! Anak nakal," teriak penyihir itu. "Apa yang kau katakan? Kupikir aku sudah memisahkanmu dari dunia luar, namun kau telah mengelabuiku." Dengan murka si Penyihir menggenggam rambut Rapunzel yang indah, melilitkannya di tangan kirinya, mengambil gunting dengan tangan

kanannya, lalu *krek, krek*, dia memotong rambut Rapunzel dan rambut itu jatuh ke lantai. Tanpa ampun dia membawa Rapunzel yang tak berdaya ke sebuah gurun, di mana dia harus hidup dalam kesedihan dan kesengsaraan.

Di hari yang sama, setelah mengusir Rapunzel, pada malam hari si Penyihir mengikat potongan rambut Rapunzel ke jendela, kemudian sang Pangeran datang dan berkata:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,

Ulurkan rambutmu,"

Si Penyihir lalu mengulurkan rambutnya. Sang Pangeran pun naik, tapi dia tidak menemukan Rapunzel disana, dia hanya melihat si Penyihir yang menatapnya jahat.

"Aha!" ejek si Penyihir, "kau mau bertemu dengan wanita yang sangat kau cintai, tapi sayangnya burung yang indah itu sudah tak ada lagi di sarangnya. Seekor kucing telah membawanya pergi, dan kucing itu pun akan mencakar matamu sehingga kau tidak bisa lagi bertemu dengan Rapunzel selamanya."

Sang Pangeran pun merasa putus asa, dan melompat turun dari menara untuk menyelamatkan diri. Tapi saat dia turun, ada duri yang menancap di matanya. Lalu dia berjalan dalam keadaan buta

menyusuri hutan, hanya memakan akar tumbuhan dan buah-buahan, dan tidak melakukan apapun kecuali menangisi Rapunzel.

Sang Pangeran berjalan tak tahu arah dan menderita selama beberapa tahun, dan pada suatu saat, tibalah dia di sebuah padang pasir di mana Rapunzel berada. Saat itu, sang Pangeran mendengar suara nyanyian yang sudah tak asing lagi di telinganya, dan dia pun berjalan menuju ke arah suara itu. Ketika sang Pangeran mendekat, Rapunzel yang melihatnya langsung mengenalinya, memeluknya, lalu menangis. Dua bulir air matanya turun membasahi mata sang Pangeran yang buta, dan seketika itu juga, sang Pangeran bisa melihat dengan jelas seperti sediakala. Sang Pangeran pun membawa Rapunzel ke kerajaannya di mana mereka tinggal dan hidup bahagia selamanya.

AT THE PARTY

"I won't, I won't, I won't. He's a greedy glutton and I won't take him to the party," said Leela *didi*⁸ stamping her feet as she stormed out of the room. But she didn't forget to hit me hard on the head with her knuckles when she swept past me.

I screamed and began to cry. *Amma*⁹ came out of the kitchen.

"Leela, come here!" she shouted. Leela *didi* didn't stop. "Did you hear me? Come back!" *Amma* commanded in a louder voice.

Leela didi turned unwillingly and slowly walked towards *Amma*. I stopped wailing and watched them anxiously. *Amma* started scolding Leela- *didi*, but she kept denying she had done anything. She argued, she pleaded, but it didn't work. *Amma* gave her an ultimatum. "Leela," she said sternly, "either you take Sudhir to the party or you too don't go."

Leela *didi* agreed reluctantly, "All right, but if he behaves like a greedy worm, I'll never, never take him with me. No, never again in my life."

I was happy I had won. I was about to smile when *Amma* turned her angry gaze on me.

⁸ Elder sister

⁹ Mother

"And you, mind you, if you don't behave properly I'll give you a nice thrashing, understand?" I just lowered my eyes and nodded. "You will not touch any cakes or biscuits or chocolates without my permission! Promise?" Leela *didi* wanted to be absolutely sure I'd behave. I hesitated.

"Promise?" *Didi* asked again.

I knew she was trying to trap me. "And. . . and supposing you don't permit me at all?" I asked.

"Oh, I will."

"But suppose you don't then?" I persisted.

"I will, stupid," Leela *didi* was getting impatient.

"But supposing you aren't near me or you are talking to someone, then?"

"Then?.... then you just remember that whenever someone offers you something, you mustn't grab a handful. You should say 'no thank you' at least twice or thrice, understand?"

I was still doubtful, but I promised.

"Come on, let's get you ready and dressed for the party,' *Didi* said and dragged me away. She pulled me and pushed me and deliberately held my arm so tight that it hurt. She pushed and pinched even when she helped me put on my shirt and shoes. I suffered all this in silence. But when she pressed both my

cheeks with her left hand and ran the comb hard through my hair, it became unbearable and I let out a loud whine.

"Do you want to come with me or not?" she threatened and asked me to shut up. At last after dabbing a little powder over my face, she finished.

When we left the house, she once again made me promise I would behave and would not take anything before refusing it three times. She nagged all the way and stopped only when we entered the nicely decorated hall where the party was being held. There she met her friend Shyama and immediately started telling her a lengthy secret. I knew it was about me because every now and then, they kept looking at me.

After a few minutes Shyamadidi came to me and whispered in my ear, "Sudhir, remember your promise and behave yourself, okay?"

They made me sit on a chair and vanished into the crowd. A lot of boys and girls had gathered now. They were laughing and talking. All round, there were balloons and streamers. I alone was unhappy. For I was supposed to sit quietly in a corner.

At one end of the room was a large table with all the eatables arranged nicely on it. In the centre

was a huge cake. It had pretty pink marzipan flowers on the icing and plenty of small silver sugar beads all round. A single red candle stood in the centre waiting to be lit. It was beautiful. I kept gazing at it and soon my mouth started watering. Then, suddenly, everybody was getting ready to watch the cutting of the cake.

It was wonderful. First there was one cut. Then a whole piece was sliced off, then another and another, as they were quickly passed round. Soon a girl in a green *sari*¹⁰ held a plate piled high with slices of cake before me. I looked up. Standing beside her was Shyama *didi* who was glaring at me. I was uneasy. I remembered the promise. I had to behave. I had to be a good boy! I looked round for Leela *didi*. She was nowhere to be seen. "Yes, have some cake," the girl in green said sweetly. I gazed at the slices of cake and my mouth watered, but. . . .but I must refuse three times. Yet, if I kept refusing and the girl went away, what then? An idea flashed through my mind and I blurted out in one breath, "No, no, no." Then I grabbed the biggest slice of cake and started munching.

Standing close to me Shyama *didi* burst out laughing. The girl in the green *sari* too began to

¹⁰ Traditional cloth worn by Hindu women

laugh, and I helped myself to another slice.

Taking a big bite, I gaped at them. Then I spotted Leela *didi* coming towards me and my heart sank. She gave me a dirty look. I overheard Shyama *didi* telling her what I had done, and she too burst out laughing. So, I knew I was safe. The girl in the green *sari* offered me some more cake and I gladly took yet another slice.

DI PESTA

“Aku tidak mau, aku tidak mau, aku tidak mau. Dia rakus dan juga serakah, aku tidak mau mengajaknya ke pesta,” kata Kak Leela (kakak perempuanku) yang menghentakkan kakinya saat keluar dari kamar. Tapi dia tidak lupa memukul keras kepalaku dengan tangannya ketika dia lewat di depanku.

Aku berteriak dan mulai menangis. Amma¹¹ keluar dari dapur.

“Leela, kemari!” teriak Amma. Kak Leela tidak berhenti. “Kamu tidak dengar? Kembali!” perintah Amma dengan suara yang lebih keras.

Kak Leela berbalik dan berjalan perlahan menuju Amma. Aku berhenti meratap dan menyaksikan mereka dengan cemas. Amma mulai memarahi Kak Leela, tetapi dia terus menyangkal telah membuat adiknya menangis. Dia berdebat dan memohon, tapi tidak berhasil. Amma memberi peringatan. “Leela,” katanya tegas, “ajak Sudhir ke pesta atau kamu tidak boleh pergi.”

¹¹ Ibu (dalam Bahasa India)

Kak Leela menganggukkan kepala dengan enggan. "Baiklah, tapi kalau sampai dia rakus, aku tidak akan pernah lagi mengajaknya ke pesta. Selamanya."

Aku senang karena aku menang. Aku baru saja mau tersenyum ketika Amma mengalihkan tatapan marahnya padaku.

"Dan kamu, ingat, jika kamu bertingkah buruk, aku akan memukulmu, mengerti?" Aku menundukkan kepala dan mengangguk. "Kamu tidak akan menyentuh kue atau biskuit atau cokelat tanpa seizinku! Janji?" Kak Leela memastikanku untuk berperilaku baik. Aku ragu-ragu.

"Janji?" Kak Leela bertanya lagi.

Aku tahu dia sedang berusaha menjebakku. "Jika... Bagaimana jika seandainya kamu mengizinkanku nanti?" tanyaku.

"Oh, tentu saja aku tidak akan mengizinkan."

"Tapi jika seandainya?" aku bersikeras.

"Aku tetap tidak akan mengizinkanmu," Kak Leela mulai tidak sabar.

"Tapi bagaimana jika kamu sedang tidak di

dekatku atau kamu sedang berbicara dengan orang lain?”

“Kamu harus ingat bahwa ketika seseorang menawarkan sesuatu padamu, kamu tidak boleh mengambil sedikitpun. Kamu harus mengatakan ‘tidak, terima kasih’ dua atau tiga kali, mengerti?”

Aku masih ragu, tapi aku berjanji.

“Ayo, bersiap dan berdandan untuk pesta,” kata Kak Leela sambil menyeretku pergi. Dia menarikku, mendorongku dan dengan sengaja memegang lenganku begitu erat hingga terasa sakit. Dia mendorong dan bahkan mencubitku ketika membantuku mengenakan baju dan sepatu. Aku menderita dan hanya bisa diam. Tapi ketika dia menekan kedua pipiku dengan tangan kirinya dan menyisir rambutku dengan kasar, aku sudah tidak tahan lagi sehingga aku merengek.

“Kamu mau ikut atau tidak?” dia mengancam dan menyuruhku diam. Akhirnya setelah menyapukan sedikit bedak ke wajahku, dia selesai mendandaniku.

Ketika kami meninggalkan rumah, dia membuatku berjanji sekali lagi bahwa aku harus berperilaku sopan dan tidak akan mengambil apapun sebelum menolaknya sebanyak tiga kali. Dia

mengoceh sepanjang jalan dan baru berhenti ketika kami memasuki aula yang dihias dengan indah, tempat di mana pesta itu diadakan. Di sana dia bertemu dengan temannya, Shyama dan mulai menceritakan rahasia panjangnya. Aku tahu mereka sedang membicarakanku karena sekali-kali mereka menatapku.

Setelah beberapa menit, Kak Shyama mendatangiku dan berbisik di telingaku, "Sudhir, ingat janjimu dan bersikaplah dengan sopan, oke?"

Mereka menyuruhku duduk di kursi dan menghilang di kerumunan. Banyak anak laki-laki dan perempuan berkumpul. Mereka tertawa dan mengobrol. Di sekitar ada banyak balon dan pita. Aku sendiri yang tidak bahagia. Karena aku harus duduk dengan tenang di sudut aula.

Di salah satu sudut ruangan ada meja besar dengan banyak makanan yang disusun dengan rapi di atasnya. Di bagian tengah meja itu ada kue besar. Ada juga bunga permen marzipan merah muda yang cantik dilapisi gula dan banyak manik-manik gula berwarna perak.

Sebuah lilin merah berdiri di tengahnya dan menunggu untuk dinyalakan. Begitu cantik. Aku

terus menatapnya dan tak lama air liurku menetes. Kemudian, tiba-tiba semua orang bersiap untuk menyaksikan sesi pemotongan kue. Mengagumkan. Pertama, satu iris. Kemudian seluruh bagian lain diiris, lalu yang lain dan lainnya, dan dengan cepat mereka semua berkumpul. Tak lama datang seorang gadis yang mengenakan kain sari berwarna hijau memegang piring yang ditumpuk tinggi dengan irisan kue di depanku. Aku mengangkat kepala. Ia berdiri bersama Kak Shyama yang sedang menatapkku. Aku merasa tidak nyaman. Aku ingat janji itu. Aku harus sopan. Aku harus menjadi anak baik!

Aku mencari Kak Leela. Aku tidak melihatnya di manapun. "Makanlah kuenya," gadis berbaju hijau itu berkata dengan manis padaku. Aku menatap irisan-irisan kue itu dan air liurku menetes, tapi... tapi aku harus menolaknya tiga kali. Tapi, jika aku terus menolak dan gadis ini pergi, bagaimana? Sebuah ide terlintas di pikiranku dan membuatku berkata dalam satu napas, "tidak, tidak, tidak." Kemudian aku ambil irisan kue yang paling besar dan mulai mengunyahnya.

Kak Shyama yang berdiri di sampingku tertawa terbahak-bahak. Si gadis berbaju hijau itu pun ikut

tertawa dan aku menenangkan diriku dengan irisan kue yang lain. Di depan mereka, aku membuka mulutku lebar-lebar saat mengambil gigitan yang besar. Kemudian aku melihat Kak Leela datang ke arahku dan aku kecewa. Ia menatapku sinis. Aku mendengar Kak Shyama memberitahu apa yang telah kulakukan dan ia juga tertawa terbahak-bahak. Syukurlah ternyata aku aman.

Si gadis dengan gaun hijau itu menawariku beberapa kue dan dengan senang hati aku mengambil sepotong lagi.

A STORY OF ROBIN HOOD

In the rude days of King Richard and King John there were many great woods in England. The most famous of these was Sherwood forest, where the king often went to hunt deer. In this forest there lived a band of daring men called out-laws.

They had done something that was against the laws of the land, and had been forced to hide themselves in the woods to save their lives. There they spent their time in roaming about among the trees, in hunting the king's deer, and in robbing rich travelers that came that way.

There were nearly a hundred of these outlaws, and their leader was a bold fellow called Robin Hood. They were dressed in suits of green, and armed with bows and arrows; and sometimes they carried long wooden lances and broad-swords, which they knew how to handle well. When-ever they had taken anything, it was brought and laid at the feet of Robin Hood, whom they called their king. He then divided it fairly among them, giving to each man his just share.

Robin never allowed his men to harm anybody but the rich men who lived in great houses and did no work. He was always kind to the poor, and he often sent help to them; and for that reason the common people looked upon him as their friend.

Long after he was dead, men liked to talk about his deeds. Some praised him, and some blamed him. He was, indeed, a rude, lawless fellow; but at that time, people did not think of right and wrong as they do now.

A great many songs were made up about Robin Hood, and these songs were sung in the cottages and huts all over the land for hundreds of years after-ward.

Here is a little story that is told in one of those songs:--

Robin Hood was standing one day under a green tree by the road-side. While he was listening to the birds among the leaves, he saw a young man passing by. This young man was dressed in a fine suit of bright red cloth; and, as he tripped gayly along the road, he seemed to be as happy as the day.

"I will not trouble him," said Robin Hood, "for I think he is on his way to his wedding."

The next day Robin stood in the same place. He had not been there long when he saw the same young man coming down the road. But he did not seem to be so happy this time. He had left his scarlet coat at home, and at every step he sighed and groaned.

"Ah the sad day! the sad day!" he kept saying to himself.

Then Robin Hood stepped out from under the tree, and said,--

"I say, young man! Have you any money to spare for my merry men and me?"

"I have nothing at all," said the young man, "but five shillings and a ring."

"A gold ring?" asked Robin.

"Yes?" said the young man, "it is a gold ring. Here it is."

"Ah, I see!" said Robin: "it is a wedding ring."

"I have kept it these seven years," said the young man; "I have kept it to give to my bride on our wedding day. We were going to be married yesterday. But her father has promised her to a rich old man whom she never saw. And now my heart is broken."

"What is your name?" asked Robin.

"My name is Allin-a-Dale," said the young man.

"What will you give me, in gold or fee," said Robin, "if I will help you win your bride again in spite of the rich old man to whom she has been promised?"

"I have no money," said Allin, "but I will promise to be your servant."

"How many miles is it to the place where the maiden lives?" asked Robin.

"It is not far," said Allin. "But she is to be married this very day, and the church is five miles away."

Then Robin made haste to dress himself as a harper; and in the after-noon he stood in the door of the church.

"Who are you?" said the bishop, "and what are you doing here?"

"I am a bold harper," said Robin, "the best in the north country."

"I am glad you have come," said the bishop kindly. "There is no music that I like so well as that of the harp. Come in, and play for us."

"I will go in," said Robin Hood; "but I will not give you any music until I see the bride and bridegroom."

Just then an old man came in. He was dressed in rich clothing, but was bent with age, and was feeble and gray. By his side walked a fair young girl. Her cheeks were very pale, and her eyes were full of tears.

"This is no match," said Robin. "Let the bride choose for herself."

Then he put his horn to his lips, and blew three times. The very next minute, four and twenty men, all dressed in green, and carrying long bows in their hands, came running across the fields. And as they marched into the church, all in a row, the fore-most among them was Allin-a-Dale.

"Now whom do you choose?" said Robin to the maiden.

"I choose Allin-a-Dale," she said, blushing.

"And Allin-a-Dale you shall have," said Robin; "and he that takes you from Allin-a-Dale shall find that he has Robin Hood to deal with."

And so the fair maiden and Allin-a-Dale were married then and there, and the rich old man went home in a great rage.

KISAH ROBIN HOOD

Pada zaman dahulu ketika Raja Richard dan Raja John yang kejam berkuasa, terdapat banyak hutan rimba di Inggris. Salah satu yang paling terkenal adalah hutan Sherwood, tempat Raja sering berburu rusa. Di hutan ini tinggallah sekelompok orang pemberani yang disebut sebagai Para Penjahat.

Mereka telah melakukan perbuatan yang melawan hukum kerajaan dan terpaksa bersembunyi agar terbebas dari hukuman. Di sana mereka menghabiskan waktu dengan menjelajahi hutan, berburu rusa milik Raja, dan merampok orang-orang kaya yang melewati hutan.

Jumlah mereka sekitar seratus orang dan dipimpin oleh seorang pemberani yang dikenal dengan nama Robin Hood. Mereka berpakaian serba hijau dan bersenjata busur panah; terkadang membawa tombak kayu dan pedang besar, yang tentu saja mereka mahir menggunakananya. Kapanpun mereka mencuri harta, mereka meletakannya di bawah kaki Robin Hood, yang mereka anggap sebagai raja mereka. Robin kemudian membagikan harta tersebut secara merata kepada semua anggota kelompoknya.

Robin tidak pernah mengizinkan kelompoknya melukai orang lain, kecuali orang kaya yang tidak bekerja dan tinggal di rumah mewah. Dia selalu baik terhadap orang-orang miskin dan sering membantu mereka. Oleh karena itu, mereka sering menganggap Robin sebagai teman.

Lama setelah Robin meninggal, banyak orang membicarakan perbuatannya di masa lalu. Sebagian orang memujinya, dan sebagian lain menyalahkannya. Robin merupakan orang yang kasar dan berandalan; namun, pada zaman dulu orang-orang tidak memikirkan tentang yang benar dan salah seperti saat ini.

Banyak lagu menarik diciptakan untuk mengenang Robin Hood, dan lagu-lagu tersebut dinyanyikan hampir di seluruh negeri beratus-ratus tahun setelahnya.

Ini adalah sebuah kisah kecil yang diceritakan oleh salah satu lagu tersebut:

Suatu hari, Robin Hood sedang berteduh di bawah pohon yang rindang di sisi jalan. Ketika dia sedang mendengarkan suara burung-burung di antara dedaunan di atas pohon, dia melihat seorang pemuda lewat. Pemuda tersebut mengenakan

setelan merah, dan walaupun sempat tersandung dia tetap terlihat ceria.

“Aku tidak akan mengganggunya,” kata Robin Hood, “karena kurasa dia sedang dalam perjalanan ke acara pernikahannya.”

Keesokan harinya Robin berada di tempat yang sama. Dia belum lama berdiri ketika dia melihat pemuda yang sama kembali melintas. Tapi sepertinya dia tidak terlalu bahagia kali ini. Dia tidak memakai mantel merahnya, dan di setiap langkahnya dia menghela napas sambil mengeluh.

“Ah, hari yang menyedihkan! Hari yang menyedihkan!” Dia terus berkata pada dirinya sendiri.

Kemudian Robin Hood melangkah keluar dari balik pohon dan berkata-

“Hai, anak muda! Apa kau punya uang yang bisa kau berikan untukku dan orang-orangku?”

“Aku tidak punya apa-apa, selain lima shilling¹² dan sebuah cincin,” kata pemuda itu.

“Cincin emas?” tanya Robin Hood.

¹² Mata uang negara Inggris pada zaman dulu.

"Iya," kata pemuda itu, "ini adalah cincin emas, ambillah!"

"Ah, aku tahu!" kata Robin; "Itu adalah cincin pernikahan."

"Aku sudah menyimpannya selama tujuh tahun," kata pemuda itu; "Aku menyimpannya untuk kuberikan kepada mempelai perempuanku di hari pernikahan kami. Seharusnya kami menikah kemarin. Tapi ayahnya telah menjanjikannya pada lelaki tua kaya raya yang tidak pernah dia jumpai sebelumnya. Dan sekarang hatiku hancur."

"Siapa namamu?" tanya Robin.

"Namaku Allin-a-Dale," Jawab si pemuda.

"Apa yang akan kau berikan padaku, emas atau imbalan lainnya," kata Robin, "jika aku dapat membantumu mendapatkan kembali pengantinmu meskipun telah dijodohkan dengan lelaki kaya raya itu?"

"Aku tidak punya uang," kata Allin, "tapi aku berjanji akan menjadi pelayanmu."

"Berapa jauh lagi untuk sampai di tempat tinggal gadis itu?" tanya Robin.

"Tidak jauh," kata Allin. "Tetapi dia akan menikah hari ini di gereja yang berjarak lima mil jauhnya."

Kemudian Robin buru-buru mempersiapkan diri sebagai pemain musik Harpa; dan siang harinya dia sudah berdiri di pintu gereja.

"Siapa kau?" kata uskup, "dan apa yang kau lakukan di sini?"

"Aku pemain harpa handal," kata Robin, "dan terbaik di negara utara."

"Aku senang kau telah datang," kata uskup ramah. "Tidak ada musik yang lebih kusuka selain harpa. Masuklah, mainkan untuk kami."

"Baiklah," kata Robin Hood, "tapi aku tidak akan memainkan musik sampai aku melihat mempelai pria dan wanita."

Pada saat itu seorang lelaki tua masuk. Dia mengenakan pakaian yang mewah, tetapi ia terlihat sudah keriput, lemah dan beruban karena usia. Seorang gadis muda yang cantik berjalan ke arahnya. Wajahnya sangat pucat dan matanya penuh dengan air mata.

“Ini tidak cocok” kata Robin. “Biarkan pengantin wanita memilih pasangannya sendiri.”

Kemudian, dia meniup terompet yang terbuat dari tanduk sebanyak tiga kali. Beberapa menit kemudian, terdapat dua puluh empat orang yang berpakaian serba hijau membawa busur panjang di tangan mereka, dan berlari melintasi halaman. Kemudian mereka semua berbaris dan berjalan menuju ke dalam gereja, dan yang berada paling depan adalah Allin-a-Dale.

“Sekarang, siapa yang kau pilih?” Kata Robin pada gadis itu.

“Aku memilih Allin-a-Dale,” katanya tersipu malu.

“Maka Allin-a-Dale menjadi milikmu,” kata Robin; “Dan siapa pun yang menjauhkanmu dari Allin-a-Dale akan berurusan dengan Robin Hood.”

Akhirnya si gadis yang cantik dan Allin-a-Dale menikah, sedangkan lelaki tua kaya raya itu pulang ke rumah dengan penuh amarah.

Dengan demikian, akhir dari pernikahan yang bahagia ini, pengantin wanita tampak seperti seorang ratu: maka mereka kembali ke Hutan

rindang nan cerah, di antara daun-daun yang begitu hijau.

IN A GUAVA ORCHARD

Safdar, Ajay and I dashed out of the classroom as the bell rang. It was the lunch break, and we had a whole hour to play. Safdar was the tallest, also the strongest amongst us. He was our leader. Ajay and I followed him meekly, like lambs!

We frisked about cheerfully over a path that led to a guava orchard. There was a mud wall round it. Safdar who was in high spirits leaped over it and bragged, "Look at the guavas! Come on, kids. Let's have a feast."

Ajay also leaped over the wall, saying, "What fun. How lovely!"

I smacked my Hps at the sight of the luscious green guavas in the orchard. I was however, afraid that we might be caught by the watchman. But Safdar's presence emboldened me.

I too jumped over the wall. There were trees and trees—all bursting with ripe and unripe guavas. We roamed freely. Safdar was greedily eating ripe guavas, while Ajay and I leaped like monkeys and devoured the unripe ones. I preferred raw guavas and I could never have enough. I stuffed my pockets.

I wanted to carry them as a souvenir of our daring expedition to the orchard. Wouldn't my classmates gape at them, eyes bulging!

Suddenly, I heard Safdar's cry, "Ajay! Lokesh! Run, run! The watchman is coming." Perched on top of a branch, I saw the tall, sinister-looking figure of the watchman approaching. He was waving a staff in his hand. Safdar and Ajay were already on the ground, and had started running. The watchman waved his staff and ran after them, shouting, "Thieves! Thieves! See they don't escape." I lost no time; I jumped down from the tree and took to my heels. Safdar and Ajay were far ahead and I ran faster. As I leapt over ditches and boulders in the orchard, the guavas began to fall out of my pockets.

The watchman chased us furiously. After what seemed ages, the mud wall came into view. Safdar, who was the first to reach it took a flying leap over it. Ajay, close behind, managed to roll over.

Safdar kept shouting, "Run, Lokesh, run! The fellow is closing in!"

I put in every ounce of energy I had and ran like mad. The watchman came charging like a bull, bellowing curses. A host of street urchins had by then appeared from nowhere and joined the chase.

"Now jump," cried Safdar.

I took a mighty leap and landed on top of the wall. The last guava in my pocket rolled out.

I felt miserably cheated. I didn't want to lose it at any cost. I jumped back into the orchard and stooped to pick it up. It was rather dark, but I managed to find the lost guava. Triumphantly I held it in my hand and leapt over the wall. Beyond it lay the school compound and my friends.

I slipped and fell.

The looming figure of the watchman drew closer.

Safdar and Ajay were screaming and urging me not to waste time. As I scrambled up, the watchman's steely fingers gripped me. I struggled to shake him off, but the burly man picked me up, flung me over his shoulder and walked briskly back into the orchard.

Soon afterwards, he deposited me before a man seated on a cot.

"*Malik*¹³", he addressed him, wiping perspiration off his forehead, "this fellow is the leader of a gang of school children. He regularly brings a number of

¹³ master

them to steal our guavas. They destroy more than they eat."

The '*malik*' looked calm but formidable. I felt he would thrash me. I was scared, also ashamed that I had been caught red-handed.

He stared hard at me. I stood rooted to the ground, expecting a tight slap.

He got up from the cot and stood before me. He looked tall as a palm tree!

"What's your name?" he asked me. "Where do you live?"

"I'm Lokesh. I study in the school over there. I'm the Principal's son. "You like guavas?"

I nodded.

"Did you come alone?"

I pointed to Safdar and Ajay, who were still peeping over the mud wall.

The '*malik*' asked the watchman to get a basket of guavas.

"He's not a thief," he told him. "He is a decent kid." He waved to my friends and signalled them to come in.

Safdar and Ajay wouldn't budge an inch. They stayed where they were.

"Come on Lokesh, ask them to come in," he urged me.

I was rather dazed and undecided. The man smiled.

"Call them in, child. Don't be frightened."

I was not afraid any more.

"Come over, Safdar. Come over, Ajay," I shout-ed. They soon joined me, looking sheepish and guilty.

We could hardly believe our eye when the watchman came back with a basket of guavas. "Go ahead and eat as many as you want," said the *malik*.

We just stood looking at him. We had expected him to treat us like thieves.

"You're like my children," his gentle voice was soothing. This is your garden. You don't have to enter it like thieves. You go to the watchman. He'll help you."

Gratefully, we accepted the guavas he offer-ed. Thanking him profusely we took leave of him. There was a smile on his face as he bade us good-bye. "Remember children, do not do any- thing that makes

you feel guilty. You must always be proud of what you do."

We left the orchard. I was limping a bit but my pockets were bulging with guavas.

His words are still fresh in my mind.

DI KEBUN JAMBU

Safdar, Ajay, dan Aku berlari keluar kelas saat bel istirahat berbunyi. Waktu itu istirahat makan siang, dan kami punya waktu satu jam untuk bermain. Safdar adalah anak yang paling tinggi dan kuat di antara kami. Dia adalah pemimpin kami. Ajay dan aku patuh padanya seperti domba!

Kami mengobrol dengan riang sepanjang jalan menuju sebuah kebun jambu biji. Kebun itu dikelilingi pagar. Safdar dengan semangat melompati pagar itu dan menoleh, "Lihat jambu-jambu itu! Ayo kita berpesta."

Ajay pun ikut melompat ke pagar itu, dan berkata, "Wah, enak sekali!"

Aku melihat warna jambu yang hijau dan lezat di kebun. Tapi aku sedikit cemas, kami bisa saja tertangkap oleh penjaga kebun ini. Tapi karena ada Safdar, aku jadi tidak takut lagi.

Aku akhirnya melompati pagar. Ada banyak pohon jambu, semua berbuah; ada yang matang dan ada yang belum matang. Kami berkeliaran dengan bebas. Dengan rakusnya Safdar memakan jambu

yang matang, sedangkan aku dan Ajay masih memanjat pohon seperti monyet. Jambu yang kupetik kebanyakan belum matang dan aku terus memetik yang banyak. Aku menaruhnya di saku celana. Aku ingin membawakan teman-temanku oleh-oleh hasil kenakalan kami pergi ke kebun siang ini. Pasti mereka kaget dan melototi kami nanti!

Tiba-tiba aku mendengar teriakan Safdar, "Ajay! Lokesh!

"Ajay! Lokesh! Ayo lari! Lari! Penjaganya datang."

Dari atas pohon aku bisa melihat sosok yang tinggi dan tampak menyeramkan datang. Dia menggoyang-goyangkan tongkat yang ada di tangannya. Safdar dan Ajay yang sudah lompat ke bawah langsung lari.

Sambil menggoyangkan tongkatnya, penjaga kebun mulai berlari mengejar mereka sambil berteriak,

"Pencuri! Pencuri! Jangan kabur."

Aku sudah tidak punya waktu, aku bergegas loncat dari pohon dan mengambil sepatuku. Safdar dan Ajay sudah jauh di depan, aku berusaha berlari lebih cepat. Tapi karena aku melompat melewati parit dan bebatuan di kebun, jambu-jambu yang

kukantongi mulai berjatuhan. Sementara itu, penjaga terus mengejar kami dengan sangat marah.

Setelah lama berlari, aku sampai pada pagar. Safdar yang pertama melompat dan berhasil melewatinya, disusul Ajay di belakangnya juga berhasil sambil terguling.

Safdar terus berteriak, "Lari, Lokesh! Lari!! orang tua itu semakin dekat."

Aku menggunakan seluruh sisa tenagaku dan berlari kencang. Penjaga berlari seperti banteng sambil menggumamkan kata-kata yang tidak jelas. Tiba-tiba ada rombongan anak-anak yang muncul dan ikut mengejar kami.

"Sekarang lompat," teriak Safdar.

Aku berhasil lompat sampai ke atas pagar. Tapi akhirnya jambu biji terakhir di sakuku menggelinding jatuh.

Aku merasa sangat menyesal dan sia-sia. Demi apapun aku tidak ingin kehilangan jambu terakhir itu. Akupun melompat kembali ke kebun itu sambil membungkuk untuk mengambilnya. Agak gelap, tetapi aku berhasil mendapatkannya. Aku genggam erat jambu itu dan lompat lagi ke pagar. Di luar pagar itu ada kompleks sekolah dan teman-temanku.

Aku terpeleset dan jatuh. Sosok penjaga yang tinggi itu mendekatiku. Safdar dan Ajay berteriak dan mendesakku agar aku cepat-cepat keluar dari sana. Saat aku bergegas, penjaga mencengkeram tanganku. Aku berusaha melepaskannya, tetapi pria bertubuh kekar itu meraihku, mendekapku, lalu berjalan cepat kembali ke kebun.

Setelah itu, dia melepaskanku di depan seorang pria yang duduk di bangku.

“Pak,” dia menyapanya, sambil menyeka keringat di dahinya,

“Anak ini adalah pemimpin *gang* teman sekolahnya. Dia biasanya membawa banyak temannya untuk mencuri jambu biji kita. Mereka juga merusak kebun.”

Si bapak pemilik kebun ini tampak tenang dan berwibawa. Aku pikir dia akan memukulku. Aku takut, dan juga malu karena ketahuan mencuri.

Dia menatapku tajam. Aku berdiri diam, menunggu tamparan keras.

Dia bangkit dari kursinya dan berdiri di depanku. Tubuhnya tinggi seperti pohon palem!

“Siapa namamu?” tanyanya padaku. “Di mana kamu tinggal?”

“Namaku Lokesh. Aku belajar di sekolah sebelah sana. Aku anak kepala sekolah.”

“Kamu suka jambu biji?”

Aku mengangguk.

“Apa kamu datang ke sini sendirian?”

Aku menunjuk Safdar dan Ajay yang sedang mengintip di balik pagar itu.

Pemilik kebut itu kemudian meminta si penjaga untuk mengambil satu keranjang jambu biji.

“Dia bukan pencuri,” katanya kepada si penjaga.
“Dia anak yang sopan.”

Dia melambaikan tangannya ke arah teman-temanku dan memberi isyarat kepada mereka supaya datang kemari.

Tetapi Safdar dan Ajay tidak bergerak sama sekali. Mereka tetap diam di luar.

“Ayo Lokesh, ajak mereka kemari,” dia mendesakku.

Aku agak bingung serta bimbang.

Pria itu tersenyum.

“Panggil mereka, Nak. Jangan takut.”

Dan aku tidak takut lagi setelahnya.

“Ayo kesini, Safdar. Ayo, Ajay,” seruku.

Mereka kemudian segera menyusulku, dengan raut muka malu dan bersalah.

Kami hampir tidak bisa percaya ketika penjaga itu kembali bersama keranjang berisi penuh jambu biji.

“Ayo, makanlah sebanyak yang kalian mau,” kata pemilik kebun.

Kami hanya diam dan heran memandangnya. Padahal, kami pikir ia akan memperlakukan kami seperti pencuri.

“Kalian itu seperti anak-anakku,” suara lemah-lembutnya sungguh menenangkan.“ Ini adalah kebun kalian. Kalian tidak perlu masuk kebun seperti pencuri. Mintalah ke penjaga. Dia akan membantu kalian.”

Dengan perasaan lega dan terima kasih, kami menerima semua jambu biji yang Ia berikan. Kami berterima kasih sebanyak-banyaknya ketika berpamitan dengannya.

Senyuman terpancar di wajahnya ketika kami pulang.

"Ingat, anak-anak. Jangan lakukan sesuatu yang membuatmu merasa bersalah. Kalian harus melakukan hal-hal yang membuat kalian bangga."

Kami pun meninggalkan kebun jambu itu. Aku berjalan timpang karena aku mengantongi banyak jambu di saku.

Kata-katanya masih terngiang di kepalaiku.

THE ADVENTURE OF ALADDIN

Once upon a time, a widow had an only son whose name was Aladdin. They were very poor and lived from hand to mouth, though Aladdin did what he could to earn some pennies, by picking bananas in faraway places.

One day, as he was looking for wild figs in a grove some way from the town, Aladdin met a mysterious stranger. This smartly dressed dark-eyed man with a trim black beard and a splendid sapphire in his turban, asked Aladdin an unusual question:

"Come here, boy," he ordered. "How would you like to earn a silver penny?"

"A silver penny!" exclaimed Aladdin. "Sir, I'd do anything for that kind of payment."

"I'm not going to ask you to do much. Just go down that manhole. I'm much too big to squeeze through myself. If you do as I ask, you'll have your reward." The stranger helped Aladdin lift the manhole cover, for it was very heavy. Slim and agile as he was, the boy easily went down. His feet touched stone and he carefully made his way down some steps . . . and found himself in a large chamber. It seemed to sparkle, though dimly lit by the flickering

light of an old oil lamp. When Aladdin's eyes became used to the gloom, he saw a wonderful sight: trees dripping with glittering jewels, pots of gold and caskets full of priceless gems. Thousands of precious objects lay scattered about. It was a treasure trove! Unable to believe his eyes, Aladdin was standing dazed when he heard a shout behind him.

"The lamp! Put out the flame and bring me the lamp!" Surprised and suspicious, for why should the stranger, out of all such a treasure want only an old lamp, Aladdin wondered. Perhaps he was a wizard. He decided to be on his guard. Picking up the lamp, he retraced his steps up to the entrance.

"Give me the lamp," urged the wizard impatiently. "Hand it over," he began to shout, thrusting out his arm to grab it, but Aladdin cautiously drew back.

"Let me out first . . ."

"Too bad for you," snapped the stranger, slamming down the manhole cover, never noticing that, as he did so, a ring slid off his finger. A terrified Aladdin was left in pitch darkness, wondering what the wizard would do next. Then he trod on the ring. Aimlessly putting it on his finger, he twisted it round and round. Suddenly the room was flooded with a

rosy light and a great genie with clasped hands appeared on a cloud.

"At your command, sire," said the genie.

Now astoundede, Aladdin could only stammer:

"I want to go home!" In a flash he was back in his own home, though the door wa tightly shut.

"How did you get in?" called his mother from the kitchen stove, the minute she set eyes on him. Excitedly, her son told her of his adventures.

"Where's the silver coin?" his mother asked. Aladdin clapped a hand to his brow. For all he had brought home was the old oil lamp "Oh, mother! I'm so sorry. This is all I've got."

"Well, let's hope it works. It's so dirty . . ." and the widow began to rub the lamp.

Suddenly out shot another genie, in a cloud of smoke.

"You've set me free, after centuries! I was a prisoner in the lamp, waiting to be freed by someone rubbing it. Now, I'm your obedient servant. Tell me your wishes." And the genie bowed respectfully, awaiting Aladdin's orders. The boy and his mother gaped wordlessly at this incredible apparition, then the genie said with a hint of impatience in his voice.

"I'm here at your command. Tell me what you want. Anything you like!" Aladdin gulped, then said:

"Bring us . . . bring . . ." His mother not having yet begun to cook the dinner, went on to say: "... a lovely big meal."

From that day on, the widow and her son had everything they could wish for: food, clothes and a fine home, for the genie of the lamp granted them everything they asked him. Aladdin grew into a tall handsome young man and his mother felt that he ought to find himself a wife, sooner or later.

One day, as he left the market, Aladdin happened to see the Sultan's daughter Halima in her sedan chair being carried through the streets. He only caught a fleeting glimpse of the princess, but it was enough for him to want to marry her. Aladdin told his mother and she quickly said:

"I'll ask the Sultan for his daughter's hand. He'll never be able to refuse. Wait and see!"

And indeed, the Sultan was easily persuaded by a casket full of big diamonds to admit the widow to the palace. However, when he learned why she had come, he told the widow that her son must bring proof of his power and riches. This was mostly the

Chamberlain's idea, for he himself was eager to marry the beautiful black-eyed Sultan's daughter.

"If Aladdin wants to marry Halima," said the Sultan, "he must send me forty slaves tomorrow. Every slave must bring a box of precious stones. And forty Arab warriors must escort the treasure."

Aladdin's mother went sadly home. The genie of the magic lamp had already worked wonders, but nothing like this. Aladdin however, when he heard the news, was not at all dismayed. He picked up the lamp, rubbed it harder than ever and told the genie what he required. The genie simply clapped his hands three times. Forty slaves magically appeared, carrying the gemstones, together with their escort of forty Arab warriors. When he saw all thls the next day, the Sultan was taken aback. He never imagined such wealth could exist. Just as he was about to accept Aladdin as his daughter's bridegroom, the envious Chamberlain broke in with a question.

"Where wlll they live?" he asked. The Sultan pondered for a moment, then allowlng greed to get the better of hlm, he told Aladdin to build a great, splendid palace for Halima. Aladdin went straight home and, in what was once a wilderness, the genie built him a palace. The last obstacle had been overcome. The wedding tbok place with great

celebrations and the Sultan was especially happy at finding such a rich and powerful son-in-law.

News of Aladdin's sudden fortune and wealth spread like wildfire, until.... one day, a strange merchant stopped beneath the palace window.

"Old lamps for new," he called to the princess, standing on the balcony. Now, Aladdin had always kept his secret to himself. Only his mother knew it and she had never told a soul. Halima, alas, had been kept in the dark. And so, now, wanting to give Alladin a surprise as well as make a good bargain, she fetched the old oil lamp she had seen Aladdin tuck away, and gave it to the merchant in exchange for a new one. The merchant quickly began to rub it . . . and the genie was now at the service of the wizard who had got his magic lamp back.

In a second he whisked away all Aladdin's possessions and magically sent the palace and the princess to an unknown land. Aladdin and the Sultan were at their wits' end. Nobody knew what had happened. Only Aladdin knew it had something to do with the magic lamp. But as he wept over the lost genie of the lamp, he remembered the genie of the ring from the wizard's finger. Slipping the ring on his finger, Aladdin twisted it round and round.

"Take me to the place where the wizard has hidden my wife," he ordered the genie. In a flash, he found himself inside his own palace, and peeping from behind a curtain, he saw the wizard and the princess, now his servant.

"Psst! Psst!" hissed Aladdin.

"Aladdin! It's you . . .!"

"Ssh. Don't let him hear you. Take this powder and put it into his tea. Trust me." The powder quickly took effect and the wizard fell into a deep sleep. Aladdin hunted for the lamp high and low, but it was nowhere to be seen. But it had to be there. How, otherwise, had the wizard moved the palace? As Aladdin gazed at his sleeping enemy, he thought of peering underneath the pillow. "The lamp! At last," sighed Aladdin, hastily rubbing it.

"Welcome back, Master!" exclaimed the genie. "Why did you leave me at another's service for so long?"

"Welcome," replied Aladdin. "I'm glad to see you again. I've certainly missed you! It's just as well I have you by me again."

"At your command," smiled the genie.

"First, put this wicked wizard in chains and take him far away where he'll never be found again." The genie grinned with pleasure, nodded his head, and the wizard vanished. Halima clutched Aladdin in fear:

"What's going on? Who is that genie?"

"Don't worry, everything is all right," Aladdin reassured her, as he told his wife the whole story of how he had met the wizard and found the magic lamp that had enabled him to marry her. Everything went back to normal and the happy pair hugged each other tenderly.

"Can we return to our own kingdom?" the princess asked timidly, thinking of her father, so far away. Aladdin glanced at her with a smile.

"The magic that brought you here will take you back, but with me at your side, forever."

The Sultan was almost ill with worry. His daughter had disappeared along with the palace, and then his son-in-law had vanished too. Nobody knew where they were, not even the wise men hastily called to the palace to divine what had happened. The jealous Chamberlain kept on repeating:

"I told you Aladdin's fortune couldn't last."

Everyone had lost all hope of ever seeing the missing pair again, when far away, Aladdin rubbed the magic lamp and said to the genie,

"Take my wife, myself and the palace back to our own land, as fast as you can."

"In a flash, Sire," replied the genie. At the snap of a finger, the palace rose into the air and sped over the Sultan's kingdom, above the heads of his astonished subjects. It gently floated down to earth and landed on its old site. Aladdin and Halima rushed to embrace the Sultan.

To this very day, in that distant country, you can still admire the traces of an ancient palace which folk call the palace that came from the skies.

PETUALANGAN ALADDIN

Pada zaman dahulu, hiduplah seorang janda bersama anaknya yang bernama Aladdin. Mereka sangat miskin dan hidup sangat terbatas. Aladdin berusaha melakukan apapun agar bisa menghasilkan uang, salah satunya dengan memetik pisang di tempat yang sangat jauh.

Suatu hari, pada saat sedang mencari buah tin yang tumbuh liar di lembah yang tidak jauh dari kota, Aladdin berpapasan dengan seorang pria misterius. Pria itu berbusana bak cendekiawan, bermata gelap, berjanggut panjang dan hitam, serta berturban dengan batu safir yang indah di atasnya. Lalu ia menanyakan suatu hal yang aneh pada Aladdin.

"Kemarilah nak" panggil sang pria. "Apakah kamu menginginkan sebuah koin perak?"

"Koin perak?" seru Aladdin. "Aku akan melakukan apapun untuk mendapatkannya, Tuan."

"Aku tidak akan menyuruhmu melakukan banyak hal. Kau hanya perlu masuk ke lubang got itu. Badanku terlalu besar untuk bisa masuk ke dalam sana. Jika kau melakukan apa yang aku perintahkan, maka aku akan memberimu koin perak."

Pria asing tersebut lantas membantu Aladdin mengangkat penutup lubang. Dengan cekatan serta perawakan badan yang kecil, mudah bagi Aladdin untuk masuk ke dalam lubang. Kakinya menapaki bebatuan dan perlahan-lahan turun ke dasar, dan ia pun mendapatkan dirinya sampai di sebuah ruang. Samar-samar terlihat kilau pantulan cahaya remang-remang dari sinar lampu minyak tua. Di saat mata Aladdin mulai terbiasa dalam kegelapan, ia melihat pemandangan yang menakjubkan: pohon yang digelantungi oleh perhiasan berkilau, bejana yang terbuat dari emas, dan peti yang penuh dengan batu permata berharga. Ribuan benda berharga tergeletak berserakan, "Sungguh! Ini adalah gudang harta karun!" Aladdin tak dapat mempercayai apa yang ia lihat. Ia berdiri mematung dengan mata berkunang-kunang ketika ia mendengar pria itu berteriak.

"Lampunya! Matikan apinya dan berikan lampunya kepadaku!" Merasa terkejut dan curiga tentang alasan mengapa pria aneh tersebut hanya menginginkan lampu tua dari sekian macam jenis harta yang ada, Aladdin bertanya-tanya keheranan. Barangkali pria itu adalah seorang penyihir. Aladdin memutuskan untuk mendapatkan perlindungan darinya, ia pun mengambil lampu itu dan berjalan

mengikuti bekas jejak kakinya kembali menuju lubang masuk.

“Berikan lampunya kepadaku” desak sang penyihir tidak sabar, “serahkan padaku!” Ia berteriak sambil menjulurkan tangannya untuk merebut lampu tersebut, tetapi Aladdin dengan perlahan mundur.

“Biarkan aku keluar dulu Tuan...”

“Sayang sekali!” Bentak pria tersebut sambil menutup lubang got. Tanpa disadari, di saat Ia menutup pintu lubang, cincin di jarinya pun terlepas. Aladdin yang ketakutan ditinggalkan dalam gelap dan tercengang memikirkan tentang apa yang akan dilakukan oleh pria penyihir selanjutnya. Kemudian kakinya tidak sengaja menginjak cincin tersebut, dan Aladdin secara spontan mengenakan cincin itu di jarinya, Aladdin berjalan mondar-mandir dan tiba-tiba saja ruangan tersebut dipenuhi cahaya berkilau dan jin gagah dengan tangan bersedekap muncul dari dalam balutan kabut awan.

“Aku akan melaksanakan semua perintahmu, Tuan,” kata sang Jin.

Aladdin yang terkejut hanya dapat tergagap.

“Aku ingin pulang.” Dalam sekejap dia sudah kembali ke rumahnya sendiri. Bahkan, pintu rumahnya masih dalam keadaan tertutup.

“Bagaimana kau bisa masuk?” kata sang ibu keheranan dari tungku dapur. Mereka saling bertatapan dalam beberapa saat. Dengan gembira anaknya menceritakan petualangan yang Ia alami kepada ibunya.

“Di manakah koin perak itu?” Ibunya bertanya. Aladdin menepukkan tangannya ke dahi. Semua yang dia bawa pulang tidak lain hanyalah lampu minyak tua itu. “Oh Ibu! Aku minta maaf. Hanya ini yang aku dapatkan.”

“Yah, coba kita lihat apakah benda ini dapat bekerja. Ini begitu kotor...” dan ibunya mulai menggosok lampu.

Tiba-tiba asap keluar dan sang Jin muncul.

“Kau telah membebaskanku setelah berabad-abad! Aku adalah tahanan di dalam lampu, menunggu seseorang menyelamatkanku dengan menggosoknya. Sekarang aku adalah pelayanmu yang patuh. Katakan apa permintaanmu?” Dan jin itu membungkuk penuh hormat, menunggu perintah Aladdin. Aladdin dan ibunya tercengang pada penampakan yang luar biasa ini, lalu sang Jin berkata dengan penuh ketidaksabaran.

“Aku disini atas perintahmu. Katakan apa yang kau mau. Apapun yang kau suka!” Aladdin menelan ludah, lalu berkata:

“Bawakan kami... bawakan...,” Ibunya belum memulai memasak untuk makan malam, lalu berkata: “Makanan yang banyak dan enak.”

Sejak hari itu, ibu dan putranya memiliki segala yang mereka inginkan, seperti makanan, pakaian, dan rumah yang bagus karena jin dari lampu tersebut telah memberikan semua yang mereka minta padanya. Aladdin tumbuh menjadi pria muda yang tampan dan ibunya merasa bahwa Aladdin harus mencari seorang istri, cepat atau lambat.

Suatu hari ketika meninggalkan pasar, Aladdin tak sengaja melihat anak Sultan, Halima, di dalam kereta yang membawanya melewati jalanan. Ia hanya sekilas melihat sang putri, tapi hal itu sudah cukup membuatnya ingin menikahi sang putri. Aladdin memberi tahu ibunya dan ibunya segera berkata:

“Aku akan menemui Sultan dan melamar anaknya. Dia tak mungkin menolak. Tunggu dan lihatlah!”

Sultan menerima kedatangan Ibu Aladdin dengan tangan terbuka. Dan memang, Sultan terbujuk oleh peti yang penuh dengan berlian. Namun, ketika Sultan menanyakan alasan mengapa dia datang, dia memberitahu wanita itu bahwa putranya harus menunjukkan bukti kekuasaan dan

kekayaannya. Bendahara kerajaanlah yang mengusulkan syarat tersebut karena Ia sendiri sebenarnya juga ingin menikahi putri Sultan yang cantik dan bermata gelap dan indah itu.

"Jika Aladdin ingin menikahi Halima," Sultan berkata, "dia harus mengirim empat puluh budak kepadaku besok. Setiap budak harus membawa sekotak batu permata yang berharga dan dikawal oleh empat puluh prajurit Arab."

Ibu Aladdin pulang ke rumah dengan sedih. Walau sang Jin sudah berhasil melakukan berbagai keajaiban, tapi belum ada yang seperti ini. Namun, ketika mendengar berita itu, Aladdin sama sekali tidak merasa kecewa. Dia mengambil lampu, kemudian menggosoknya lebih keras dari sebelumnya dan mengatakan permintaannya pada sang Jin. Sang Jin hanya bertepuk tiga kali, lalu empat puluh budak ajaib muncul, membawa batu permata bersama dengan empat puluh pengawal prajurit Arab. Ketika Sultan melihat hal itu keesokan harinya, Ia terkejut. Ia tidak pernah bisa membayangkan ternyata ada orang yang sekaya itu. Karena Sultan hendak menerima Aladdin sebagai pengantin anaknya, sang bendahara yang iri menyela dengan sebuah pertanyaan.

“Di mana mereka akan tinggal?” tanyanya. Sultan berpikir sejenak, kemudian keserakahan membuatnya meminta Aladdin untuk membangun istana yang besar dan megah untuk Halima. Aladdin pulang ke rumah dan di daerah hutan belantara, sang Jin membuatkan Aladdin sebuah istana. Masalah itu telah berhasil diatasi. Kemudian, pernikahan itu diadakan secara meriah dan tentunya Sultan sangat senang memperoleh menantu yang kaya dan kuat.

Berita tentang kekayaan Aladdin mendadak tersebar luas dengan sangat cepat, seperti api. Sampai suatu hari tampak seorang pedagang aneh berhenti di bawah jendela istana.

“Lampu usang itu sepertinya perlu diganti,” katanya kepada sang putri yang berdiri di atas balkon. Pada saat Aladdin sedang berusaha menjaga rahasianya, hanya ibunya yang tahu tentang rahasia itu, Ia tidak pernah memberitahu siapapun tentang lampu itu. Sayangnya Halima pun tidak tahu akan rahasia tersebut, sekarang Ia ingin memberikan kejutan yang tak disangka-sangka untuk Aladdin. Ia mengambil lampu minyak tua itu dan memberikannya kepada pedagang aneh tersebut untuk ditukarkan dengan yang baru. Pedagang itu mulai menggosoknya ... dan sekarang jin itu

melayani pria yang telah mendapatkan lampu ajaibnya kembali.

Pada usapan kedua, semua harta benda milik Aladdin, istana, dan sang putri secara ajaib berpindah ke sebuah tempat yang tidak dikenal. Aladdin dan sang Sultan keheranan. Tidak ada yang tahu apa yang telah terjadi. Hanya Aladdin yang mengetahui bahwa ada sesuatu yang telah terjadi dengan lampu ajaibnya. Tapi, ketika ia meratapi atas kehilangan jin dalam lampu, dia ingat cincin dari penyihir. Terselip cincin di jarinya, Aladdin memutar-mutarnya.

“Bawa aku ke istana di mana penyihir menyembunyikan istriku,” Ia meminta kepada sang Jin. Dalam sekejap, ia menemukan dirinya sendiri di dalam istananya, diintipnya dari balik tirai, Ia melihat sang putri yang sekarang menjadi pelayan si penyihir.

“Sstt! Sstt!” desisnya.

“Aladdin! Apa itu kau....?”

“Ssh. Jangan biarkan dia mendengarmu. Ambil bubuk ini dan masukkan ke dalam tehnya. Percayalah padaku.” Bubuk itu dengan cepat mempengaruhi si penyihir dan membuatnya tertidur. Aladdin mencari lampu itu, tapi tidak terlihat di manapun. Tapi Ia yakin lampu itu pasti

ada di sana. Bagaimana mungkin si Penyihir memindahkan istana tanpa menggunakan lampu itu. Di saat Aladdin memandangi musuh yang tertidur, terlintas di pikirannya untuk mencari di bawah bantal. "Lampu! Akhirnya," desah Aladdin, bernafas lega dan dengan cepat dia menggosoknya.

"Selamat datang kembali, Tuan!" seru sang Jin. "Kenapa Anda meninggalkanku kepada orang lain dalam waktu yang lama?

"Selamat datang," balas Aladdin. "Aku bersyukur dapat melihatmu lagi. Aku sangat merindukanmu! Aku beruntung memilikimu lagi.

"Perintahkan apa saja yang kau inginkan, Tuan," senyum sang jin.

"Pertama, ikatlah peyihir jahat itu dengan rantai, lalu bawa ia ke tempat yang jauh agar ia tidak bisa ditemukan lagi. Sang Jin tersenyum lebar, menganggukkan kepalanya, dan si penyihir itu pun hilang. Halima mencengkram Aladdin sambil ketakutan:

"Apa yang terjadi di sini? Siapa jin itu?"

"Jangan khawatir, semuanya akan baik-baik saja," Aladdin meyakinkanistrinya sambil menceritakan semua kisahnya; bagaimana ia bertemu penyihir dan menemukan lampu ajaib yang membuatnya menikahi Halima. Semuanya kembali

normal dan pasangan yang berbahagia itu pun berpelukan satu sama lain.

“Bisakah kita kembali ke kerajaan kita?” pinta sang putri dengan lirih, sembari memikirkan ayahnya yang sedang berada di tempat yang jauh. Aladdin melihatnya sambil tersenyum.

“Sihir yang membawamu kemari akan membawamu kembali pula, tapi bersamaku yang berada di sisimu selamanya.”

Sang Raja sangat merasa khawatir anak perempuannya telah menghilang bersama dengan istana dan menantunya. Tidak ada yang tahu di mana mereka sekarang, bahkan para penasihat istana pun dipanggil dengan segera untuk menceritakan yang telah terjadi. Pembantu kerajaan mengulangi perkataannya:

“Aku sudah bilang bahwa keberuntungan Aladdin telah habis.”

Semua orang kehilangan harapan ketika melihat pasangan itu menghilang. Di tempat lain, tampak Aladdin sedang menggosok lampu ajaibnya dan berkata kepada sang Jin:

“Bawa aku, istriku dan istana kembali ke kerajaan kita secepat yang kau bisa”.

“Dalam sekejap, Paduka,” balas sang Jin. Dengan menjentikkan jari, istana melayang ke udara dan

melaju di atas kerajaan sang raja. Lalu istana itu pun turun kembali ke tanah dan mendarat di tempat semula. Aladdin dan Halima bergegas memeluk sang raja.

Sampai saat ini, di negeri nan jauh itu, orang-orang masih tetap bisa menikmati jejak istana tua dan tak jarang pula mereka menganggapnya sebagai istana yang datang dari langit.

THAT SUNDAY MORNING

My father was posted in Patna. On the first Sunday there, my brother and I decided to do a little exploring on our bikes. It was still very early in the morning, and only a few people were about. The roads were good and the trees lining them were shady. There were no imposing buildings or monuments as there are in Delhi, from where we had just come. After cycling for about half-an-hour, my brother got bored and said, "Come on, I'll race you to that corner. The loser treats the other to a chocolate, okay?"

"Okay, one, two, three!" I said, and then we were off.

This was not the first time we had raced. Only my brother had invariably beaten me and then crowed about it for days. I was determined to win this time. I pedalled as fast as I could. My legs ached and my skirt billowed out, threatening to hit my face. The trees on either side of the road had become one green blur. My hair blew behind me and my lungs were bursting for air. Soon I drew level with my brother and then gradually I moved ahead. I could see the corner, in a haze. I was

starting to whoop with glee, but the whoop froze on my lips. There, right in the middle of the road, stood a lone cow!

I jammed on the brakes and the cycle stopped abruptly, but I could not stop the momentum of my own body. I flew over the handlebars and landed smack on the back of the unfortunate animal. The cow, startled by this sudden attack, reared up and started running. I clung to her for dear Me, as she charged up the road and round the corner.

As we turned, I spotted two rows of resplendent Cavalry officers, mounted on their magnificent horses coming towards us. They obviously belonged to the governor's bodyguard. I could only cling helplessly as the frightened cow charged straight at the horses. The horses panicked and scattered. There was a regular stampede. The cow managed to fall into a ditch and in the process, dislodged me, and I landed on the soft earth bordering the ditch. I sat up with a groan and saw that the Cavalry horses were still out of control. Some of them were running like mad in circles, while their riders tried to bring them under control. Two horses were nowhere to be seen, and one horse threw its rider right in front of my eyes. The poor man landed in the ditch just next to the cow.

The cow thinking this was another attack, bellowed loudly and, lowering its head, charged at the unfortunate man. The poor fellow scrambled out of the ditch, tearing his pants at rather an awkward place. Realising this, he sat down on the road with a thump and would not get up.

I saw my brother approaching with my bike in tow, coming up to me with a grin on his face. I felt like hitting him. "You looked such a sight on top of that cow," he said and started laughing. Then he probably realised that I might have been hurt and asked, "Are you all right?"

"Of course, I am," I said haughtily and got up at once. Nothing on earth would have made me admit to him how frightened and shaken I was.

Just then my brother spotted one of the horse-riders coming towards us with a thunderous scowl on his face. Behind him was the man to whom, in all probability, the cow belonged. My brother gave them an uneasy glance and said, "I think it would be nice if we moved quickly from here." I looked round and saw that if both of us did not move fast enough, we would be called in for a lot of explanations. With one accord we got onto our bikes and beat a hasty retreat.

The morning had already been rather eventful

and we did not want to add another unpleasant episode to it.

MINGGU PAGI ITU

Ayahku ditugaskan di Patna. Pada minggu pertama di sana, aku dan kakakku memutuskan untuk berkeliling kota dengan bersepeda. Saat itu masih pagi buta, dan hanya beberapa orang saja yang terlihat. Jalanan rapi dan pohon-pohon rindang berjejer di tepi jalan. Di sana tidak ada bangunan atau gedung yang indah seperti di Delhi, tempat kami berasal. Setelah bersepeda sekitar setengah jam, kakakku merasa bosan dan berkata “Aku menantangmu balapan sampai ujung tempat itu, yang kalah harus mentraktir coklat yang menang, oke?” “Oke, satu, dua, tiga!” ucapku, kemudian kami mulai mengayuh pedal.

Ini bukan pertama kalinya kami balapan. Hanya saja kakakku seringkali menang dan selalu menyombongkan diri selama berhari-hari. Aku bersemangat untuk mengalahkannya hari itu. Aku mengayuh pedal sepedaku secepat mungkin. Kakiku terasa sakit dan bajuku berkibar tertiu angin seakan-akan ingin menampar wajahku. Pohon-pohon di tepi jalan terlihat tidak jelas. Rambutku tertiu ke belakang dan paru-paruku bekerja

memompa udara dengan cepat. Seketika, aku menyamai kakakku dan perlahan-lahan mendahuluinya. Samar-samar, aku bisa melihat ujung tempat itu. Aku mencoba bersorak kegirangan, tapi teriakanku membeku di ujung bibir. Ada seekor sapi di tengah jalan!

Aku mengerem dan sepedaku berhenti mendadak, tapi aku tidak bisa menahan gerakan tubuhku. Aku terpental melewati setang dan mendarat pada punggung sapi yang malang itu. Sapi itu terkejut; seketika Ia mengangkat kedua kakinya dan mulai berlari. Aku memegang sapi itu erat-erat saat Ia melewati jalan dan memutari ujung tempat tersebut.

Ketika kami berputar, aku melihat dua barisan rapi tentara yang sedang menunggangi kuda-kuda yang indah dan berlari ke arah kami. Sudah jelas kuda-kuda itu milik pengawal gubernur. Aku hanya bisa berpegangan erat saat sapi yang ketakutan tadi menerjang barisan tersebut. Kuda-kuda itu pun panik dan lari berhamburan. Sapi yang kutunggangi jatuh ke dalam lubang dan aku mendarat pada tanah lunak di sekitar lubang tersebut. Aku duduk dengan perasaan kacau dan melihat kuda-kuda itu masih belum terkendali. Sebagian dari mereka berlari

berputar-putar ketika para tentara berusaha mengendalikan mereka. Dua kuda tidak terlihat, dan salah satu kuda menendang tentara di depan mataku. Tentara itu mendarat ke samping lubang tepat di sebelah sapi itu. Sapi itu berpikir bahwa jatuhnya tentara tersebut adalah ancaman berikutnya, lalu ia mengangkat kedua kaki depannya, dan menundukkan kepalanya, berlari ke arah tentara yang malang itu. Tentara itu memanjat keluar dari lubang hingga celananya sobek. Menyadari hal itu, sang tentara kembali duduk di jalan dan tak mau berdiri.

Aku melihat kakakku mendekat dengan menarik sepedaku di belakangnya, menghampiriku dengan senyuman lebar di wajahnya. Aku merasa ingin memukulnya.

“Kau tampak keren saat menunggangi sapi tadi,” katanya dan mulai tertawa. Sadar jika aku merasa kesakitan, dia bertanya, “Apa kau baik-baik saja?”

“Tentu saja,” kataku dengan sombong dan berdiri seketika. Aku takkan ingin mengakui ketakutan yang aku rasakan pada kakakku.

Setelah itu, kakakku melihat seorang tentara dengan wajah sangat marah. Di belakangnya, ada orang yang tampaknya adalah pemilik sapi itu. Kakakku memberi isyarat dan berkata, "Kurasa akan lebih baik kalau kita cepat-cepat pergi dari sini." Aku melihat sekeliling dan menyadari bahwa kalau tak bergerak cepat, kami akan disuruh menjelaskan semua kejadian ini. Kami melompat ke atas sepeda dan melaju pergi secepatnya.

Pagi itu dipenuhi dengan kejadian yang tak menyenangkan dan kami tidak mau menambahnya lagi.

FATHER FROST

There was once upon a time a peasant-woman who had a daughter and a step-daughter. The daughter had her own way in everything, and whatever she did was right in her mother's eyes; but the poor step-daughter had a hard time. Let her do what she would, she was always blamed, and got small thanks for all the trouble she took; nothing was right, everything wrong; and yet, if the truth were known, the girl was worth her weight in gold--she was so unselfish and good-hearted. But her step-mother did not like her, and the poor girl's days were spent in weeping; for it was impossible to live peacefully with the woman. The wicked shrew was determined to get rid of the girl by fair means or foul, and kept saying to her father: 'Send her away, old man; send her away--anywhere so that my eyes sha'n't be plagued any longer by the sight of her, or my ears tormented by the sound of her voice. Send her out into the fields, and let the cutting frost do for her.'

In vain did the poor old father weep and implore her pity; she was firm, and he dared not gainsay her. So he placed his daughter in a sledge, not

even daring to give her a horse-cloth to keep herself warm with, and drove her out on to the bare, open fields, where he kissed her and left her, driving home as fast as he could, that he might not witness her miserable death.

Deserted by her father, the poor girl sat down under a fir-tree at the edge of the forest and began to weep silently. Suddenly she heard a faint sound: it was King Frost springing from tree to tree, and cracking his fingers as he went. At length he reached the fir-tree beneath which she was sitting, and with a crisp crackling sound he alighted beside her, and looked at her lovely face.

'Well, maiden,' he snapped out, 'do you know who I am? I am King Frost, king of the red-noses.'

'All hail to you, great King!' answered the girl, in a gentle, trembling voice. 'Have you come to take me?'

'Are you warm, maiden?' he replied.

'Quite warm, King Frost,' she answered, though she shivered as she spoke.

Then King Frost stooped down, and bent over the girl, and the crackling sound grew louder, and the air seemed to be full of knives and darts; and again he asked:

'Maiden, are you warm? Are you warm, you beautiful girl?'

And though her breath was almost frozen on her lips, she whispered gently, 'Quite warm, King Frost.'

Then King Frost gnashed his teeth, and cracked his fingers, and his eyes sparkled, and the crackling, crisp sound was louder than ever, and for the last time he asked her:

'Maiden, are you still warm? Are you still warm, little love?'

And the poor girl was so stiff and numb that she could just gasp, 'Still warm, O King!'

Now her gentle, courteous words and her uncomplaining ways touched King Frost, and he had pity on her, and he wrapped her up in furs, and covered her with blankets, and he fetched a great box,

in which were beautiful jewels and a rich robe embroidered in gold and silver. And she put it on, and looked more lovely than ever, and King Frost stepped with her into his sledge, with six white horses.

In the meantime the wicked step-mother was waiting at home for news of the girl's death, and preparing pancakes for the funeral feast. And she said to her husband: 'Old man, you had better go out into the fields and find your daughter's body and bury her.' Just as the old man was leaving the house the little dog under the table began to bark, saying:

'YOUR daughter shall live to be your delight;
HER daughter shall die this very night.'

'Hold your tongue, you foolish beast!' scolded the woman. 'There's a pancake for you, but you must say:

"HER daughter shall have much silver and gold; HIS daughter is frozen quite stiff and cold." '

But the doggie ate up the pancake and barked, saying:

'His daughter shall wear a crown on her head;
Her daughter shall die unwooed, unwed.'

Then the old woman tried to coax the doggie with more pancakes and to terrify it with blows, but he barked on, always repeating the same words. And suddenly the door creaked and flew open, and a great heavy chest was pushed in, and behind it came the step-daughter, radiant and beautiful, in a dress all glittering with silver and gold. For a moment the step-mother's eyes were dazzled. Then she called to her husband: 'Old man, yoke the horses at once into the sledge, and take my daughter to the same field and leave her on the same spot exactly; 'and so the old man took the girl and left her beneath the same tree where he had parted from his daughter. In a few minutes King Frost came past, and, looking at the girl, he said:

'Are you warm, maiden?'

'What a blind old fool you must be to ask such a question!' she answered angrily. 'Can't you see that my hands and feet are nearly frozen?'

Then King Frost sprang to and fro in front of her, questioning her, and getting only rude, rough

words in reply, till at last he got very angry, and cracked his fingers, and gnashed his teeth, and froze her to death.

But in the hut her mother was waiting for her return, and as she grew impatient she said to her husband: 'Get out the horses, old man, to go and fetch her home; but see that you are careful not to upset the sledge and lose the chest.'

But the doggie beneath the table began to bark, saying:

'Your daughter is frozen quite stiff and cold,
And shall never have a chest full of gold.'

'Don't tell such wicked lies!' scolded the woman. 'There's a cake for you; now say:

"*HER* daughter shall marry a mighty King."

At that moment the door flew open, and she rushed out to meet her daughter, and as she took her frozen body in her arms she too was chilled to death

RAJA SALJU

Pada zaman dahulu, hiduplah seorang wanita miskin yang memiliki seorang putri kandung dan seorang putri tiri. Putri kandungnya selalu mendapat apa yang ia inginkan dan apapun yang ia lakukan selalu benar di mata ibunya. Tetapi putri tirinya yang malang selalu tersiksa. Ia selalu disalahkan atas apapun yang dilakukannya dan hanya mendapat sedikit ucapan terima kasih atas semua jerih payahnya. Tidak ada yang benar di mata sang ibu, semuanya selalu salah. Tapi sebenarnya, gadis itu sangat baik. Ia tak pernah mementingkan dirinya sendiri, dan Ia pun berhati emas. Tapi ibu tirinya tidak menyukainya dan gadis itu meratap setiap hari karena Ia tak mungkin bisa hidup tenteram dengan sang ibu tiri. Ibu tiri yang jahat itu selalu berusaha menyingkirkan gadis malang itu dengan berbagai cara, dan selalu berkata kepada suaminya: ‘Singkirkan dia, Pak Tua, singkirkan dia—ke manapun juga, agar mataku tak sakit melihatnya, dan telingaku tak tersiksa mendengar suaranya. Bawa dia ke ladang dan biarkan udara dingin membekukannya.’

Dengan penuh harap, pria tua yang malang itu menangis dan memohon belas kasihan istrinya. Namun sang ibu tiri tetap teguh, dan sang ayah tidak berani menentangnya. Jadilah Ia membawa putrinya dengan sebuah kereta luncur dan bahkan tak memberinya pakaian tebal untuk menghangatkan badan. Kemudian Ia mengantarnya ke ladang yang luas, mencium putrinya, lalu meninggalkannya. Ia pulang secepat yang Ia bisa agar tidak melihat kematian putrinya yang menyedihkan.

Setelah ditinggal oleh ayahnya, gadis malang itu duduk di bawah pohon cemara di pinggir hutan dan mulai menangis diam-diam. Tiba-tiba ia mendengar suara samar: Itu adalah Raja Es yang melompat dari pohon ke pohon dan menggeretakkan jari-jarinya seiring ia melompat dari pohon ke pohon. Hingga akhirnya, Raja Es mencapai pohon cemara tempat gadis itu duduk. Dengan suara gemerisik ia turun di samping gadis itu dan menatap wajahnya.

‘Nak,’ sapanya, ‘Apa kau tahu siapa aku? Aku adalah Raja Es.’

‘Salam, Yang Mulia Raja,’ jawab sang gadis dengan suara lembutnya yang bergetar. ‘Apakah Anda datang untuk membawaku?’

‘Apa kau merasa hangat, Nak?’ balas sang raja.

‘Cukup hangat, Raja,’ sang gadis menjawab meski ia menggigil saat bicara.

Lalu Raja Es membungkuk di depan gadis itu. Suara gemerisik terdengar keras dan udara dingin semakin menusuk. Kemudian ia bertanya lagi,

‘Nak, apa kau merasa hangat? Apa kau merasa hangat, gadis cantik?’

Dan meski bibirnya hampir beku, ia berbisik dengan lembut, ‘Cukup hangat, Raja.’

Kemudian Raja Es mengertakkan gigi dan jari-jarinya, matanya berkilau, dan suara gemerisik itu semakin keras. Dan untuk terakhir kalinya, ia bertanya kepada sang gadis:

‘Nak, apa kau masih merasa hangat? Apa kau masih merasa hangat, gadis kecil?’

Dan gadis malang itu merasa tubuhnya kaku dan mati rasa sehingga ia hanya bisa menghembuskan nafas,

‘Masih hangat, wahai Raja!’

Kata-katanya yang lembut dan sopan, serta sikapnya yang tidak pernah mengeluh telah

membuat Raja Es tersentuh dan merasa iba kepadanya. Sang Raja menyelimutinya dengan selimut bulu dan mengambil sebuah kotak besar yang di dalamnya terdapat perhiasan yang indah serta jubah tebal yang bersulamkan emas dan perak. Lalu gadis itu memakainya dan terlihat lebih cantik dari biasanya. Raja Es membawanya masuk ke kereta luncurnya yang ditarik oleh enam kuda putih.

Sementara itu, sang ibu tiri yang jahat sedang berada di rumah, menunggu kabar kematian gadis itu dan mempersiapkan *pancake* untuk upacara kematianya. Lalu ia berkata pada suaminya: ‘Suamiku, sebaiknya kau pergi mencari putrimu di ladang dan menguburnya.’ Seiring pria tua itu pergi, si anjing kecil di bawah meja mulai menggonggong dan berkata:

‘Putrimu akan hidup bahagia. Dan putrinya akan meninggal malam ini juga.’

‘Jaga bicaramu, hewan bodoh!’ omel sang ibu tiri. ‘Ini *pancake* untukmu, tapi kau harus mengatakan:

‘Putriku akan mendapat banyak perak dan emas, sementara putrinya akan membeku.’

Namun si anjing langsung memakan *pancake* tersebut seraya berkata:

‘Putrinya pasti akan mengenakan mahkota di kepalanya, sedangkan putrimu pasti akan mati membeku.’

Sang ibu tiri lantas membujuknya dengan lebih banyak *pancake*, hanya saja anjing tersebut malah menggonggong dan tetap mengulangi kalimat yang sama. Dan tiba-tiba saja pintu terbuka dan tampaklah peti harta berukuran besar tengah didorong masuk, tepat di belakangnya terdapat si gadis tiri, cantik berbahaya, lengkap dengan pakaian berhiaskan emas dan perak. Untuk sejenak mata sang ibu tiri merasa silau. Ia kemudian memanggil suaminya: ‘Oh suamiku, naikilah kudamu sekarang dan bawa anak gadisku di tempat yang sama!’ Si Pak Tua lantas membawa anak gadis yang dimaksud dan meninggalkannya di pohon yang sama, di mana ia sebelumnya berpisah dengan anak gadisnya. Dalam beberapa menit Raja Es datang kembali, melihat ke si anak gadis dan berkata:

‘Apa kau merasa hangat, nak?’

‘Pertanyaan macam apa itu?!’ jawab si gadis dengan marah. ‘Apa kau tak melihat kakiku menggigil kedinginan?’

Raja Es tiba-tiba melompat ke depannya, kembali bertanya dan hanya mendapatkan jawaban-jawaban kasar sebagai balasannya. Begitu kesabaran sang Raja Es habis, ia pun marah. Si gadis lantas dibekukan sampai mati.

Tepat di pondok, sang ibu tiri menunggu kepulangan anak gadisnya. Ia mulai tak sabar dan berkata pada suaminya: ‘Naiki kudamu, oh suamiku! Pergi dan bawa ia kemari! Pastikan engkau hati-hati dan jangan sampai kehilangan petinya, ya!’

Si anjing kembali menggonggong dan berkata: ‘Putrimu membeku kedinginan, dan sama sekali tak memiliki peti harta karun.’

‘Omong kosong!’ omel si Ibu tiri. ‘Lihat, ada kue untukmu. Nah sekarang ucapan: Anak gadisku pasti akan menikah dengan seorang raja.’

Di saat yang sama, pintu terbuka dan sang ibu tiri pergi melihat putrinya. Ia lantas menggendong tubuh putrinya yang telah beku tak bernyawa.

THE PINK CARD

Ponni sat on the footpath in front of Berywood Girls Primary School. She sold knick-knacks for little girls. Besides pencils, rubbers, sharpners, rulers, shoelaces and ribbons, she had colourful sweets and pretty trinkets too. All these were spread out in front of her on a piece of gunny.

The school bell rang. Ponni watched the girls hasten into the school. One of them stopped in front of her.

"A pencil, quick," she said.

"Here," Ponni picked up one and gave it to her.
She grabbed it and turned to cross the road.

"Hev, Ponni called out, "You haven't paid me for it. Give me twenty-five paisa."

"Oh! I'm sorry," the girl said coming back. "The bell has rung. I was in such a hurry I forgot. She fished out a 25 paisa coin from her bag, and handed it to Ponni. "Here, take it. And, don't call me 'hev'. My name's Sheela."

"I'm Ponni," said the vendor, flashing a friendly smile.

Sheela crossed the road and ran into the school.

That night, as Ponni lay on the ground beside her mother in their small hut, she said, "Amma¹⁴, I want to go to school, like Sheela."

"Hush, child. I don't have money to send you to school!"

The next day, as Ponni sat in her usual place under the shade of a *peepul*¹⁵ tree, an old man came towards her. He carried a small cane basket in one hand and a bird-cage in the other. Tucked under his arm was a folded mat. He spread the dusty old mat under the tree and sat down on it, putting the basket and the cage beside him.

"Scree. . .ch, screech", cried the pretty green parrot in the cage. The bell rang. School was over. The children trooped out of the gate.

"What're you looking at?" Sheela called out to Ponni as she came running out.

"At that old man, I wonder who he is?" said Ponni.

Sheela looked at him curiously, "I think he's a fortune-teller. The parrot in the cage tells you what you'll be when you grow up. How exciting! I must get some money from home tomorrow to hear my fortune. Bye!" Sheela hurried home.

¹⁴ Mother

¹⁵ Holy Fig Tree

That night, as her mother was making *kanji*¹⁶ Ponni sat beside her and asked softly, "Amma, can I have some money?"

"Whatever for?" snapped her mother.

"I want to have my fortune told. Sheela says the parrot knows everything."

"You know I have no money to spare, Ponni. We are just able to manage one meal a day. When you grow up and start working like me as a *coolie** we can have two meals a day."

"Oh no, Amma" cried Ponni, "I want to go to school."

"Forget about school, my child. Get going and sweep the floor."

The next day Ponni sat under the *peepul* tree, as usual. Sheela came running to her, and said, "Ponni, you know what the fortune-teller told me? I'll study well and am going to be rich. I gave him 50 paisa."

"What did the parrot do?" asked Ponni.

"The old man took a bundle of coloured cards from the basket and spread them on his mat. The parrot picked a pink card for me. The man read the card."

"Really . . ." before Ponni could say anything more, Sheela had pranced off.

¹⁶ Rice Porridge

That night was hot and stuffy. Ponni lay awake and restless, beside her mother.

"*Amma*" she began.

"Unskilled labourer."

"Hm. ... ?"

"Sheela got a pink card. It said she would study well and be a rich woman. I want the pink card too. Please give me 50 paisa."

"Shut up, Ponni. Don't pester me for money, again and again."

"*Amma*, when will I go to school, like Sheela?"

"Ponni, go to sleep. I told you, you can't go to school."

The next day, the children were in school and all was quiet. Ponni turned to see what the parrot was doing. The old man was wiping the dust off his spectacles. He had the cage beside him. Ponni got up, walked up to him, and asked softly, "Will you tell me my fortune?"

The man put on his specs and looked up. His face was wrinkled and his voice gruff.

"Give me 50 paisa."

Ponni shook her head, "I don't have any money."

"What?" asked the man raising his voice. "You think I run a free service? I have to earn a living

and feed the parrot too. Go away and don't come here without money."

Ponni went back to her place feeling sad.

It was a hot afternoon. Ponni was thirsty. She sat watching the parrot. It kept fluttering its wings as it hopped about in the cage. Ponni quietly tiptoed to the cage, and peered in. There were a few pieces of fruit and red chillies and a small water bowl. It was dry.

'Poor little parrot,' thought Ponni. 'It is thirsty.'

The old man was fast asleep on the mat. He was snoring.

"Wait, little bird," she whispered. "There is a tap across the road. I'll run across and get you some water." As she stood up to go, she heard a 'click,' and turned round. The parrot's flapping wings had hit the small bolt holding the cage door. The bolt slipped and the door flew open. The parrot was free to fly out. "Wake up old man," Ponni shouted a warning. The man continued to snore.

"Your parrot is about to escape, wake up," Ponni called out again. But the man was fast asleep.

The parrot flew off. It went straight to the tap and perched on it. Bending down, it began to drink the dripping drops of water. Ponni was happy the parrot had got what it wanted.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, because she saw a big black cat. It was crouching a few feet away from the tap and was ready to pounce on the parrot.

She went up to the old man and screamed, "Get up.

He stirred.

"Don't disturb me, you naughty girl. I told you I want 50 paisa, before I can do anything for you."

He turned round and went to sleep again.

Ponni looked about. There was nobody around whom she could call to help her catch the parrot. Only a car was parked in front of the school gate. Ponni decided to go to the parrot's rescue herself.

Hitching up her skirt, she sprinted across the road. With one quick movement she caught the bird. Chest heaving, she held the parrot close to her heart, her eyes closed in relief. Then she turned round and ran back to the shade of the *peepul* tree.

"Old man, here is your parrot. Take him," she shouted in his ears. He opened his eyes, blinking. "I told you not to disturb me. Why are you screaming?" he growled. He stretched his arms and yawned. Then he put on his specs and glared at Ponni.

"You naughty girl, what are you doing with my parrot? You want to steal the bird?" he asked her

rudely.

Tears welled up in Ponni's eyes.

"Leave my bird alone and go back to your place," he shouted and snatched the parrot from her.

Ponni burst into tears. She ran back to her place, wiping her tears with the skirt.

"Now, now, little girl, don't cry."

Ponni looked up and saw a stranger standing before her.

The old man is so rude to me," she sobbed. "She stole my parrot," said the old man, getting up to put the parrot back in its cage.

"I did not steal his parrot," Ponni wept aloud. "I only tried to save it."

"Save it, bah!" growled the old man. "This girl has no money. Her mother won't give her any. She is only a *coolie*. This girl is trying to steal my parrot and sell it."

"Quiet," commanded the stranger.

The old man sat still.

"I saw this girl saving your parrot. I came to the school to take my daughter home."

Just then, the school bell rang and the children came pouring out.

"Daddy," shouted Sheela, dashing across the

road.

"Daddy, this is Ponni I was talking to you about yesterday."

"Really! She is such a nice girl. But for her, a cat would have gobbled up this fellow's parrot." "Tell me all about it," cried Sheela, catching hold of Ponni's hands.

"Ponni, come let's go home." They turned round to see Ponni's mother coming towards them. Wiping beads of perspiration off her face with her *sari*, she looked at Ponni and at Sheela. Her gaze rested on Sheela's father.

"Ponni is a good girl," he told her. "My daughter likes her very much." He paused and continued, "I would like her to go to a school."

"But I can't afford it, Sir," said Ponni's mother, looking miserable.

"I know, I know. But that shouldn't worry you. I'll meet all the expenses. She can go to school with Sheela."

"Oh, Sir," was all the woman could say. She was so overwhelmed that tears of joy ran down her dusty face.

The old man edged close to Ponni. "Do you want the parrot to pick a card for you?" he asked hoarsely, removing his spectacles and wiping

them.

Ponni rushed towards the cage. Even before the old man could spread the cards fully on the mat, the parrot picked a card with its beak for Ponni. It was the pink card!

Ponni jumped with joy. "Thank you, old man, thank you, parrot dear," she burst out and turned to go home with her mother.

"Bye, bye, Sheela," she said.

"Bye, see you in school," Sheela replied.

KARTU MERAH MUDA

Ponni duduk di trotoar di depan SD Berrywood Girls. Ia menjual barang-barang untuk anak kecil. Selain pensil, penghapus, penggaris, tali sepatu, dan pita, ia juga menjual permen warna-warni dan perhiasan kecil. Semuanya ia jajakan di hadapannya di atas selembar kain goni.

Bel sekolah berbunyi. Ponni memandangi anak-anak yang bergegas masuk ke sekolah. Salah satu dari mereka berhenti di hadapannya.

“Pensil, cepat,” ucapnya.

“Ini,” Ponni mengambil sebuah pensil dan memberikan pensil itu kepadanya.

Ia meraih pensil tersebut dan berbalik untuk menyebrang jalan.

“Hei,” sahut Ponni, “kau belum bayar.

Harganya 25 paisa¹⁷.”

“Oh, maaf,” jawabnya seraya berjalan kembali menghampiri Ponni. “Bel sekolah sudah berbunyi. Aku buru-buru, makanya lupa.” Ia mengeluarkan 25 koin paisa dari tasnya dan memberikannya pada Ponni. “Ini, ambillah. Dan jangan panggil aku “hei”. Namaku Sheela.”

“Namaku Ponni,” ucapnya sambil tersenyum.

¹⁷ Unit mata uang di India (1/16 rupee)

Sheela menyebrangi jalan dan berlari menuju sekolah.

Malamnya, tatkala Ponni berbaring di lantai di sebelah ibunya dalam rumah kecil mereka, ia berkata, "Ibu, aku ingin sekolah, seperti Sheela."

"Ssst... Ibu tak punya uang untuk menyekolahkanmu."

Keesokan harinya, ketika Ponni duduk di tempat seperti biasa di bawah sebuah pohon beringin yang rindang, seorang pria tua datang menghampirinya. Ia membawa sebuah keranjang rotan kecil dan sebuah kandang burung. Juga segulung karpet yang ia selipkan di bawah lengannya. Ia menggelar karpet tua berdebu itu di bawah pohon dan duduk di atasnya, kemudian meletakkan keranjang serta kandang burung di sampingnya.

"Cuit... Cuit..." seekor burung kakatua hijau yang cantik berseru dari dalam kandang. Bel sekolah berbunyi, menandakan Jam sekolah telah usai. Anak-anak berbondong-bondong keluar dari balik pagar sekolah.

"Kau sedang melihat apa?" sahut Sheela pada Ponni seraya berlari keluar dari sekolah.

"Aku melihat pria tua itu. Aku heran, siapa ia sebenarnya?" jawab Ponni.

Sheela melihat pria tua itu dengan penasaran. "Aku rasa ia seorang peramal. Burung kakatua itu akan memberitahumu akan jadi apa kelak saat kau sudah dewasa. Menarik sekali! Besok aku harus membawa uang untuk mengetahui nasibku. Sampai jumpa!" Sheela pun pulang dengan terburu-buru.

Malamnya, ketika ibunya sedang membuat bubur, Ponni duduk di sampingnya dan meminta dengan halus, "Ibu, bolehkah aku meminta uang?"

"Untuk apa?" bentak ibunya.

"Aku ingin mengetahui nasibku. Sheela bilang burung kakatua tahu segalanya."

"Kau tau, Ibu tidak punya uang lebih, Ponni. Kita cuma bisa makan satu kali sehari. Kelak saat kau sudah dewasa dan menjadi buruh seperti kita akan bisa makan dua kali sehari."

"Oh, tidak, Bu." Ponni pun menangis, "Aku ingin sekolah."

"Lupakan saja tentang sekolah, anakku. Pergilah dan sapu lantainya sekarang."

Keesokan harinya Ponni duduk di bawah pohon beringin seperti biasanya. Sheela berlari menghampirinya dan berkata, "Ponni, tahukah kau apa yang dikatakan oleh si peramal? Aku akan belajar dengan baik dan menjadi kaya. Aku membayarnya 50 paisa."

“Lantas apa yang dilakukan oleh burung kakatuanya?” tanya Ponni.

“Pria tua itu mengambil seikat kartu warna-warni dari keranjang dan menebarkannya di atas tikar. Burung kakatuanya mengambil sebuah kartu merah muda untukku. Kemudian pria itu membacakannya.”

“Benarkah?” belum sempat Ponni mengatakan apapun, Sheela sudah berjingkrak-jingkrak.

Malam itu panas dan pengap. Ponni terjaga dan gelisah di samping ibunya.

“Ibu,” ucapnya.

“Hmm?”

“Sheela mendapat kartu merah muda. Kartunya mengatakan bahwa Sheela akan belajar dengan baik dan menjadi kaya. Aku ingin kartu merah muda juga. Tolong beri aku 50 paisa.”

“Diamlah, Ponni. Jangan mengangguku demi uang, lagi dan lagi.”

“Bu, kapan aku akan pergi ke sekolah, seperti Sheela?”

“Ponni, pergilah tidur. Ibu sudah bilang, kamu tidak bisa pergi ke sekolah.”

Keesokan harinya, ketika anak-anak tengah belajar di sekolah dan keadaannya hening. Ponni menoleh untuk melihat apa yang dilakukan burung

kakatua itu. Pria tua itu sedang membersihkan debu dari kacamatanya. Dia memiliki kandang di sampingnya. Ponni bangkit, berjalan ke arahnya, dan bertanya dengan lembut, "Maukah Anda memberitahu nasibku?"

Pria itu memakai kacamatanya lalu dan mendongak. Wajahnya keriput dan suaranya kasar.

"Beri aku 50 paise."

Ponni menggeleng, "Aku tidak punya uang."

"Apa?" tanya pria itu dengan lantang. meninggikan suaranya. "Kau pikir aku menjalankan layanan gratis? Aku harus mencari nafkah dan memberi makan burung kakatua ku juga. Pergi dan jangan datang ke sini tanpa uang."

Ponni kembali ke tempatnya dengan perasaan dengan perasaan sedih. Siang itu begitu panas, dan Ponni merasa haus. Ia duduk mengamati burung kakatua itu. Dia terus mengepulkan sayapnya ke sana kemari di dalam sangkar. Ketika melompat di dalam kandang, Ponni diam-diam mendekati sangkar dengan berjinjit dan mengintip dalam sangkar tersebut.

Ada beberapa potong buah, cabai merah, dan mangkuk air kecil yang kering.

"Burung kakatua kecil yang malang," pikir Ponni.
"Dia kehausan."

Pria tua itu tertidur pulas di atas tikar. Dia mendengkur.

"Tunggu, burung kecil," dia berbisik. "Ada keran di seberang jalan. Aku akan menyeberang dan mengambilkan air untukmu." Saat dia berdiri untuk berangkat, dia mendengar 'klik', dan berbalik. Kepakan sayap burung kakatua itu menabrak baut kecil yang menahan pintu sangkar. Baut itu tergelincir dan pintu terbuka. Burung kakatua itu terbang bebas. "Bangun, Pak Tua," Ponni berteriak memberi peringatan. Pria itu terus mendengkur.

"Burung kakatuamu lepas, bangun!" Ponni berteriak lagi. Tetapi lelaki itu tetap tertidur pulas.

Burung kakatua itu terbang. Ia menuju keran dan bertengger di atasnya. Membungkuk dan mulai meminum tetesan air yang menetes. Ponni senang burung itu mendapatkan apa yang diinginkannya.

"Oh, tidak!" Dia berseru karena dia melihat kucing hitam besar. Kucing itu berjongkok beberapa meter dari keran dan siap menerkam burung kakatua.

Dia menghampiri pria tua dan berteriak, "Bangun." Dia bergerak.

"Jangan ganggu aku, gadis nakal. Aku sudah bilang aku ingin 50 paisa sebelum aku bisa

melakukan apapun untukmu." Dia berbalik dan pergi tidur lagi.

Ponni melihat sekeliling. Tidak ada orang di sekitarnya yang bisa diminta bantuan menangkap burung kakatua. Hanya ada sebuah mobil yang di parkir di depan gerbang sekolah.

Ponni memutuskan untuk pergi menyelamatkan burung kakatua itu sendiri. Dia berlari menyeberang jalan. Dengan satu gerakan cepat dia menangkap burung itu. Dengan napas terengah-engah, dia memegang burung kakatua itu di dekat jantungnya, matanya tertutup lega. Lalu dia berbalik dan berlari kembali ke bawah pohon beringin yang rindang.

"Pak Tua, ini burung kakatua Anda. Bawalah dia." Teriak Ponni di telinga Pak Tua. Dia membuka matanya, dan berkedip. "Aku sudah memberitahumu untuk tidak menggangguku. Kenapa kamu berteriak?" dia membentak, dia meregangkan tangannya dan menguap. Kemudian dia memakai kacamata dan melotot ke Ponni.

"Apa yang kau lakukan pada burung kakatuaku, gadis nakal? Kau ingin mencuri burung itu?" bertanya dengan kasar.

Air mata menggenang di mata Ponni.

"Tinggalkan burungku sendiri dan kembalilah ke tempatmu." Ia berteriak dan merebut burung kakatua itu dari Ponni.

Ponni menangis. Dia berlari kembali ke tempatnya, menghapus air matanya dengan rok.

"Tenanglah, gadis kecil, jangan menangis."

Ponni menengadah dan melihat orang asing berdiri di depannya.

"Tapi pak tua itu begitu kasar kepadaku," dia terisak.

"Dia mencuri burung kakatuaku," kata pria tua itu bangun dan meletakkan burung kakatua kembali ke sangkarnya.

"Aku tidak mencuri burung kakatuanya," Ponni menangis dengan keras. "Aku hanya berusaha menyelamatkannya."

"Menyelamatkannya? Hah, omong kosong!" sahut pria tua itu dengan geram. "Gadis ini tidak punya uang. Ibunya tidak akan memberinya uang. Ia hanya seorang buruh. Gadis ini mencoba mencuri burung kakatuaku dan kemudian menjualnya."

"Diam," ujar si orang asing. Pria tua itu pun duduk diam.

"Aku melihat gadis ini menyelamatkan burung kakatuamu. Kebetulan aku datang ke sekolah untuk menjemput putriku."

Pada saat itu, bel sekolah berbunyi dan para siswa pergi keluar.

"Ayah," teriak Sheela sambil berlari menyeberang jalan.

"Ayah, ini Ponni yang Sheela ceritakan pada ayah kemarin."

"Sungguh! Dia adalah gadis yang baik. Jika bukan karena dia, seekor kucing pasti telah melahap burung kakatua itu." "Ceritakan semuanya padaku," teriak Sheela sambil memegang tangan Ponni.

"Ponni, ayo kita pulang." Mereka berbalik saat melihat ibu Ponni menghampiri mereka. Sambil mengusap keringat di wajahnya dengan sapu tangannya, dia memandang Ponni dan Sheela, akan tetapi tatapannya kemudian tertuju pada ayah Sheela.

"Ponni adalah gadis yang baik," kata ayah Sheela pada ibu Ponni. "Putriku sangat menyukainya." Dia diam sesaat, lalu mekanjutkan, "Saya ingin Ponni bisa bersekolah."

"Tapi saya tidak sanggup, Pak," kata ibu Ponni, tampak sedih.

"Saya mengerti. Ibu tidak perlu khawatir. Saya akan menanggung seluruh biaya sekolah Ponni. Dia bisa bersekolah bersama Sheela."

"Oh, Tuan," hanya itu yang bisa dikatakan wanita itu. Dia begitu terharu sehingga air mata kebahagiaan mengalir di wajahnya yang berdebu.

Orang tua itu mendekati Ponni. "Apakah kau ingin burung kakatua itu memilih kartu untukmu?" Ia bertanya dengan serak, melepaskan kacamatanya dan mengelapnya.

Ponni bergegas menuju ke arah sangkar. Bahkan sebelum pria tua menebarkan semua kartu ke atas tikar, burung kakatua itu telah mengambil kartu dengan paruhnya untuk Ponni. Itu kartu merah muda!

Ponni berjingkrak-jingkrak dengan gembira. "Terima kasih, Pak Tua, terima kasih, kakatua tersayang," dia berseru keras dan kembali pulang bersama ibunya.

"Selamat tinggal, Sheela," katanya.

"Sampai jumpa di sekolah," jawab Sheela.

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