

MENAK JINGGA
Menak Jingga

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MENAK JINGGA

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MENAK JINGGA

The Court Session in Siti Inggil

The scorching rays of the midday sun seeped through the roof-tiles of the Governor's residence, making it almost unbearable. Governor Logender repeatedly wiped the sweat off his brow and neck pacing back and forth, occasionally sitting down and getting up again anxiously. He was completely at a lost, having received the Queen's order to look for a person named Damarwulan. He was troubled not because he lacked the means to find Damarwulan, but rather because Damarwulan had been in fact living under his roof for the past few months, as the husband to Anjasmara, his eldest child.

"Is it true that he is capable of crushing the rebellion in Prabalingga just like the Queen has said? Why did Queen Kencana Wungu choose my son-in-law? Why not Layang Seta or Layang Kunitir? Aren't those sons of mine are mightier than Damarwulan?" muttered the Governor to himself.

"Sabdapalon...", the Governor called out.

"Yes, Master..."

"Fetch Damarwulan!"

“Right away, Master.”

With a reverent bow, Sabdapalon excused himself and soon disappeared from his sight

“Does Damarwulan possess a magicalmagical power that the Queen trust him to be able to crush the rebellion? Did she mistakenly choose him as the war’s commander in chief? The only thing he has ever been entrusted with is the care of those horses, for goodness sake.” those thoughts kept assaulting his mind.

“What if Damarwulan loses? My daughter will then become a widow, but if he wins, he would be crown King of Majapahit. Ah... there’s no way the son of the late Governor Maudara could defeat Menak Jingga. Ugh... what do I do now...?” the Governor moaned while staring at the roof-tiles with wandering thoughts.

On one hand, he had to prioritize the kingdom and yet on the other hand, he also had to think of his own family. He was truly vexed and did not know what to do. The Queen’s order had left him dismayed.

“Governor, did you call for me?”

A voice at the door startled Governor Logender, but his heart was a bit relieved when he found out that it was Damarwulan.

“Damarwulan, My Son-in-Law, have a seat! Why do you still call me Governor? Just call me father. Haven’t you become my son-in-law?” that was the only sentence that the Governor could muster.

“Alright, Father.”

“Now go and get yourself ready. Queen Kencana Wungu has asked me to bring you before her to discuss about a particular matter.”

“What do you mean, Father?” asked Damarwulan hesitantly.

“Queen Kencana Wungu has asked me to bring you for an audience with her,” repeated Governor Logender, “therefore let us go there immediately!”

“You mean today, Father?”

“Yes,” replied Governor Logender curtly.

When the sun was about to set in the west, the two of them went to the palace in the Governor’s carriage. On their way, passers-by would stop to show their respect, making a curtsy or simply bowing their heads reverently. Since the Governor’s residence was located in the King’s town, their trip was quite brief. When they reached the palace, Governor Logender and Damarwulan were directly led to Siti Inggil where many royal courtiers stood before the Queen.

“Your Highness, Governor Logender would like to see you,” said one of the guards to Queen Ayu Kencana Wungu with a reverent posture.

“Bring them to me right away!”

Shortly after, Governor Logender and Damarwulan were brought to her presence. Having showed their respect and taken their seat, Governor Logender said, “Your Highness, I would like to present Damarwulan to you.”

“Is that true, Uncle?”

“Yes, Your Highness. Here he is.”

“Young Man, are you Damarwulan?”

“Yes, Your Highness, I am Damarwulan,” replied Damarwulan, bowing his head.

“Governor, how could you find Damarwulan in only one day?”

“Allow me to explain it to you, Your Highness. Actually, Damarwulan has been living in the Governor’s residence for quite some time, but only now I could bring him to meet you.”

“No problem, Uncle. The most important thing is that now he is among us. Damarwulan, is it true that you have been living with Uncle Governor’s for a while now?”

“That is correct, Your Highness...” answered Damarwulan.

“Apologies, Your Highness ...” Governor Logender cut him short, “Damarwulan has been serving at the Governor’s residence. He has even become my son-in-law now since he married my eldest child Anjasmara three months ago.”

“Oh... I see,” hissed the Queen, “why was I invited, Uncle?”

“Please forgive me, Your Highness! Our country is in peril so I did not dare to hold any feast.”

“No big deal, Uncle Governor,” said Queen Kencana Wungu while observing Damarwulan closely. “Damarwulan... what your father-in-law has said is true. As we speak right now, the Regent of Blambangan or Menak Jingga is rebelling against Majapahit. Many have fallen. Several days ago, Uncle Regent of Tuban perished at Menak Jingga’s hands.” Queen Ayu Kencana Wungu was quiet for a while before continuing, “Therefore, I would like to ask for your help.”

“What can I do for you, Your Highness?” asked Damarwulan reverently.

“Are you able to crush that rebellion?”

“If it is your order for me, Your Highness, I am ready to do my utmost to accomplish the task.”

“Good. If you succeed, I will crown you the King of Majapahit. Do you have what it takes to win against Menak Jingga, Damarwulan?”

“I will try my best, Your Highness.”

“Alright, Damarwulan, now tell me who your parents are?”

“Your Highness...” Governor Logender intervened, “Damarwulan is the son of the late Governor Maudara.”

“What? What did you say, Uncle Governor? He is the son of the late Governor Maudara?”

“That is correct, Your Highness.”

“That explains it! If so, I have no doubt about your capability, Damarwulan. Go to Prabalingga immediately where Menak Jingga is now and he has even built his barracks there.”

“That means, within six or seven days, they will enter the King’s town, is that so, Your Highness?”

“Yes, Damarwulan. I order you to catch that Menak Jingga, dead or alive, and bring him to me!”

“I will, Your Highness.”

After finishing their discussion, Damarwulan and Governor Logender excused themselves. They had to walk across the

northern square before reaching the carriage parking lot. A breezy wind rubbed against their skin. It was so soft that Governor Logender yawned several times. A moment later, someone approached them and invited Governor Logender and Damarwulan to get on the carriage, which started to move slowly, leaving the palace behind. Thousands of thoughts were racking their brains, but they did not utter a single word. They preferred to keep silent, absorbed in their own thoughts.

“Damarwulan, why didn’t you propose to bring along your two younger brothers to Prabalingga? Are you sure you will be able to defeat Menak Jingga? Didn’t you always lose when fighting against Seta or Kunitir?” asked Governor Logender, breaking their silence.

Being bombarded with several questions at once, Damarwulan was a bit nervous in mustering his answer. “Apologies, Father. I did not expect Queen Kencana Wungu to give me a task to catch Regent Menak Jingga at all.”

“I should have given you a clue about it beforehand.”

“Yes, Father, if only you had told me earlier about the matter, I would have requested the Queen to let Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir come along with me as well.”

“Ah well, I will propose it myself to the Queen later. Why did we go home in a hurry? Ah... I am getting old and forgetful,” grumbled Governor Logender to himself.

Silence returned again between them. Not long after that, the carriage already entered the yard of the Governor’s residence. When the coachman pulled the bridle of his horses, the carriage came to a full top. He quickly jumped off to open the door and let his two masters get off the vehicle, with his head bowed reverently.

“Damarwulan, go and tell your wife about the Queen’s order!” suggested the Governor to his son-in-law.

“Alright, Father. Hopefully she will let me go!”

“Try to convince her!”

They parted with each other after saying goodbye at the porch. Governor Logender went inside the house directly, while Damarwulan had to turn left and walk towards the rear part of the house. The residence of Damarwulan and his wife was indeed located a bit far from the main house, but still within the Governor’s residential complex. Almost all of their relatives had heard their arrival.

“Brother..., Brother Damarwulan, stop for a minute!” called Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir, almost in unison.

Damarwulan didn't expect to see Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir there at all. Usually, even though it was already dusk, both of his brothers-in-law were still out of the residence. He himself was still at a loss trying to find a way to tell the Royal Queen's order to his wife.

"Brother Damarwulan, please stop for a while!"

"Where have you been, that you dressed up so well?" asked Layang Seta. Damarwulan turned his head to the left. He saw both of his brothers walking side by side, approaching him.

"Father invited me to come with him to meet the Royal Queen."

"Wow... so you've been there, then? Why were you the only one invited, Brother?" added Layang Kunitir.

"I have no idea. Actually Father wanted to invite you two as well, but you were not around the complex," replied Damarwulan, trying to console them.

"Brother, let's go and see our father," said Layang Kunitir while pulling a hand of Layang Seta.

Damarwulan remained silent seeing his brothers-in-law behaviors. After both of them were gone, he immediately went into the part of the house behind the right wing of the Governor's main residential building.

The Farewell

Damarwulan directly went inside but after a while, he was outside again, opening the left door to peek inside, before closing it again, as if he were looking for someone.

“My Wife Anjasmara ...where are you?” called Damarwulan.

Since there was no response, Damarwulan went back to the main room. Shortly after, he went outside again with a different outfit towards the back room. The room was actually used to store good ingredients for the family of the Governor. However, without anybody knowing, Damarwulan often used it to practice the martial art movements he had learned. Sometimes he had to repeat them several times to master them in order to be able to defend himself and attack his enemy.

He steadied his starting position, then occasionally jumped up with his left leg stretched forward and his right leg folded backward. Meanwhile, his both hands were folded too, forming two fists. Occasionally he would jump up high and swirl his body in the air two or three times before his feet stepped on the ground again.

When dark night fell, Damarwulan finished his workout. While wiping the sweat off his body, he walked away from that place in a leisure pace. A breeze of night wind stroked his wet face, drying drops of sweat all over his body. He intentionally slowed down

his steps while his eyes were wide-open staring at the garden under the dim moonlight.

However, everything remained still and looked obscure. The only visible thing was those leaves rustling, as if wanted to bid him farewell.

When Damarwulan was about to go inside his house, all of a sudden, there was a shadow running towards him, calling him out. “My Husband... My Husband Damarwulan..., where have you been since the afternoon? Why did you come home so late?” asked a tender voice, breaking the silence.

Damarwulan was not surprised at all when he heard the voice which he recognized well as his wife’s.

“My Wife Anjasmara, didn’t father tell you about where I went this afternoon?” asked Damarwulan.

“Ah, My Husband..., no, father did not tell me anything about you. Where have you been this afternoon?” whined Anjasmara.

“My Wife, this afternoon father invited me to come with him to the palace to see the Royal Queen Kencana Wungu,” answered Damarwulan with his eyes locked on his wife.

“Oh, why didn’t you tell me beforehand?”

“I wanted to, but you were not around. Now tell me, where have you been all afternoon?” it was not his turn to interrogate his wife playfully.

“I didn’t go anywhere, only visiting the princesses’ residence with the maids.”

“That’s why.... you were not here when I wanted to say goodbye.”

“Why didn’t you leave a message or write me a letter?”

“Forgive me, Darling, if only father had not been in such a hurry, I would have left you a message.”

“Ah... you’re such a bad husband!” Anjasmara whined, pinching her husband’s arm. “And then, after coming home from the meeting with the Royal Queen, where did you go?” pressed Anjasmara.

“Well, as usual... to the food storage.”

“You must have trained yourself hard again, right? Why did you bring me along? Ah...you are such a bad husband,” said Anjasmara with both hands beating her husband’s back intimately.

“Ouch... stop it, Darling! Now tell me where you have been yourself. When I got home you were nowhere to be seen,” replied Damarwulan.

“I had waited for so long, but you did not show up. So I went to see father, but only saw Uncle Sabdapalon and Nayagenggong. Both of them did not know where you and father had gone either.”

“But now you know, right?” Damarwulan teased his wife.

“Yes..., My Husband. Well...so Queen Kencana Wungu asked you to come and meet her. What’s the matter?”

Damarwulan did not know how to answer the question, because if he told her everything, his wife surely would not allow him to go to Prabalingga. However, if he did not tell her as it was, he would feel guilty for keeping this matter from her.

“My Husband Damarwulan, don’t you still love me?” asked Anjasmara with a lump in her throat, “if you do, please be honest to me!” she begged.

Unable to lie and out of his deep love for her, Damarwulan finally decided to break the news, “My Wife Anjasmara, Queen Kencana Wungu assigned me to eradicate the rebellion. Those rebels have set up barracks in Prabalingga,” answered

Damarwulan cautiously, not wanting to shock Anjasmara too much.

“What!? You will have to fight the rebels?”

“Yes, Dear Wife.”

“Please don’t go, Husband. Say no to her order! Was the Regent of Tuban recently killed several days ago, despite his magical power? I am so afraid to lose you. Please don’t go!” pleaded Anjasmara in tears.

“My Wife Anjasmara, if I refuse the Queen’s order, I don’t know what punishment shall be imposed on me. Your whole family will also be greatly impacted. That’s why you have to let me go to fight them, Darling!”

Anjasmara could not keep her tears from rolling down her cheeks and so she started to sob sadly, knowing her husband as a naïve and honest man, without any remarkable martial art skills. As far as she knew, his fighting ability was inadequate. She had seen how her husband was defeated repeatedly by her younger brothers, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir. She did not know though, that when Damarwulan was still a horse caretaker, he actually had only pretended to lose every time his two brothers-in-law invited him to practice their martial art skills.

“Husband, do you have a heart to leave me and the baby in my womb?”

“What, My Dear? Is it true..., is it true, My Dear Wife...?”

“Yes, Husband, according to the traditional healer, I am now pregnant.”

Damarwulan was very happy to hear about the good news. But when he remembered again the Queen’s order, he started to be restless again. Then he took his wife’s hand to take her inside their house. Anjasmara let herself be guided inside.

“Are you still determined to go to the battlefield?” asked Anjasmara tenderly.

Not wanting to break his wife’s heart, finally Damarwulan tried to console her.

“My Wife Anjasmara, if you wish, I will reconsider again the Queen’s order.”

“You mean it, right?” asked Anjasmara incredulously.

“Yes...” replied Damarwulan, smiling at her.

The crickets sang noisily amidst the grass, signaling that the evening had come. It was such a long night for Damarwulan. He

had let his wife sleep on his lap and only moved her to bed when he was sure she had been soundly asleep.

Damarwulan left the Governor's residence in a hurry. He planned to be out of the King's town early in the morning. Before he departed from the Governor's residence, his two uncles, Sabdapalon and Naya Genggong expressed their desire to come along with him.

However, Damarwulan only took Sabdapalon, the brawny one. Nayagenggong, who was plump and older than Sabdapalon was instead instructed to take care of Anjasmara.

At dawn, when the sunlight started to shine, the roosters were crowing one after another. The tinkling sound of a cart's bell was heard indistinctly every now and then. Anjasmara squirmed to the left with her hand groping around, looking for something. Afterwards, she opened her eyes and looked around the room.

"My Husband.... My Husband Damarwulan! Let's go outside and get some fresh air!" she said with a low voice, thinking that he was in the bathroom. However, having waited for a while to no avail, she rose from her bed and went to the back of their house, only to find an empty bathroom. She did not even see a single drop of water, a sign that somebody had recently used it. Anjasmara hurried back inside, starting to feel alarmed, thinking

that her husband might have gone to Prabalingga. Therefore, she immediately washed her face and got dressed.

When combing her hair, she saw a dry palm leave on which a poem was written.

Anjasmara ari mami

mas mirah kulaka warta

dasihmu tan wurung layon

aneng kutha Prabalingga

prang tanding lan wuru bisma

karia mukti wong ayu

pun kakang pamit palastra.

(Anjasmara my dear one

the apple of my eyes, seek the news,

of your love turned into a dead corpse

in the city of Prabalingga

having fought against Wuru Bisma

may you always be happy, lovely

allow me to die)

She read it over and over again in disbelief, wondering how her husband had a heart to leave her. Tears welled up in her eyes and finally she gave in to uncontrollable sobs.

“My Husband Damarwulan, let me come with you ...” cried Anjasmara. Having shed her tears for quite some time, she wiped them away and left her place a moment later.

The Protest of Anjasmara

Governor Logender was enjoying his fried banana and ginger coffee. Its sweet aroma, mixed with coconut sugar, was wafting in the whole room. While eating his snacks, he recalled again how his two sons, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir, had been upset for not being appointed to wipe out the rebels in Prabalingga.

“Father ..., Father ..., please help my husband Damarwulan, Father.” All of a sudden a woman came and threw herself at his feet while sobbing sadly.

“Be patient, My Daughter Anjasmara! Let us talk with peaceful hearts, so try to calm down, My Daughter!” said Governor Logender.

“Father, my husband Damarwulan has left last night. Didn’t you know that he does not possess adequate martial art skills? Why

did you have a heart to let him go?” Anjasmara could not hide her troubled heart.

“That’s right, My Daughter, I myself has seen Damarwulan practice with Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir. He was always defeated by your two brothers, but I could not do anything. It was the wish of Queen Kencana Wungu to send him there.”

“So you do not mind seeing me become a widow?” asked Anjasmara emotionally.

“Be patient, Anjasmara! Try to think clearly! Control your emotions!”

“Father..., isn’t it clear that my husband Damarwulan will lose against Menak Jingga?”

Governor Logender was totally at a lost. He could not bear seeing his eldest daughter suffer like that, after being left by her husband. While he was trying to find a solution, all of a sudden Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir showed up.

“Oh... it is fortunate that we come here this morning, Brother,” said Layang Kunitir to Layang Seta.

“What do you mean, Kunitir?” asked Layang Seta, oblivious to where his younger brother’s conversation was going.

“I mean, it is such a good coincidence that Sister Anjasmara is also here,” explained Layang Kunitir.

“Oh ..., is that what you meant?”

“Father...” Layang Kunitir struck a conversation. “Now what should I and Brother Seta do?”

Governor Logender remained silent, thinking hard. It was Anjasmara who broke the silence. “Seta and Kunitir, don’t you take pity on me? Your brother-in-law Damarwulan has left this residence this morning,” she explained to them.

“So that peasant guy has departed?” said Layang Kunitir, scorning his own brother-in-law.

“Watch your mouth, Kunitir!” scolded Anjasmara, who could not suppress her offended feelings.

“But it’s true! Damarwulan is indeed a peasant. Didn’t he come from Paluamba, a territory known for its aridity? What is it to be proud of about him? He even always loses when fighting against me, let alone against Menak Jingga! Isn’t it true, Brother Seta?” Layang Kunitir kept sneering at Damarwulan.

“Everything that you said is true, Kunitir. We are the ones who are supposed to destroy Menak Jingga.”

“Sons, please stop arguing! Try to think like adults and do not just think of your own interests! Damarwulan is accomplishing a royal task. If he succeeds in defeating Menak Jingga, we will also obtain the benefits from his triumph,” Governor Logender tried to stop his children’s dispute and to give them all a wise advice.

“Damarwulan is a good man which deserves to be with your sister Anjasmara. Had he been evil, your father wouldn’t have become a governor.”

“Why is that, Father?” Layang Seta sought further explanation.

“Know this, My Sons. His father was the Governor of Majapahit named Maudara. Since Brother Maudara passed away when Damarwulan was still a little boy, I was assigned to be his successor. I actually should have returned this position to him.”

“I am sure that Damarwulan does not know about this, Father,” interrupted Layang Kunitir.

“Who told you he does not know this? He has ever told me about it,” Anjasmara talked back.

“That’s why, you two, Seta and Kunitir, have to help your brother-in-law to make amends for my sin against Damarwulan,” said Governor Logender.

Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir remained silent, having heard the explanation of their father and eldest sister. Layang Seta felt

embarrassed inside to know that the man he had always looked down on turned out to be the official heir of this governor's residence, and not his father.

So was Layang Kunitir, having acknowledged the truthfulness of his father's words. Finally he was willing to help Damarwulan, despite the objection that started to arise in his heart. "If Damarwulan succeeds in defeating Menak Jingga, he will surely be crowned king. Won't you feel jealous? The one who is entitled to becoming a king is you, Layang Kunitir, not Damarwulan," an evil's whisper seeped through his mind.

While the thoughts of Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir soared to the heavens, Anjasmara intervened, "Father, I will go to see Queen Kencana Wungu and beg her to send a troop to help my husband."

"Alright, Daughter. Seta and Kunitir, accompany your sister to go to see the Queen!" instructed Governor Logender to Anjasmara's two younger brothers.

"We will, Father," said Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir.

The Majapahit Palace was not too crowded then. When the sun was still in the eastern horizon, the lower-rank governors were preparing their troops. They were getting ready to set out to Prabalingga to waylay the soldiers of Blambangan, who were planning to besiege Majapahit. However, not all governors were

going to Prabalingga, since some of them would remain within the surroundings of the palace. They were waiting for the additional troops just in case Damarwulan failed to defeat Menak Jingga.

That morning, Queen Ayu Kencana Wungu held a meeting inside the palace with her close relatives, family members, personal maids, and several governors.

“Brother Menak Koncar, how is the condition of Tuban Governor’s sons?” asked Queen Kencana Wungu, breaking the silence.

“Thanks to your prayers, Raden Buntaran and Raden Watangan are in God’s protection, Your Highness.”

“Thank God. Brother Menak Koncar, do you think Damarwulan will be able to accomplish the task?” asked Queen Kencana Wungu to the Governor of Lumajang.

Menak Koncar did not expect such a question at all. However, before he could answer, a court servant entered the room in a hurry.

“Your Highness, there are a woman and two men outside, asking to meet with you.”

“Let them come to me!”

Shortly after, a beautiful woman with two robust men came in. After they bowed in reverence, they took their seats at the left side of Menak Koncar.

“Apologies, Your Highness. I encouraged myself to come before you,” said the woman in a gloomy tone.

“What’s the matter?” asked Queen Kencana Wungu.

“I am afraid of losing my husband, Your Highness.”

“Husband ...? Who do you mean...?”

“My husband Damarwulan.”

“Oh, ... are you Anjasmara?” asked the Queen to the woman.

“I am, Your Highness. I’d rather die than losing my husband Damarwulan. Just kill me, Your Highness! Without him, my life would have no meaning,” said Anjasmara in tears.

“Anjasmara, why did you say so? Tell me the truth,” said the Queen tenderly.

“I don’t want my husband to go to the battlefield. My husband will surely be clobbered by Menak Jingga.”

“Anjasmara, do not be dismayed nor sad. You have to be sure that Damarwulan is able to defeat Menak Jingga. If he makes it, I will make crown him King of Majapahit.”

“But my husband Damarwulan is not a skillful fighter, Your Highness,” explained Anjasmara while wiping her tears away.

“Brother Damarwulan has never won against us when we practiced and fought against each other.”

“That is correct, Your Highness. Brother Damarwulan has never won a single fight against us.” Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir took turn in encouraging themselves to interrupt the conversation.

“Are you two also the sons of Governor Logender?”

“We are, Your Highness.”

“You must be Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir, then?”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“Anjasmara ..., in order to make your heart more peaceful, I order your two brothers to go to catch up with Damarwulan with a special troop, completely armed if necessary, to join him in the battlefield.”

The Barracks of Prabalingga

The Governor of Sumenep with a title of Mraja Dewasraya, the Governor of Bandung with a title of Mraja Dwantaka, and the Governor of Pamekasan with a title of Wong Agung Marsorah, started to get bored in the barracks. They grew impatient waiting

for the response from Queen Kencana Wungu which they considered too slow.

The three governors were planning to launch a sudden attack against Majapahit and immediately sought the advice from Menak Jingga for that purpose.

“Brother Dewasraya, I’m going to capture Kencana Wungu alive. I will force that Queen of Majapahit to keep her promise,” said Mraja Dewantaka while walking slowly.

“That Kencana Wungu is indeed out of line. She did not know what to do to deal with the rebellion led by Kebo Marcowet,” added Wong Agung Marsorah.

“Didn’t she finally come up with a contest?” asked Mraja Dewasraya.

“Yes, and that contest has been a dispute matter between Majapahit and Blambangan,” answered Wong Agung Marsorah.

“At that time, Kencana Wungu promised that whoever could defeat Kebo Marcowet, he would be crowned King of Majapahit and allowed to marry her. But after Jaka Umbaran had killed Kebo Marcowet, she didn’t keep her promise.”

“However, wasn’t Jaka Umbaran finally awarded with Blambangan area and made the Governor of Blambangan with a title of Menak Jingga or Wuru Bisma?” asked Mraja Dewantaka.

“Yes, that’s true. But if only Jaka Umbaran were still as robust and handsome as he used to be, Kencana Wungu would have kept her promise for sure,” said Wong Agung Marsorah.

“Are you saying that Menak Jingga used to be handsome?” interrupted Mraja Dewasraya.

“He was. When he was still living in Singajuruh Residence, a lot of women were crazy of him. Jaka Umbaran used to be handsome and patient. However, after his face was deformed by an evil spell and his legs were infected with *gundala seta* venom of Kebo Mercowet. Now he even limps when walking. He became an ill-tempered person since then,” explained Wong Agung Marsorah to Mraja Dewasraya.

“Who knows if the Menak Jingga title he received was actually a mockery?” Mraja Dewantaka wondered.

“What do you mean?” asked Wong Agung Marsorah, his brow furrowed.

“*Menak* means ‘a noble man’, ‘high-rank officer’, or ‘a rich man’, while *jingga* means ‘red’,” replied Mraja Dewantaka. Having paused for a while, he then continued, “Thus, *menak jingga* actually means ‘a short-tempered nobleman’.”

“Oh..., Kencana Wungu is incredibly sassy!” said Mraja Dewasraya and Wong Agung Marsorah almost in unison.

Having known more about the disputed matter, they grew more convinced that their action in defending Jaka Umbaran or Menak Jingga, who owned the Wuru Bisma title, was correct. Without realizing it, they already reached the main barracks. Inside the barracks, Governor Gajah Dhungkul, Baudenda, Carangwaspa, and Walikrama were already seated. Wong Agung Marsorah, Mraja Dewantaka, and Mraja Dewasraya soon entered to join the others.

Baudenda, Carangwaspa, and Walikrama, who were still close relatives of Menak Jingga, advised Wuru Bisma to immediately withdraw his troops from Prabalingga and to go back to Blambangan instead. Carangwaspa and Walikrama also advised the Governor to change his mind about assaulting Majapahit. According to them, Queen Kencana Wungu had nevertheless promoted Wuru Bisma by making him the Governor Blambangan with a title of Menak Jingga.

In his heart, Menak Jingga actually admitted that all the information and advices his two uncles had given him were true, but Dayun—Menak Jingga’s personal attendant—kept provoking and igniting his anger regarding this matter.

“Master...,” said Duyu, breaking the silence.

“What’s the matter, Dayun?” asked Menak Jingga.

“I agree heartily with Uncle Carangwaspa and Uncle Walikrama, that we’d better go back to Blambangan. However, the problem is that Queen Kencana Wungu has promised Jaka Umbaran one thing ...” Dayun paused for a while, “If I am not mistaken, this is what she has promised: if Jaka Umbaran could kill Kebo Marcowet, he would be crowned King of Majapahit and made husband of Queen Ayu Kencana Wungu, not only as the Governor Blambangan as you are now,” continued Dayun provocatively.

“Be quiet, Dayun!” scolded Baudenda with a rather harsh voice.

Dayun was immediately silenced. He just glanced at Menak Jingga out of the corner of his eyes while fiddling with his own thumbs.

“Brother Beudena, what Dayun has just said is true. Why are you angry?” Wong Agung Marsorah interrupted.

“The title of Menak Jingga granted by Kencana Wungu is also nothing but a mockery,” added Mraja Dewantaka, also provocatively.

“What do you mean?” growled Menak Jingga.

“Think about it, doesn’t Menak Jingga mean a grumpy nobleman?” explained Mraja Dewantaka.

“My Master Wuru Bisma,” Walikrama intervened, “we’d better stop bringing up this matter. Hasn’t Queen Kencana Wungu given the land of Blambangan and made you a Governor? Blambangan was even made an independent area,” Walikrama continued to advise his master tenderly.

Having heard the explanation of his uncle, the anger of Menak Jingga started to subside.

“If we go back to Blambangan, what about the two sons of the Governor of Adipati whom we have taken hostage, Uncle?” asked Menak Jingga, waiting for an explanation.

Walikrama was about to reply, but Governor Gajah Dhungkul was quicker in speaking up.

“Allow me to speak, Governor. Several days ago, our northern barracks were attacked by Menak Koncar,” replied Governor Gajah Dhungkul with a terrified face.

“What?? Uur barracks were attacked?” asked Menak Jingga with a raised voice. “Why didn’t you report before, Uncle Governor?” he scolded Governor Gajah Dhungkul.

“Forgive me, Governor. I have tried to chase Menak Koncar along with several soldiers, but we did not make it.”

“That Menak Koncar is such an insolent person!” All of a sudden Menak Jingga’s hand formed a fist which hit a glass chest near

him. Crash!!!! The glass chest was shattered in pieces as Menak Jingga was wheezing, consumed by his rage.

“Brother Marsorah, now exert all of the Blambangan troops to chase Menak Koncar! If we have to, we can destroy Majapahit right away!” said Menak Jingga, rising to his feet.

“I will, Brother,” replied Wong Agung Marsorah gladly. He did not even have to tell about the purpose of his coming.

Not long after that, the continuous loud sound of gong was heard, a signal that all soldiers were instructed to gather. They came running from each corner of the barracks into the southern part of the main building to join their own platoons. The first platoon was led by Governor Gajah Dhungkul, the second by Regent Marsorah, and the third by King Sareng. Meanwhile, Mraja Dewasraya and Mraja Dewantaka were in charge of the main troop. After they were all ready, they departed right away, carrying the greenish yellow Blambangan banner they were proud of on their shoulders.

Carangwaspa, Walikrama, and Baudenda tried to swallow their anger. Their advice was completely ignored by Menak Jingga. Nevertheless, the three of them still advised Menak Jingga to not go to the battlefield to lead the war. Menak Jingga was requested to remain in the main barracks. Only if the main soldiers of

Blambangan lose that he would be allowed to go to the battlefield himself.

When the soldiers of Blambangan had set out towards Majapahit, the sun was already moving to the western horizon. Only then Sabdapalon started to feel tired. He walked slowly behind Damarwulan.

“Master ... let us have a break for a while. I feel nauseated,” said Sabdapalon to Damarwulan.

“Uncle ..., weren’t you once a vagabond expert?” Damarwulan asked him while continuing to move forward.

Sabdapalon did not have a chance to answer since the sound of galloping horses was heard from a far and was now getting louder. Gradually the pompous red and white banner started to be seen. At first Damarwulan furrowed his forehead, but then his face was beaming again.

“Uncle, look ...the soldiers of Majapahit are coming for us,” he said to Sabdapalon.

“Their uniforms look like those of the Governor’s residence.”

“You are right, Uncle. It looks like Brother Dinda Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir are coming to help us,” said Damarwulan.

Damarwulan's assumption, that those were the soldiers led by Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir, turned out to be true. Apparently, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir saw Damarwulan and Sabdapalon who were taking a rest so that Layang Seta gave a signal to the soldiers of Majapahit to stop there as well.

"Brother Damarwulan ...why are you going to the battlefield by foot?" asked Layang Seta.

Rather than answering the question, Damarwulan asked him back, "Brother Layang Seta, where are you taking these soldiers?"

"We have been ordered by Queen Kencana Wungu to catch up with you to besiege Prabalingga. Here, we have a horse for you, Brother," explained Layang Seta, pointing at a horse at his left side.

Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir finally told Damarwulan about how their sister, Anjasmara, went to talk to Queen Ayu Kencana Wungu. Thanks to her boldness, they were ordered to catch up with him along with a third of Majapahit soldiers who had been ready in the King's town.

The sun started to set, signaling that the night was approaching. The soldiers of Majapahit were instructed to set up temporary barracks as their resting place. Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir stayed in the main barracks with Menak Koncar. They devised a strategy to besiege Menak Jingga's fort. If it worked out, they

would plan their next ambush against Blambangan. Their battle plans and strategies to paralyze their enemies had been laid carefully. When the eerie night reached its peak and drops of dew started to fall to the ground, they agreed to take turns in taking a rest.

The Battle at River Kendhil

When the roosters started to crow incessantly, the soldiers of Majapahit woke up one by one and immediately prepared themselves by taking a shower first or simply washing their faces. After all of them were ready, the soldiers of Majapahit continued their journey towards Prabalingga. Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir led the battalion, while Damarwulan and Menak Koncar remained at the back.

Time went by so quickly, and the Majapahit soldiers had passed through several jungles. They only passed a few villages only since they intentionally avoided public attention. When the sun was exactly above their heads, the Majapahit soldiers were already leaving Pasuruhan behind. Having passed River Kendil with its clear water, Damarwulan's forehead was suddenly furrowed. He heard indistinct sound of thundering footsteps from the opposite direction. At first he doubted about what he had heard, but having concentrated fully, the sound grew more distinct.

“Brothers Seta and Kunitir, don’t you hear something suspicious?” asked Damarwulan, slowing down his horse.

Having furrowed his forehead for a moment, Layang Seta replied him, “You’re right, Brother Damarwulan, I also hear it.” Layang Seta soon made his horse stop galloping. Then he ordered the whole troop to stop and get ready for anything. Shortly after, the thundering sound became closer and closer. Damarwulan was right, the sound belonged to the footsteps of thousands of soldiers, ready to fight with their holding spears, shields of combat, clubs, and many other weapons.

Damarwulan did not flinch at all to see such a large troop in front of him, being assured of the skills of the trained Majapahit soldiers. Therefore, he immediately told Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir to set *diradameta* formation, a combat arrangement which he predicted would be efficacious to repress the enemies’ movement.

Seeing the troop in front of him devise a war strategy, the leader of the battalion from the east was taken aback for a moment. When they recognize the red and white banner fluttering in front of them, they then became aware that those in front of them belonged to the troop of Majapahit. They immediately counterbalanced it by devising another formidable war strategy called *samudra rob*. The leaders started to shout various orders. Signals to devise the combat strategies were heard out loud. The

war was about to break out and it was just inevitable. However, before it erupted, two figures from the east were seen on horses, approaching the troop of Majapahit.

Upon seeing those two approaching figures, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir spurred their horses right away to go meet them.

“Are you the leaders of Majapahit troop?”

“Yes.”

“I am Wong Agung Marsorah and I will take Kencana Wungu to Blambangan and capture Menak Koncar! If Menak Koncar is handed to me and Kencana Wungu keeps her promise, this war will not take place.”

“Know this, Wong Agung Marsorah, we are accomplishing the mission from Queen Kencana Wungu to eradicate the rebellion and to crush your troop in Prabalingga. We will capture that brazen Governor Menak Jingga alive!” said Layang Seta confidently.

“Do not twist the truth. We would not have rebelled had Kencana Wungu kept her words. She should be willing to be the wife of Jaka Umbaran and crown him the King of Majapahit as she has promised him!” Wong Agung Marsorah tried to defend Menak Jingga from the accusation.

They kept arguing in such a heated argument, without anybody willing to give in. Each of them deemed their own opinion to be the right one. When they could no longer suppress their emotions, Wong Agung Marsorah gave a signal to his troop to attack the soldiers of Majapahit. Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir did likewise by immediately giving a signal to the Majapahit soldiers. The war was indeed inevitable. The soldiers of Blambangan were like billowing waves which crushed the enemies' defense with incessant blows. However, the attacked Majapahit soldiers were impenetrable and as steadfast as the black rocks in the sea.

When the sun started to set in the west, the soldiers of both troops kept falling one by one. Some were without limbs, and some with lacerated stomachs. Some even had fractured skulls. Red blood was splattered everywhere and its foul smell started to stink. When the war had been going for quite some time, the troop of Majapahit was cornered since their number was way smaller. Therefore, Damarwulan inched closer to Layang Seta and suggested him to change the war formation into *supit urang*.

Layang Seta then gave a particular signal to the soldiers of Majapahit. A moment later, the uproar amidst the battlefield was inevitable. The troop of Sumenep used that opportunity to launch a ferocious assault from the left side. They thought the soldiers of Majapahit had started to run helter-skelter.

Since they were changing their war strategy, the soldiers of Majapahit just withdrew defensively and took several steps backwards. However, within a relatively short span of time, they out of sudden attacked from sideways like a lobster stinging its rivals. The soldiers of Sumenep immediately tried to withdraw but it was too late since the soldiers of Majapahit had already hemmed them in. The soldiers of Sumenep fell down one by one, dying.

Upon witnessing the scene, Wong Agung Marsorah, Mraja Dewantaka, and Mraja Dewasraya soon divided the tasks among them. Wong Agung Marsorah immediately invaded the main troop of Majapahit led by Layang Seta, while Layang Kunitir had to face Mraja Dewantaka at the left side. In another corner, Damarwulan was facing Mraja Dewasraya.

Layang Seta was so confident in fighting against Wong Agung Marsorah. When Wong Agung Marsorah attacked with his right arm while making a quick jump, Layang Seta intentionally clashed his elbow against his enemy's hand to calculate his strength. Thump! Their hand and elbow met, both shuddered and were hurled backwards.

“It's crazy ..., his strength is formidable,” thought Layang Seta. They rose to their feet again and started to attack each other with their most dangerous blows.

In another spot, Layang Kunitir was a bit overwhelmed in facing Mraja Dewantaka. He was tottering and even fell into a sitting position when Mraja Dewantaka landed one blow on his stomach. However, not wanting to give in yet, Layang Kunitir rose instantly and a moment later launched his counterattack by stretching his left hand, while the right one was folded on his chest. Then he jumped and exerted all of his power to assault Mraja Dewantaka.

“I’ll bash you... prepare to die, Dewantaka!”

Mraja Dewantaka didn’t want to get hurt. Therefore, he shifted sideways while aiming his right hand to hit Layang Kunitir’s stomach. Layang Kunitir changed his attack right away. While dodging out the blow, Layang Kunitir dropped his body while his feet swept across the defense of Mraja Dewantaka.

Bang!! Bluff!!

Mraja Dewantaka’s face twisted in pain, having failed to avoid the attack. The scene last only one second. They rose again and continued to combat against each other.

In the meantime, Menak Koncar went head to head with Governor Gajah Dhungkul, while Baudenda was ambushed by Sabdapalon. They were attacking each other and dodging out of their respective blows. At times they had to jump around in order

not to get hurt. Several movements had been exerted, but so far there was no winning or losing side.

On the other one, Damarwulan did not find it too difficult to fight against Mraja Dewasraya. He managed to break almost all of Mraja Dewasraya's attacks. Some of his kicks sometimes hit his enemy. At first, Mraja Dewasraya had been so confident to be able to beat his opponent. However, having failed with several of his movements, Mraja Dewasraya started to be jittery, realizing that his opponent turned out to be stronger than he had expected.

When the sun was about to disappear completely from the sky, Mraja Dewasraya intensified his attacks without delay. He wanted to end the battle soon. Mraja Dewasraya jumped to release his even more powerful blows. His attacks became more ruthless and fierce. He jumped while sending a blow with his hand to the opponent's chest. Damarwulan only tilted his body slightly, and kicked his enemy's stomach with one leg. Shoop! Mraja Dewasraya was shocked by such a sudden attack. He did not expect Damarwulan to be able to counterattack with perilous movements.

Not wanting to get hurt in the stomach, Mraja Dewantaka dropped himself to the ground and rolled away. Then he bounced up and landed a bit far from Damarwulan. All of a sudden he bent his left leg forward, while his right leg was stretched right

backwards. Then, he soared high to crush Damarwulan's head with his hand.

“Be prepared to die, Arrogant Brat! Huff...!”

Damarwulan recognized it to be his opponent's *brajamusti* movement. To avoid being killed by such a potent strike, he swiftly crossed both arms in front of his chest and spread his legs wide. In an instant, Damarwulan was ready with his excellent *tameng waja* movement. A second later...Clank! Boom! A violent collision occurred. Mraja Dewasraya's blow seemed to have hit a strong steel wall. It bounced back to his chest. He felt as if his heart was ripped out of his body, which was flung backwards. His eyes started to see stars, and a moment later, thud! He fell hard on the ground.

He was gasping for breath for several seconds, and then his got stiff, forever. On the other hand, Damarwulan also shuddered for a moment and tottered several steps backwards. Nevertheless, his feet were still fixed on the ground.

Damarwulan was dazed for a while, before he managed to glance around him. He saw Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir were still battling against their enemies. Damarwulan was a bit doubtful about the ability of Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir in defeating their enemies, and so his heart grew anxious.

While anxiety was still unsettling Damarwulan's mind, he was already shocked by a loud noise. Wham! Layang Kunitir's body was pushed several steps backwards, having been hit by his opponent's blow. Layang Kunitir tried to defend himself, but his head was spinning around. He grimaced before falling into a sitting position.

"You Arrogant Brat, call your parents before I send you to hell," insulted Mraja Dewantaka as he jumped to strike Layang Kunitir, who was in a lot of pain. However, out of the blue, a shadow flashed and snatched his wrist. The shadow now lunged forward with a powerful force. "Ouch...!" Mraja Dewantaka only managed to utter a painful scream, before, whooz... thud...! His body flung and hit a tree trunk. His eyes bulged, staring at Damarwulan full of hatred. He let out a low moan of anguish before his body froze.

Layang Kunitir was ready to surrender to his fate, thinking that his enemy was about to put an end of his life, but, having heard a painful groan at his side, he slowly opened up his eyes. The body of his enemy sprawled right beside him.

"Were you the one who have saved me, Brother?"

"Just try to concentrate your thoughts. Send them to the injured parts of you body. Take a deep breath!" advised Damarwulan.

"Thank you, Brother Damarwulan!"

While closing his eyes, Layang Kunitir followed Damarwulan's advice. In no time, the body of Layang Kunitir gradually recovered. He had never thought that Darmawulan would have been able to defeat his enemy in just one movement, while he previously had exerted tens, even hundreds of them to paralyze Mraja Dewantaka, to no avail. In fact, he was almost killed trying.

He also wondered how come his brother-in-law, who he had always clobbered during their fight practice, could defeat Mraja Dewantaka in such a short time.

Both parties agreed to cease the battle when the night fell. When all victims were gathered, the soldiers of Blambangan then found out that Mraja Dewantaka and Mraja Dewasraya had died with their bodies badly disfigured.

Battle Inside the Palace

After taking a break for a while, Menak Koncar walked around the barracks together with Darmawulan. They went to check the barracks one by one. Damarwulan and Menak Koncar were touched when they saw the injured ones. Apparently there were quite a lot of them from the Majapahit's side. Some had broken arms, some had their chest scratched by the swords, and some had even speared left stomach. Damarwulan could not bear seeing the bruised, stiff hands of Panjawi and Parapat.

“Hang on, Brother!” said Damarwulan while sprinkling the concoction power from a tiny tube he always put inside his pants pocket. Panjawai grimaced in pain when the concoction touched his wound, but only for a second. Shortly after that, he already got better. Menak Koncar also attended the wounds of Parapat skillfully. Now and then he passed him pure air to help boost Panjawi’s immune system. When they continued to check the other parts of the barracks, occasionally Damarwulan heard painful groans.

“Sir Menak Koncar, what if I directly sneak into Prabalingga?” asked Damarwulan breaking the silence.

Menak Koncar was startled at the question. After being quiet for a while, he then replied with another question, “Why don’t we finish this battle first?” said Menak Koncar while staring at Damarwulan.

“Rather than witnessing more victims, I prefer to go directly to Prabalingga to challenge Menak Jingga in a duel.”

“Oh, I see.”

“I will try to defeat Menak Jingga, Sir. If I can beat him, the war between Blambangan and Majapahit will be over soon,” Damarwulan tried to convince Menak Koncar.

“Damarwulan, if you go to Prabalingga, what will become of us in the battle tomorrow? Don’t they still have some powerful warrior?” Menak Koncar asked again.

“Sir, didn’t you see that our troop had an equal strength when fighting the enemy in the battle this afternoon? Tomorrow morning, the force of Blambangan will be greatly impacted by the death of Mraja Dewantaka and Mraja Dewasraya. In my opinion, our troop will still be able to fight valiantly without me, or at least, the soldiers of Majapahit will be able to defend themselves well,” explained Damarwulan.

“So, you still insist on going to Prabalingga?”

“If you allow me, Sir,” answered Damarwulan briefly.

“Alright, but do not go there alone. Take some guards with you!” advised Menak Koncar to Damarwulan.

“I will only take Uncle Sabdapalon with me.”

“When are you leaving?” asked Menak Koncar.

“Right away, Sir.”

“Take a good care of you!”

When the night grew darker, two shadows were seen flashing from one tree to another. At first it seemed that they were just

running, but their pace became faster and faster, even to the point of seemingly chasing one another.

“Master Damarwulan, we will get there there soon.”

“Hopefully we will arrive in Prabalingga before the rooster crows, Uncle. Uncle Sabdopalon, are you still strong enough to keep running?”

“I would even make it until Banyuwangi, not only until Prabalingga, Master. Let’s get going!” replied Sabdopalon while darting forward ahead of Damarwulan.

Damarwulan had to cast his *abur raga* spell to be able to catch up with his uncle. The two shadows again looked like chasing each other. The moon above the clouds was smiling at the sight of those two human beings, with their quirky attitudes, which sometimes looked funny, but at times could bring about disaster as well.

Despite its dim reflection, Damarwulan and Sabdopalon could make a use of the moonlight to light their path. They ignored the biting cold of the night and the freezing drops of dew. They kept pressing on towards the east until the barracks of Blambangan troops were clearly seen.

“Sssh..., do not enter through the front gate, Uncle! There are too many guards around it,” whispered Damarwulan to Sabdopalon.

“Let’s sneak in through the side or rear gate. There must be fewer guards there,” added Damarwulan, still in a whisper.

Sabdapalon nodded his head approvingly. They started to tiptoe towards the left side. After several rounds, they finally found the main barracks. However, surprisingly, the place was not closely guarded. In the dim light, the building looked more sturdy and bigger than the other parts of the barracks. There were only four people walking to and fro around it. The four of them were not even particularly guarding the main barracks.

Damarwulan immediately sneaked in and paralyzed those guards one by one, without making any sound. Afterwards, he put those helpless guards in a sitting position as if they had been sleeping, with bowed heads and hands still on their spear. Damarwulan had no time to waste. Therefore, he quickly went inside.

Having entered the barracks, Damarwulan was taken aback for a moment to see how clean and orderly internal part of the room was. While he was still in a daze, a sound of laughter was heard, at first not too loud, but eventually it became deafening.

“How dare you to enter this area!”

Damarwulan was well aware of being attacked by *bledheg sayuta* spell. Therefore, he quickly took out his ivory flute and blew into it tenderly while exerting his latent energy. Tulit tulit tu ... lit ... tu ... lit the sound of Damarwulan’s flute counterbalanced the

spell. All of a sudden, a shadow was flashing down towards Damarwulan.

“Do not think that you have won because you managed to break my spell! What on earth are you doing in this room?”

“I am looking for Menak Jingga!” replied Damarwulan brusquely.

“I am Menak Jingga, as known as Wuru Bisma or Jaka Umbaran!”

“I knew it. Come with me to Majapahit to talk to Queen Kencana Wungu!” ordered Damarwulan.

“What ...?” asked Menak Jingga with clenched teeth.

“Come with me to see Queen Kencana Wungu! Then I will beg her to forgive you.”

“Ah ..., so you’re an ally of Kencana Wungu! How dare you to underestimate the Governor of Blambangan. Shabby Brat, you’d better try to remember your own name before I send you to hell!” he bellowed.

“You’re right, I am indeed a shabby kid from Majapahit. My name is Damarwulan and his is my uncle Sabdapalon.”

“Come altogether to face me, you two! Menak Jingga is never afraid of anymore, let alone two shabby persons like you. Follow

the fate of the Governor of Tuban who perished pathetically right here!”

“Don’t gloat too fast, Menak Jingga! I already see the signs of death in your face,” replied Sabdapalon valiantly. “We’re not going to gang up on you. I will let my master send you to hell!” continued Sabdapalon while looking for a place to sit down.

“Damarwulan, what are you defending Kencana Wungu for? She would for sure break her promise, even if you could beat me.”

“Uhm...” in response to it, Damarwulan only cleared his throat.

“I was successful in crushing the rebellion of Kebo Marcowet. I even managed to kill that man, but Kencana Wungu’s promise to crown me King of Majapahit and to make me her husband turned out to be nothing but empty words.” Menak Jingga tried to influence Damarwulan.

“Menak Jingga, you have been obsessed by greed and envy. If you continue to behave that way, you will be forever disappointed. Hasn’t Queen Kencana Wungu given you a just reward for what you have done for her?” Damarwulan tried to talk some sense into Menak Jingga.

“It’s not enough. She promised me to become the King of Majapahit, not the Governor of Blambangan. A part of it, she also promised to make me her husband!”

“Oh, Menak Jingga ... why don't you look at yourself in a mirror? Do you think someone a Queen deserves to marry someone with a scarred face like that?”

“Shut up!” growled Menak Jingga.

“Be mindful of who you are. Withdraw your troops from Prabalingga so that no more people get killed,” Damarwulan still tried to persuade him.

“Damarwulan ...stop lecturing me! I have already obtained a profound knowledge of this life. It is Kencana Wungu that might need your advice, not me. Remind her to keep her promise to marry me! If my face had not been disfigured like this, she would have run after me for sure.”

“Those golden days have passed, Menak Jingga. Now you better accept the reality. Even the peasant girls would be terrified to see your face now, so do not dream to win Queen Kencana Wungu's heart,” said Damarwulan bluntly, without really meaning to insult him.

“Damarwulan ... be prepared! I will ruin your face and impair your feet so that Kencana Wungu also will dump you the way she dumped me. I'll be glad to see you end up like me ha ... ha ... ha...” Menak Jingga laughed bitterly while jumping on Damarwulan.

It had been awhile since Damarwulan braced himself for the attack. When Menak Jingga finally struck, he only tilted his body slightly to the left while launching a hard kick with his left leg to the opponent's stomach. Menak Jingga was aware that his first blow would have failed. When Damarwulan's foot kicked his stomach, he swiftly reached out his hand to snatch Damarwulan's ankle. However, Damarwulan did not want his foot to be injured so when Menak Jingga's hand almost touched his foot, the long-stretched leg was quickly swirled into a half circle. Woot!!

Damarwulan's foot almost nailed a forceful kick on Menak Jingga's head. However, being a tough and experienced warrior, Menak Jingga managed to dodge Damarwulan's attack by dropping himself to the ground, with his right leg sweeping across Damarwulan's left leg. Now it was Damarwulan who was getting cornered. He jumped high quickly and swirled around several times in the air before treading his feet on the ground again, several steps from where Menak Jingga was. The duel went on and got more perilous.

Menak Jingga started to intensify his attacks, but Damarwulan kept managing to counterbalance them all. When Damarwulan succeeded in hitting Menak Jingga's back... Bang! Menak Jingga's body only shook slightly.

“This man is quite tough,” thought Damarwulan, “I have to counterbalance his strength with my agility, if I don’t want to let him put a tragical end to my life.”

“Go on and show me all of your most powerful movements, Damarwulan! Don’t hold them back!” exclaimed Menak Jingga.

“Don’t gloat too fast, Menak Jingga!” sneered Damarwulan while hurling himself towards Menak Jingga. “Feel this blow!”

Woot...Bang!

Menak Jingga was startled to see how agile his opponent was. He could not believe what he was seeing and so he did not have time to avoid Damarwulan’s hand which landed on his back.

Bumm! Menak Jingga tumbled, rolling over and over. Nevertheless, in a wink of an eye he could jump and stand up again.

“How dare you, Damarwulan!” shouted Menak Jingga furiously. He then sent a counterattack to Damarwulan’s direction. This time his blow was much more fatal than the previous ones. Menak Jingga was like a starving tiger, prowling to devour its victim, while Damarwulan was like an eagle hovering effortlessly to avoid the blows while looking for a good opportunity to peck at its prey. Their duel was heated and tremendous. One of them relied on the strength of his muscles while the other counted on

his agility. They lost track of how many movements they had exerted against each other.

At one point, Menak Jingga tossed himself up high, before landing several inches from Damarwulan. All of a sudden he stomped his feet three times...thud ... thud ... thud ... and the earth started to tremble. When Damarwulan was stunned, Menak Jingga sent a deadly kick towards his chest. To avoid getting hurt, Damarwulan pulled his chest slightly while his both hands hit his opponent's feet, twisting the power in Menak Jingga's kick. The result was incredible. Woot...Wham! Menak Jingga fell on his back.

After several failed attempts, and having been cornered by his rival, Menak Jingga became more impatient to end the battle. All of a sudden, his right fingers grabbed something out of his clothes and in just seconds he already held a club, which he lifted above his head, while his left hand formed a fist and was crossed in front of his chest. At the same time, he folded his right leg backwards. Instantly his hand became as red as fire.

“Tapak geni spell!” thought Damarwulan.

“Cry out to your patron god before I crush you to death with my hand, Damarwulan! No one has escaped alive from my yellow iron club!” threatened Menak Jingga as he swung the yellow club

in his hand. After that, he screamed, “Heeyaaa...!” while jumping to whack Darmawulan’s head with it.

In an instant Damarwulan had loosened his belt. The belt he had been wearing was actually a deadly weapon, an heirloom from his guru. It had a form of a whip, but it could be used like a belt. In a wink of an eye Damarwulan was ready with his mainstay spell, namely *tameng waja*.

Menak Jingga had a moment of doubt when he saw Damarwulan’s weapon. However, he had made up his mind to immediately bring down his opponent. The yellow iron club of Menak Jingga was swooshed ferociously towards Damarwulan’s head. But before it could hit the head of Damarwulan, a thundering sound of a cracking whip was heard, smashing his prominent weapon. Tar ..., tar ..., tar ...! Two formidable forces collided.

Damarwulan was pushed several steps backwards. His feet were trembling and he almost lost his balance. He finally fell in a sitting position with his hand still holding on to his whip. In the meantime, Menak Jingga’s convulsed. It was as if his hand had hit a piece of indestructible steel. His blow was bounced back to his own body. He tottered backwards a little bit before his back leaned on a wall. Menak Jingga tried to rise up with great difficulties. After that, he jumped to pounce on Damarwulan, who was still sitting limply.

Though his sight was blurry, Damarwulan could still see the motion of Menak Jingga who was about to pounce on him. Exerting his remaining power, he cracked the whip in his hand. “*Sendal pancing!* Tar...! Tar...! Tar...! A moment later, a thumping sound was heard. Menak Jingga plummeted, having been hit by Damarwulan’s whip.

After sitting cross-legged for a moment to concentrate consciousness, the condition of Damarwulan was gradually getting better. Though his back and arms were badly bruised, he ignored the tingling pains. He quickly gathered his belt, but was very surprised when he found out that the yellow iron club of Menak Jingga was stuck in the coil of his own belt. After he inserted both weapons behind his clothes, Damarwulan immediately looked for his uncle Sabdapalon. Apparently, Sabdapalon had passed out beside the corner of the room. After Darmawulan helped him regain his consciousness, Sabdapalon told him that he had fight against Dayun, the loyal servant of Menak Jingga with rigid, lifeless body at a corner.

The Sly Trick of the Two Brothers

The death of Menak Jingga had caused uproar in the whole barracks and greatly discouraged the high-rank officers of Blambangan. However, after those leaders had surrendered to Damarwulan, the uproar in the barracks abated. They were ready to be brought to Majapahit.

“Uncle Carangwaspa and Uncle Walikrama,” said Damarwulan breaking the silence, “we have to immediately stop the enmity between Blambangan and Majapahit.”

“I agree, Master,” replied Carangwaspa.

“Therefore, in order to keep the victims from falling, you two have to come with me to the battlefield right now,” ordered Damarwulan sternly.

“We’re ready, Master.”

Shortly after, four horses were seen leaving the barracks of Blambangan troops, heading west. Clouds of dust were scattered about. When the sun had risen for quite some time, Damarwulan, Carangwaspa, and Walikrama reached the battlefield. Apparently the war had commenced again.

“Soldiers of Blambangan and Majapahit ..., stop this fight! Stop this fight right away!” roared Damarwulan. The battle was immediately suspended for awhile since Damarwulan’s voice was thundering that it deafened their ears.

“We are all brothers! Know that we fight only due to our own avarice! Now it is over. Look, the body of Menak Jingga is now lying lifeless!” continued Damarwulan while pointing at the corpse of Menak Jingga.

All eyes gazed at Menak Jingga’s corpse on the back of a horse.

“Therefore, lay down all of your weapons! I assure you that the soldiers of Majapahit will not attack,” said Damarwulan while taking several approaching steps.

“Soldiers of Majapahit, back off several steps!” ordered Damarwulan with a piercing voice.

The war was then over. They all agreed with the words of Damarwulan. When the sun started to move to the west, the war was completely over. The leaders of both parties finally agreed to withdraw their respective troop to their own barracks. Layang Seta, Layang Kunitir, and Menak Koncar hurried to meet Damarwulan.

“Brother Damarwulan, you turned out to be a powerful and skilled warrior. Forgive my attitudes towards you all this time, Brother!” said Layang Seta to Damarwulan.

“Accept my apologies as well, Brother! I have never thought that would be able to kill Menak Jingga,” said Layang Kunitir.

“Oh well ..., forget everything! I am still Damarwulan, the son of the late Governor Maudara, who once was a horse caretaker at the Governor’s residence,” replied Damarwulan, without intending to insinuate anything. However, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir became embarrassed when they heard his statement.

The soldiers of Majapahit had to stay overnight before returning to the King's town, while those of Blambangan returned right away to the barracks in Purbalingga. Damarwulan, Menak Koncar, Carangwaspa, and Walikrama accompanied the soldiers of Blambangan to Prabalingga. Meanwhile, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir were assigned to guard the corpse of Menak Jingga. Damarwulan would take the corpse the following day along with the spoils of war to Majapahit. Damarwulan also gave the soldiers of Majapahit an opportunity to rest before going back to the king's town.

Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir immediately ordered the soldiers of Majapahit to take a rest. Then both of them toured the barracks while arranging everything for their departure to Majapahit the following morning.

"Brother Seta," said Layang Kunitir while looking around to his left and right sides. "Damarwulan is indeed a mighty warrior, but he is also a fool." continued Layang Kunitir.

"What do you mean?"

"Why did he ask us to guard the corpse of Menak Jingga?"

"What's wrong with it?"

"Let's just take Menak Jingga's dead body to Majapahit now and tell Queen Kencana Wungu that we have killed him. Queen

Kencana Wungu will surely crown you King of Majapahit, Brother. I would be glad to see you become the spouse of Queen Kencana Wungu.”

Layang Seta smiled when he heard his brother’s explanation. Without thinking twice, he agreed with the plan. Both of them decided to meet up with Regent Panjawi and the Chief of Parapat village.

“Brother Panjawi let’s go back to Majapahit. We have to deliver the corpse of Menak Jingga to Queen Kencana Wungu,” said Layang Seta.

“But Sir, shouldn’t we wait for Master Damarwulan first?” replied Panjawi.

“This corpse will rot soon and stink if we do not bring it to Majapahit immediately, Brother,” Layang Seta tried to convince Panjawi.

“Then we will tell Queen Kencana Wungu that Brother Damarwulan will catch up with us with the spoils of the war,” intervened Layang Kunitir.

Regent Panjawi and the Chief of Parapat village could not say no to the request of Governor Logender’s sons, knowing their characters too well. However, Panjawi and Parapat had no idea about the evil plan of Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir.

“Now, order all soldiers to set out as soon as possible. I will take care of Menak Jingga’s corpse,” said Layang Seta to Regent Panjawi.

Regent Panjawi finally ordered all of Majapahit soldiers to get prepared to return to the King’s town right away. When they received such a short-notice order, most of the soldiers grumbled, since some of them had been already asleep, and some even were attending to their fellows’ wounds. Nevertheless, they had no power to refuse the order for fear of being punished, even to the point of being expelled from the troop. Therefore, despite their inward objection, they finally left the place.

Upon his arrival at the barracks in Prabalingga, Darmawulan was treated like a special guest. He was considered the successor of Menak Jingga. Menak Koncar, Carangwaspa, and Walikrama sat in the lower seats, while Damarwulan was requested to take a seat in Menak Jingga’s throne. He was reluctant at first, but having gained the support from the others, he finally overcame his initial awkwardness.

He then arranged the departure plan to Majapahit. He asked the leaders of Blambangan to come along to Majapahit. The emblems of Blambangan would also be brought to Majapahit, while the rest of them were requested to return Blambangan. The soldiers who would go back to Blambangan would be led by Governor Gajah Dhungkul.

When everyone was ready, suddenly a soldier came to report something.

“Master, there is someone on the back of a horse.”

“Bring him inside!”

The soldier went out of the barracks immediately and not long afterwards came back, bringing a man on his shoulder. The soldier put the man on a mat.

“Wong Agung Marsorah!” said Carangwaspa.

Damarwulan rose from his seat and approached the body of Wong Agung Marsorah. Then he opened up a package that he always put inside his clothes, which contained some concoction. He took some, squeezed it, and then sprinkled it on the wounds of Wong Agung Marsorah.

“Hopefully the Almighty God will heal him!” said Damarwulan while giving a light massage throughout the nape and neck of Wong Agung Marsorah. He also massaged the soles of Wong Agung Marsorah’s feet slowly.

Either because of Damarwulan’s massage or because he had passed out for quite some time, Wong Agung Marsorah started to move and regain his consciousness. His eyes fluttered open little by little. After looking around to see the people in his surroundings, he tried to sit down straight.

“Don’t move too much, Marsorah, your body is still weak!” said Walikrama.

“Brother ... the soldiers of Majapahit have left. They were ordered to leave by the two brothers.”

“They must be Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir,” said Damarwulan to himself, “How about Menak Jingga’s corpse?” he asked.

“They took it with them, Master,” said Wong Agung Marsorah.

“Seta and Kunitir will for sure claim all the credits in front of Queen Kencana Wungu,” interrupted Sabdapalon all of a sudden.

“Let’s go and get them, Master,” added Sabdapalon angrily.

“No need to do so, Uncle. Let Seta and Kunitir go to Queen Kencana Wungu. Even if they claimed to have killed Menak Jingga, I would not oppose it. I am sure that somehow the truth will reveal itself,” said Damarwulan, soothing Sabdapalon’s fury.

“I am sure that Queen Kencana Wungu will not easily believe what Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir tell her,” Menak Koncar, who had been silent, finally spoke up.

“That’s true, Master. I am willing to keep you company to meet with Queen Kencana Wungu as the war prisoner and witness of Menak Jingga’s death,” said Baudenda, signaling to Damarwulan to tie both of his hands.

“Brother Baudenda, Brother Walikrama, Uncle Carangwaspa, and Uncle Sabdapalon, there’s no need to worry even though Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir have taken Menak Jingga’s corpse away.”

“Alright, Master.”

“I still have a reliable proof to convince Queen Kencana Wungu that I am the one who has killed Menak Jingga, and not Layang Seta or Layang Kunitir,” said Damarwulan, convincing them.

It was still early afternoon. The heat of the sun was not at its peak yet. Before heading for Majapahit, Damarwulan divided the remaining soldiers of Blambangan into two groups. Some of them were instructed to go back to Blambangan, while the rest were ordered to come along to Majapahit. Having received some advice and messages, Baudenda started to set out to Blambangan.

Damarwulan also left, heading southwest. He intentionally invited Carangwaspa, Walikrama, Menak Jingga’s wives, and some Blambangan soldiers. They were asked to give their testimony in front of Queen Kencana Wungu in Majapahit.

When they arrived in Majapahit, the coronation of Damarwulan as King could not be held yet since Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir insisted of having defeated Menak Jingga. Queen Kencana Wungu was almost deceived by their lie.

“Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir, if you insist of having defeated Menak Jingga, are you willing to fight against Damarwulan?” asked Queen Kencana Wungu to Layang Seta.

“Of course, Your Highness.”

“Damarwulan, will you accept the challenge to fight against Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir?”

“Yes, Your Highness,” replied Damarwulan.

“Alright, this afternoon in the North Square, you have to face each other with your magical powers. I believe that whoever wins is the one who has killed Menak Jingga,” ordered Queen Kencana Wungu.

“And remember this, the winner of this fight will be my lifelong partner in ruling this country,” continued Queen Kencana Wungu.

When the sun was about to set in the west, the North Square was packed with the spectators. The news about the fight that day had been spread quickly within the palace. The gong was beaten repeatedly to signal that the event would commence soon. Not long after that, Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir entered the arena from the opposite side of Damarwulan.

“Hey, Damarwulan, you are nothing but a low peasant. Fight me, Layang Seta, if you dare!”

“Brother Layang Seta, why are you so blinded by your evil wish? Why do you claim something that does not belong to you?” Damarwulan tried to give him a wise advice.

“I don’t care about what you say. Your presence in the Governor’s residence took away my chance to marry Queen Kencana Wungu! Layang Kunitir will also lose his opportunity to replace our father as governor.”

“Brother, this is not my decision, but the wish of Queen Kencana Wungu herself.”

“I’m not going to believe a single word that comes out of your mouth. You have to know that I don’t want to have such a lowly brother-in-law, though you have married my sister! You are nothing but a burden to my father, yet you boast like you’re the ruler of the skies!”

Damarwulan felt the fury boiling within him upon hearing his brother-in-law’s insult. “Layang Seta, do you really think that Queen Kencana Wungu would be willing to have a husband like you, who has no manner, a lousy drunkard, gambler, and without any skill. Also hardly takes a shower! You’re nothing but a brat in the shadow of your father!”

“Go to hell, Damarwulan!” screamed Layang Seta, lashing at Damarwulan’s forehead. Damarwulan had been ready to face the

blow, though. Pulling his head slightly backwards, he avoided it perfectly. However, Layang Seta didn't stop there.

When each of his attack failed, he repeated it again while laughing boisterously. His laughing sound grew louder and louder to the point of deafening.

Damarwulan ignored the laughter, but his concentration was impaired by the sound. He was aware of it when the leg of Layang Seta hit his back. Plakk! Damarwulan was on the verge of tumbling down. However, he could regain his balance in an instant. His right hand quickly loosened his belt, and seconds later, the cracking sound of his whip was heard repeatedly. Tar... tar ... tar ...! The whip chased every movement of Layang Seta, muffling his laughter which had hurt the ears of all the spectators around them.

The whip in Damarwulan's hand sometimes became soft like a string of wet thread, but sometimes it grew hard and solid like a sword ready to rip open the opponent's stomach. The whip even could dance around above Layang Seta's head before exploding right near his ear. Though he could play easily with his whip, Damarwulan did not intend to kill Layang Seta. He just wanted to give his brother-in-law a lesson to act like a true warrior and to admit his error.

Layang Kunitir couldn't stand to see his elder brother treated that way. Therefore, he jumped and screamed, "Heeyaaa...!" and in a blink of an eye, Layang Kunitir had joined his brother.

"Brother Layang Seta, let's combine our powers and finish him off immediately!" whispered Layang Kunitir. A moment later both of his hands released a deadly blow towards Damarwulan. Whoosh! But, Damarwulan of course would not let his chest be hurt. Therefore, he intentionally cracked his whip to his opponents' hands. Tar ...! The two brothers groaned in pain since electric shock stung their hands. Before Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir could think clearly, the whip of Damarwulan had coiled around their bodies, lifting them and thrusting them outside the battle arena.

"Run, Brother...!"

Layang Seta and Layang Kunitir ran helter-skelter from that place, followed by the sneering laughter of the spectators upon witnessing the scene of the two brothers' escape. When they were no longer seen, the triumphant cheers were heard loudly to acclaim the victory of Damarwulan. In the story passed orally from one generation to another, it was said that in the following day Damarwulan was crowned King of Majapahit with both Anjasmara and Kencana Wungu as his queens.