

**THE FRIENDSHIP OF HARUKU AND SERAM  
ISLANDS**

*Kisah Persahabatan antara Pulau Haruku dan Pulau  
Seram*

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Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia  
Jalan Daksinapati Barat IV, Ramangun, Jakarta  
Telepon (021) 4706287, 4706288, 4896558, 4894546  
Pos-el: badan.bahasa@kemdikbud.go.id  
[www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id](http://www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id)

# **THE FRIENDSHIP OF HARUKU AND SERAM ISLANDS**

## **1. Haruku Village and Learissa Kayeli the Crocodile**

Haruku Village was a peaceful and happy village. The people lived in harmony with each other. When a villager had a misfortune, the others would immediately help him. Haruku Village also had an abundance of natural resources. The forest and the sea provided everything that the people needed.

Most of Haruku people earned a living by farming. They usually cleared a little piece of land in the forest to make place for their fields. They planted tuber plants, vegetables, and fruits. They sold the harvest in Ambon City.

One day, Dominggus was preparing to go to his field and harvest durian fruits. Several days ago, his father and uncle had gone there for the same reason. They had asked him to come, but he had no heart to leave his wife alone at home. She had been sick for a while. Today, his wife was getting better, so Dominggus told her that he would go to the field. “Dear Wife, I am going to harvest durian in the field. I may not come back for three days. Take care of yourself, okay. Don’t forget to take your medicine.”

“Yes, Husband. Be careful and have a safe trip. I will prepare

the provision. Please wait a moment, I will make a ring from palm fibers. Please give it to the Crocodile Laerissa Kayeli,” Marice said to her husband. She was a little sad and worried but she had to let him go because during *durian* season, everyone could get some money from selling the fruits. They surely could use the money for their daily needs. While Marice prepared her husband’s provisions, a voice was heard from the front door.

“Good morning, Marice, how are you today? I bring you some turmeric rice for breakfast.”

Dominggus went to the door and welcomed the guest.

“Oh, Tante Konstanta. Please come in.”

Tante Konstanta went in and the three of them chatted animatedly. Since Dominggus were leaving, Tante Konstanta offered herself to take care of Marice.

“You are leaving your wife alone at home? Let her stay with us until you return. It’s just next door. I’m honestly worried if she is home alone,” suggested Tante Konstanta.

Dominggus quickly replied, “We don’t want to bother you and your family, Tante. I’m sure Marice will be just fine.”

“O, come on. Don’t feel burdened. We are neighbors. We’re

almost like family. Shouldn't we help each other? Don't worry about us, just go and bring back a lot of harvest," Tante Konstanta insisted.

With that assurance, Dominggus felt a little relieved. He knew his wife would be taken care of. After eating breakfast that Tante Konstanta brought, Dominggus said goodbye to his wife and Tante Konstanta.

As had been said before, most people in Haruku had their fields in the middle of the forest. Dominggus was no exception. To reach the forest, they had to cross a river called Learissa Kayeli.

In the river, lived a female crocodile. The people of Haruku called her King Learissa Kayeli. The crocodile was different than other crocodiles. Her skin was white and smooth, not green and scaly like normal crocodiles. The Crocodile of Learissa Kayeli also had no long incisors, which made her looked more friendly than scary. In addition, the Crocodile was friendly to the people of Haruku. She often helped them crossing the river to their fields.

When Dominggus arrived at the river bank, the water was high. He saw Martinus, his cousin, was waiting for him. "Martinus! I'm sorry for being late. I was having breakfast with my wife and Tante Konstanta. Have you been here long?" Dominggus greeted

Martinus.

“It’s okay. I myself just arrived. The Crocodile of Learissa Kayeli is still over there. Look, she’s just turned and heading to this side,” Martinus said, pointing somewhere across the river.

“I bring a ring as a present for her. I hope she liked it,” said Dominggus, pulling out the palm-fibers ring.

The crocodile reached their side of the river in just a blink of an eye.

“O, Good Crocodile, would you please take me and my cousin across the river? We are going to harvest *durian*,” Dominggus asked the Crocodile of Learissa Kayeli.

With a glow on her face, the Crocodile replied, “O, Brothers, come. Climb to my back, I’ll take you across.”

With the Crocodile’s permission, both men climbed to her back. Standing safely on the other side of the river, Dominggus and Martinus thanked the Crocodile of Learissa Kayeli.

“Thank you, Generous Crocodile. We will always remember your kindness. Here is a ring my wife made for you. I hope you like it,” said Dominggus, putting the ring on the Crocodile’s finger.

“Anytime, Brother. I hope you have good harvest. Thank you for this beautiful ring. Please send my regard to your wife,” the Crocodile of Learissa Kayeli said before swimming away to the other side. Other people had been waiting for her there.

Dominggus and Martinus then continued their trip to the forest, heading to their fields.

## **2. The Crocodiles of Seram**

The sun had just risen but the water in the Cape of Sial had turned red. The red sea was a sign that a huge battle had just taken place there. A dead crocodile was floating on the surface, badly mangled.

From a tree on the coast, a loud sound was heard. The sound would surely terrify any human or animal if they had no guts. Those who heard it would run away and wet their pants.

The sound came from an enormous and scary snake. His body was as long and as thick as a coconut tree, his fangs glistened between his lips, and ripples of muscles were clearly visible beneath his skin.

“Who else dares to fight me? This is my place and I will kill anyone who dares to cross me. I don’t care if you come alone or with ten friends, I will destroy you all. I am the King of the

Snake, the master of Sial Cape!” The Snake spoke clear and loud, threatening everyone in the area.

The crocodiles in the sea and the birds on the trees shook with terror. They quickly hide themselves before the snake got to them.

“What can we do, Leader? The Crocodile of Buru Island was defeated. He was our only hope to kill the arrogant snake,” a crocodile said to their leader.

“The Giant Snake really has great power. We have to find a way to defeat him if we want to live in peace. Do any of you have any suggestion?” said the Crocodile Leader. The Crocodile Leader was frustrated and desperate with what had been happening to them.

They had to get rid of the Giant Snake because the monsoon season would come in just a few weeks. It meant that the season for strong wind and huge waves would come. In that season, it would be hard for crocodiles to find food in the sea. The only place they could hunt for food was near the shores, which now had been claimed by the Giant Snake.

When no one said anything, an eagle finally spoke. “Some friends flying around Haruku Island often see a female crocodile helping Haruku people. The crocodile is called King Learissa



Kayeli.”

“How can a crocodile live harmoniously along the humans?” a crocodile chimed in with disbelief.

The eagle replied, “I don’t know how or why she helps them, but from the stories I heard, she is a kind crocodile who is fond of helping people.”

“Not to underestimate her, but do you think she can take down the snake and not be his meal instead?” asked Crocodile Leader.

“Well, I cannot guarantee that she would be able to defeat the Giant Snake. But I think it is worth a try, considering that she has the power to live along with and help the humans,” said the eagle.

After deliberating, the Crocodile Leader of Seram finally agreed to invite the crocodile from Haruku and asked for her help. “Ladies and gentlemen, I will go to Haruku myself and bring King Learissa Kayeli here. I will set out tomorrow. Wish me luck. Pray that I can convince her to come to Seram and help us getting rid of the Giant Snake.” The whole hideout exploded with cheers from all inhabitants of Seram.

### **3. The Arrival of Seram Crocodile**

The next day, before the sun fully rising, the leader of crocodiles

of Seram swam alone to Haruku. He had to go a long way to reach Haruku. Even though he had never been there, the eagle had told him a lot information about how to get there.

The Crocodile Leader took the Southern route. From the Cape of Sial, he crossed to Lima country and swam straight pass Alang Village. Past Alang Village, he got lost for a while and ended up in the Gulf of Ambon. Realizing that, he made a quick turn around and got back on track. From the Gulf of Ambon, he headed towards Tulehu Village and then crossed to Haruku Island.

When he arrived at the island, the sun was setting. The Crocodile Leader of Seram saw an unusual spectacle, several kids were riding on a crocodile's back. Neither the human kids nor the crocodile seemed scared or awkward, they even seemed to have an animated conversation. He just watched them and tried to take it all in. The river was getting dark and the Crocodile Leader felt it would be rude to ask Learissa Kayeli right there and then. Besides, he needed the rest. He decided to spend the night in the river and talked to King Learissa Kayeli tomorrow.

When the sun came up the next day, the Crocodile Leader of Seram approached Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. "Greetings, Sister. I come from Seram as a friend," he introduced himself.

“Welcome, my foreign Brother. What makes you swim against the current and storm to get here?” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile asked.

“I am the leader of all crocodiles in Seram Island and we have a problem. It is a huge mess there,” Crocodile Leader of Seram replied.

Learissa Kayeli Crocodile was startled, “How come? What happened? Isn’t you country a peaceful place? I always hear the birds talking about how beautiful it is over there.”

“It is true, Sister. Seram Island was a very beautiful and peaceful island. But since a giant snake came and resided there, everything changed,” Crocodile Leader of Seram explained.

“How can a snake destroy all that?” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile could not believe it.

“At first, he came to Seram to ask for protection. He said that a group of monitor lizards was pursuing him and he needed a place to hide. He convinced us that the lizards were after him for something he did not do and we believed him. We welcomed and protected him. But it was all a lie. The Giant Snake turned on us and preyed on us. He attacked and eat not only the crocodiles but also other animals.” Crocodile Leader of Seram could not hold back his tears.

“We have tried everything to stop him but we failed. Countless crocodiles had died fighting him. That’s why I come here. On behalf of all animals in Seram, I beg you to help us, King Learissa Kayeli.”

“What he did is unacceptable. He is ungrateful. I have to teach him a lesson. Animals like that deserved to be killed,” Learissa Kayeli growled in anger.

Crocodile Leader of Seram was touched and glad at the same time with Learissa Kayeli Crocodile’s response. They soon prepared to head to Seram Island.

Before she left, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile said her farewell to Haruku people. It was hard for the people in Haruku Village to see her go, but they understood that she had to. She was a very kind and generous crocodile, and everyone hoped that God protected her until she returned.

The next day, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile and Crocodile Leader of Seram began their travel. At that time, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile was in fact pregnant. However, she clenched her teeth and gathered her courage. She needed to do this because she cared so much about others. Her caring nature had always been the source of her courage, allowing her to forget all the worries and fears in her heart.

All the way to Seram Island, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile and Crocodile Leader of Seram discussed the strategy they should use to fight the Giant Snake. Learissa Kayeli Crocodile knew that since she was way smaller than the snake, only a good strategy could defeat him.

“Brother, I think I have the perfect strategy to take the Giant Snake down but I’ll need two big and strong crocodiles to help me,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile said.

“Of course I and my friends will be glad to help you,” Crocodile Leader assured her.

“Here is the plan. I will engage the Giant Snake in a long duel until he’s tired. When he is, your people should attack him as hard as they can,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile explained her strategy.

“Based on my experiences of past fights, the Giant Snake has great strength and endurance. The venom in his bites is lethal. Once he bites the victim will be paralyzed and he can easily kill and swallow them. You need to really watch for those bites.”

“Does he have any weakness?” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile asked.

“I believe he has one. Once, a crocodile hit the back of his head and he seemed to be stunned a little. He became unfocused and

his attacks missed every time. It was too bad the crocodile did not use the opportunity too well. The Giant Snake managed to regain his focus and killed the crocodile.”

Learissa Kayeli Crocodile took it in and felt confident that she had the chance to win.

#### **4. The Fight**

The last rays of sunset turned the sea red when they arrived in Seram Island. All crocodiles in Seram Island gladly welcomed Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. When she arrived, Learissa Kayeli wasted no time to hold a meeting with Seram crocodiles to discuss how to defeat the Giant Snake.

After resting, Crocodile Leader of Seram and another crocodile took Learissa Kayeli Crocodile to the shore near the Giant Snake’s tree. The tide was high so Learissa Kayeli Crocodile could get very close to the tree. Learissa Kayeli Crocodile called the Giant Snake who was sleeping.

“Hey, Giant Snake, get down here. I come to fight you,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile shouted.

The Giant Snake woke up irritated. His face was beet red. Arrogantly, he replied, “Hahaha, you are asking for trouble! Do you have a dead wish? Do you know who I am? I am the king of

all snakes in this world. I will destroy anyone and everyone who dares to cross me!”

“Don’t be so cocky, Snake! You had better leave this land! Don’t you realize what you have done to this peaceful island?” said Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

“Hahaha, the crocodiles are a bunch of weak, pathetic, and stupid animals. They don’t deserve to live here. I’d rather dead than leaving this land!” replied the Giant Snake.

“Let’s just prove who the best between us is! By the end of this fight, one of us will win and the other will be dead!” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile challenged the Giant Snake.

An intense fight ensued. The Giant Snake attacked first. He bent his body and snapped at Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. However, she had anticipated it and swiftly moved back to dodge the bite.

At one point, the Snake dropped his guard and Learissa Kayeli Crocodile quickly bit his body. The Snake countered by wrapping himself around her. He squeezed so hard that she had to release her bite and got away.

The salty tinge of blood filled the air. The water around them was red with blood. The Crocodile Leader and his people watched the fight anxiously. They hoped that their champion

could take down the Giant Snake and restore the peace in the land. They prayed that God protected Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

The fight had been going for three days. Both fighters were tired. There were countless scars and bite marks on their bodies. However, none of them wanted to stop. They both struggled to win the fight and kill the opponent.

“Just give up, Crocodile. Give up and go back to wherever you come from! Surrender and I’ll spare your life,” the Giant Snake shouted, trying to intimidate Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

“No way! I will not go until you die, stubborn Snake!” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile snapped. She tried to focus all her will to win, even though she was extremely tired. She felt her stomach cramped.

On the fourth day, both Learissa Kayeli Crocodile and the Giant Snake were exhausted. They stopped the fight for a while. Both were extremely alert, however, waiting for the other to attack first. While Learissa Kayeli Crocodile was still catching her breath, the Giant Snake shot towards her. She dodged the attack at the last moment by throwing herself backwards. With the last spur of strength Learissa Kayeli Crocodile brought her tail up and dropped it on the Snake’s head as hard as she could. The Giant Snake had no time to react and he slumped unconscious in the



water.

“Hey, you two, it’s time to end him!” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile called Crocodile Leader of Seram and his friend who were waiting on the shore.

“Good! Go get some rest on the shore, we’ll take care of him,” Crocodile Leader of Seram.

Crocodile Leader of Seram and his companion jumped to the sea and glided towards the Giant Snake. They shredded the Giant Snake to pieces. Blood poured from his body and turned the sea red.

Seeing that the Giant Snake is dead, Crocodile Leader of Seram and his friend returned to the shore to check on Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. Lying on the sand, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile was breathing hard. It seemed that she had serious injuries on her spine.

Crocodile Leader of Seram and his friend carefully took Learissa Kayeli Crocodile to their hideout.

“Brothers and Sisters, today, peace has returned to our land. The arrogant Giant Snake has been defeated!” Crocodile Leader of Seram announced clearly and loudly.

“Hurray! Long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile!” The hideout erupted in an uproar of joy from the animals.

“Today, we all can get out of this hideout and breath the fresh air without worrying about the snake anymore. All these is not possible if God Almighty did not put our fate to cross path with Learissa Kayeli Crocodile,” Crocodile Leader of Seram commended their savior.

“Hurray! Long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, long live Learissa Kayeli Crocodile!” Once again, the animals cheered Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. Crocodile Leader of Seram then asked all animals there to go out to the shore and enjoy their freedom again.

Seeing how happy the animals of Seram Island were, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile felt that it was all worth it. She felt her strength returned and could not wait to go back to Haruku Village. She had been wanting to give birth in Haruku Village.

“My Brother, enjoy this happiness. Live happily and peacefully. May God bless you and everyone in Seram Island,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile whispered to Crocodile Leader of Seram.

“I cannot thank you enough, O Generous Crocodile. Please stay for a few days, let us take care of your wounds, before you go

back to Haruku.”

“Thank you for the offer, but I cannot stay. I have to return to Haruku because I am with a baby. It is due in a few days and I really want to give birth at home. I want my child to be a child of Haruku and live harmoniously with Haruku people,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile explained.

“What? You are pregnant? Why didn’t you say so? I wouldn’t have asked you if I had known. You are truly an extraordinary crocodile. Only God the Almighty can repay all you did for us. I wish you arrive safely in Haruku and give birth to your child. Please accept our token of gratitude. You need companion and provision in your journey,” Crocodile Leader of Seram said. He instructed Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish to accompany Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

Learissa Kayeli Crocodile thanked Crocodile Leader of Seram and returned to Haruku Village with Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish.

## **5. The Journey Home**

Learissa Kayeli Crocodile swam away, followed by Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish, crossing the vast ocean. She sometimes stopped and rested because her wounds and her stomach hurt. The farther she went; the pain came even more

frequently.

Due to those pain attacks, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile forgot the way to Haruku Village.

In her confusion, a huge wave slammed her, resulting in her being beached at Waii Village shore. The local people were naturally surprised and afraid that a big, strange crocodile was on their beach. They surrounded her and tried to kill her.

“Hey, look! A crocodile!” a villager called his friends.

“Where? Wow, it is a strange crocodile. It must be an omen of misfortune. We’d better kill it before something bad happened to our village!” another villager said.

“Please don’t kill me! I am innocent. I am lost. I just want to return to my village, Haruku. I am pregnant and about to give birth,” Learissa Kayeli Crocodile begged the people of Waii Village.

“Don’t listen to it! It must be an evil animal, trying to trick us! Kill it! Kill it!” a villager shouted.

“What is your last wish, strange crocodile!” another villager asked, holding up a log, ready to hit Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

“Very well, if that is what you want. I only wish you spare my body. Please don’t hit me. Just poke my navel with a stick. I will die and my child may be born. If my child is born, please let it live. It will continue my journey back to Haruku Village,” said Learissa Kayeli Crocodile.

The people of Waii Village respected her wish and stuck her navel with a stick. Learissa Kayeli Crocodile gave birth right there and then.

With a heavy breath and teary eyes, Learissa Kayeli Crocodile realized that her time is almost over. She gave her last words to her child.

“O, beautiful child, be happy. Enjoy your life. Be a good being and help others. Find your way to Haruku Village. That is our home. Out there in the sea, there are three fish waiting for you. Go to them and they will follow and help you.”

“Yes, Mother. I will do as you ask,” said the baby crocodile.

A few moments later, everything fell silent. It was as if nature itself paid respect to Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. The great crocodile was gone. The people of Waii Village were stunned seeing the last moment of Learissa Kayeli Crocodile and her child. They regretted killing Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, but there was nothing they could do to reverse time. It was all fated.

The baby crocodile could only cry seeing his mother lying lifelessly. He was confused and scared. However, he composed himself and prepared to follow his mother's last words.

After burying his mother, with the help of Waii people, the baby crocodile continued the journey to Haruku Village. The moment he left Waii Beach, the baby crocodile met Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish. They were waiting for Learissa Kayeli Crocodile to return from the beach.

“Are you Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish? Greetings, I am the child of Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. My mother had passed away, and she asked me to continue her journey home. Do you want to come with me?” the baby crocodile said.

“Wherever you go and whatever you command, we will follow you. We will never forget what your mother did to our island. She is an extraordinary crocodile. Learissa Kayeli Crocodile had given her life to help us. Something we can never repay,” Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish replied in unison.

During their long journey, Parang-Parang, Make, and Lompa fish recounted the great fight between Learissa Kayeli Crocodile and the Giant Snake. Through their stories, the baby crocodile knew his mother a little. He was proud of her and vowed to be as good and generous as his mother.

One day, they arrived at Batu Lompa and decided to stay for a while. They also passed Tial Cape and Passo, where they got lost for quite some time. That was what caused Lompa, Parang-Parang, and Make fish to come to Passo during certain times of a year.

The baby crocodile could feel in his bones that Passo was not Haruku Village. He quickly swam away from the village.

However, unbeknownst to him, he had left Parang-Parang fish in Passo. He then crossed the sea and arrived at the mouth of Learissa Kayeli River. He instinctively knew that this was the place his mother called home.

When he entered the river, some Haruku Villagers who were about to cross the river saw him. “Hey, isn’t that Learissa Kayeli Crocodile?” one of them said.

“O, people of Haruku, I am the child of Learissa Kayeli Crocodile. My mother passed away on her journey here, her beloved home. She had defeated the Giant Snake but she could not make it home. Before she died, she told me to come here and live along with you. She also told me to bring Make and Lompa fish for you.”

“O, Son of Learissa Kayeli Crocodile, your mother had done so much for us. We will never be able to repay our debt to her.

Please stay here and be part of our family,” they said.

“I will live where my mother used to live. Please take the fish I brought for your consumption. Let Lompa fish come and play with me in the river until it is time for you to harvest them. Let Make fish live on the coast. You can harvest them when the season comes,” said the crocodile.

After that, the child of Learissa Kayeli Crocodile swam away to his mother’s home. Lompa fish stayed in Learissa Kayeli River.