

**PRINCESS RINGIN KUNING**  
*Putri Ringin Kuning*

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## PRINCESS RINGIN KUNING

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## **PRINCESS RINGIN KUNING**

### **The Witch Girl**

It was very quiet that afternoon, when even the wind seemed reluctant to blow and the leaves around that old hut did not make any sound. In that silence, a witch girl named Galuh Gagalang was sitting alone in front of her hut with eyes were staring out blankly, confused. Her mouth quivered, casting her magical spells.

“Oh Gods I worship, do listen to me. Grant me an incredible strength to be able to reign in this country. You have not been fair to me. How come you gave power to such a weak king while I don't even have a little of it? Aren't I more capable than that foolish king?”

Galuh Gagalang kept sighing and complaining about it angrily. She wanted to avenge the King who was ruling in the hinterland of South Kalimantan.

The witch girl started to devise a strategy. Firstly, she would be the King's wife. That way, she would always be close to him to find the best time to conquer him. Unfortunately, the King had already a queen namely Nyai Ciciri, who was very beautiful. Her attitude was also graceful and so the King loved her very much.

Even though the King had already a queen, Galuh Gagalang couldn't care less as she was still determined to conquer him at all cost. Even if she needed to, she would get the Queen out of her way.

Day by day the witch girl continued to refine her evil intention, as her resentment grew stronger. She started to lose her patience as well and could not wait to put her plan into action. Therefore, she went to her room to meditate.

A moment later, with her magical power, Galuh Gagalang transformed herself into a very beautiful woman. The witch girl then got up and imitated the Queen's graceful way of walking.

"It's time for me to sneak into the palace, since it's still dark and nobody would notice," thought Galuh Gagalang while closing the front door of her house and then started to walk into the darkness.

It was quiet inside that palace around that time with only several maids running around, busy preparing the meal for the King and his Queen. Cunningly Galuh Gagalang disguised herself as one of them and joined the other maids. When they returned to the kitchen, Galuh Gagalang sneaked into the royal dining room.

She saw that the foods were already served on the dining table. There were also two cups of drink, one for the King, and another one for the Queen. She looked to her right and left for a while, and after being sure nobody was around, she quickly sprinkled the

enchanted dust, on which she had previously cast a spell into the King's cup.

“Let's see what will happen tomorrow. I will conquer you soon,” said Galuh Gagalang triumphantly in her heart.

The following day, her concoction started to show its effects. The King had a high fever and so he shivered all over. His body temperature soared to a dangerously high level. The Queen was at her wits' end and decided to call one of the royal commanders.

“Uncle, please fetch a traditional healer. The King's fever is getting higher. Please hurry, will you?” implored the Queen.

“Right away, Your Highness,” replied the commander.

The loyal commander immediately went to fetch a traditional healer. A moment later, upon his arrival at the palace, the healer soon checked on the King's condition. He attended to the King and gave him the concoctions he had prepared.

He made the King drink a cup of fresh water.

“Your Highness, you don't need to worry about his sickness. I have given him the medicine. Hopefully he will recover soon. Now, let him take a rest. Please excuse myself,” said the traditional healer.

“Thank you, Uncle,” said the Queen.

The healer's statement turned out to be true. The King started to gradually get better. However, from then on he kept mentioning the name of Galuh Gagalang.

This made Queen Nyai Ciciri wonder and become suspicious. She did not know who Galuh Gagalang, whose name had been mentioned a lot of time, actually was. She didn't think of having heard that name before, but how come her husband now kept repeating it?

Within the following days, the King started to be head over heels in love with Galuh Gagalang that he even sometimes neglected his own wife, despite the fact that she was even pregnant at that time.

The rumor about the King's infatuation with Galuh Gagalang started to spread among the royal family in the palace. Inevitably, it reached the people outside the palace as well. Finally, it became the talk of all people. Eventually Galuh Gagalang heard about it too and was very happy about it. She laughed triumphantly.

The witch girl was convinced that soon her heart's desire would come true. She was overwhelmed with joy. The hope of Galuh Gagalang was not without any good reason. It was proven true not long afterwards, when several messengers from the palace were sent by the King and came to her hut on the edge of the woods.

“Please excuse us. Are you Miss Galuh Gagalang?” asked one of the King’s messengers.

“I am,” replied Galuh Gagalang.

When they heard her answer, the King’s messengers were startled. They wondered how come the King could be interested in such a plain girl whose face was not like one of those pretty girls of the village. She looked more like a witch with her plump stature and unkempt hair, which seemed to have never been touched by any comb, and a pair of round eyes which reflected hatred. Nevertheless, they kept being faithful to the task they had to accomplish.

After they explained about the purpose of their visit, the King’s guardians immediately took Galuh Gagalang to the palace.

In the palace, Nyai Ciciri was sobbing sadly. She had found out about the King’s plan to marry Galuh Gagalang and his plan made her really sad. She felt as if her heart was being stabbed by a sharp knife and therefore she wept bitterly. The maids in the palace had tried to console her yet she did not stop crying.

The Queen managed to refrain herself when the King came to her. Soon after she saw him, she quickly tried to dry her tears.

“My Husband, have you thought twice about your plan to marry Galuh Gagalang?” asked the Queen.

“Yes, My Wife.”

“Will you not regret it later? Don’t you know that nobody knows the origins of Galuh Gagalang?”

“Oh, come on, My Wife. I have thought it over. Right now I’m just waiting for your decision. Do you approve of it?”

“If you have thought it over, then I don’t think I have a reason to not approve of it. But you have to promise that you will not forget me,” implored Nyai Ciciri.

Having obtained his Queen’s approval, the King was relieved. He was proud of his Queen and her big heart. Without having to argue much, she could finally understand her husband’s wish.

With her Queen’s approval, the King immediately took Galuh Gagalang as his wife.

Since she became the King’s wife, Galuh Gagalang lived in the palace, occupying a building beside the *keputren*<sup>1</sup> of Nyai Ciciri. She asked the King to rebuild the part of the palace she lived in because she wanted it to be as great as Nyai Ciciri’s place. In addition to it, she also asked the King to provide some personal maids for her. Besides the maids, she also asked for a group of

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<sup>1</sup> Keputren : part of a palace where the princesses (king/noblemen’s daughters) reside



special guards. Without suspecting anything, the King granted all of the witch girl's wishes.

After living in the palace, Galuh Gagalang kept influencing the people around her. In the eyes of her trusted people, she looked kind and beautiful. It was because of the witchcraft that had possessed their mind. However, that false impression did not work on the King's messengers who had fetched her from the hut on the edge of the woods.

Galuh Gagalang asked one of her guards to watch the Queen closely. The name of the guard who was given that task was Ki Banta, a man Galuh Gagalang trusted the most.

Having given the task to Ki Banta, Galuh Gagalang returned to her palace right away, feeling glad because now she had the guards and people she could trust. With their help, she could always monitor the movement of the King and his Queen. However, she was not yet satisfied.

### **The Birth of Princess Ringin Kuning**

Since he married Galuh Gagalang, the King often stayed with his new wife and her visits to the pregnant Nyai Ciciri were getting rare. Nyai Ciciri wondered why. As much as she hated his scarce attention towards her, she felt helpless and thus she often cried alone.

On her ninth month of pregnancy, Nyai Ciciri encouraged herself to go to the King's palace to talk to him personally, accompanied only by one of her personal maids. With a sad face, the Queen poured out her heart in front of him.

“My Husband, to welcome our baby, I have only one wish.”

“What is your wish, My Wife?” asked the King.

“This is it, My Husband. If you don't mind, I would like you to look for a *caping*<sup>2</sup> and a *papaliran*<sup>3</sup> for our newly born child. But you have to go find them yourself and shall not delegate the task.”

“I shall not delegate the task?”

“That's correct, My Husband. Just like our tradition, the task to look for those items shall be accomplished by the baby's parent himself. So, it shall not be delegated to anyone.”

“Alright, My Wife. If that is your wish, I will do it. When I have finished with all of the emergency matters, I will immediately set out to look for them.”

“Thank you, My Husband.”

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<sup>2</sup> Caping : baby girl genital cover (its form is like betel leaf, made of gold, silver, or copper)

<sup>3</sup> Papaliran : baby boy genital cover made of gold, silver, or copper

Nyai Ciciri felt relieved. Soon after she had expressed her wish to obtain a *caping* and a *papaliran*, she excused herself to return to her residence, followed by her personal maid.

Several days later, the King kept his promise. Having completed the royal affairs, he quickly got prepared to leave the palace. He took off his royal robe, including several kingdom emblems on his body. Then he wore a commoner's clothing, putting on a simple outfit so he did not look like a king. He indeed intended to disguise himself. That way, he could look for the *caping* and *papaliran* more freely. His departure was also to discover how the people were doing within his kingdom territory.

On the set date, the King left the palace, accompanied only by two guards who were also in disguise as commoners by not wearing any military attribute.

During his journey, the King went to see several goldsmiths as he wanted to order the two objects requested by his Queen. However, there was barely any goldsmith who could accept the task. If any, they had difficulties in meeting the quality standards as required by the King.

Finally the King went to another goldsmith to order the two objects. By now he had gone to many goldsmiths, all of which experienced this peculiar happening, that every time they almost finished making the two items, they always got broken

immediately. Consequently, he had to extend his departure into several weeks long. He even had to stay overnight several times to wait throughout the making process. Eventually, nobody kept track anymore on how long the King had been gone. Probably several months had passed since he first departed.

Galuh Gagalang knew how to take advantage of the King's absence for months. She kept influencing the people around her, including the maids who were serving the Queen. When it was time for the Queen to give birth, her faithful maids were expelled from the palace by Galuh Gagalang. Some of them were forced to leave even by some ruthless threats. And so those maids finally fled, being scared of Galuh Gagalang's cruelty.

The Queen had no idea that her maids had been gone. Now there were only maids sent by Galuh Gagalang to serve her.

One afternoon, when the maids were busy in the kitchen, the Queen seemed to be in a great pain. She placed her hands on her throbbing stomach as her cold sweats started to break out. When her pain was unbearable, she screamed on top of her lungs.

“Maids!!!” she cried out on top of her lungs.

The maids were startled when they heard the Queen's scream.

They rushed to her immediately.

“Maids! Please call the traditional healer. I can’t stand it anymore,” shouted the Queen, trying to endure the pain.

“We did, Your Highness. A friend of us is fetching him. Now please try to calm down, Your Highness. The healer will be with us in a moment,” said one of the maids.

The baby inside the Queen’s womb could wait no longer to see the light. Before the healer arrived, the Queen had already given birth. Loud cries broke the silence. The maids were surprised to find out that the Queen had given birth to three babies. The first one was a baby girl, while the two others were boys. All of them looked healthy and plump.

Shortly afterwards, the “healer”—who turned out to be Galuh Gagalang in disguise—arrived. She was also surprised to see the triplets.

“Maid, please call some guards,” ordered Galuh Gagalang to one of her maids.

“Right away, Your Highness,” replied the maid.

Then she went away to call the guards. Of course the summoned ones were the ones who were loyal to Galuh Gagalang. A moment later the maid returned with four guards.

One of them was instructed to fetch a trunk, while the other three were ordered to send the Queen into exile. Though they did not

have any idea what Galuh Gagalang's intention was, the guards did not dare to ask, knowing how ferocious and cruel she could be. Therefore, they only could follow her order without daring to raise any objection.

The maids in the room looked surprised. They were startled to see the guards who would send the Queen into exile and actually felt pity for her. Yet, they were so helpless they could not do anything to help.

After a while, the guard who had gone to fetch a trunk came back and hurried to report to Galuh Gagalang.

“Your Highness, this is the trunk you have requested,” said the guard.

“Put it here and fill it with several layers of clothes. Afterwards, put the babies inside,” instructed Galuh Gagalang.

Again, the guards did not dare to refute her order. They did what Galuh Gagalang told them to do. After that, the guards and maids were asked to come near her.

“My guards and maids, this shall be our secret and you should not tell about this to anymore. If any of you dare to do so, you will bear the consequence. Understood?” threatened Galuh Gagalang.

“Yes, Your Highness,” they replied almost in unison.

“Good,” praised Galuh Gagalang.

There was only silence for a while. The guards and maids just stared at each other, without any courage to utter a single word.

“Now you have to divide the tasks,” said Galuh Gagalang, breaking the silence. “Some of you have to clean up this room. Bear in mind to not leave the slightest trace. Everything has to look clean and tidy. Later tonight, two guards have to bring this trunk to the river and throw these babies in the deepest part of it. Meanwhile, the other two guards shall send this Queen into exile far outside the palace. Remember, do everything with great caution. Do not let anyone find about this. Have I made myself clear?” asked Galuh Gagalang with a stern voice.

“Yes, Your Highness,” replied the guards in unison.

Galuh Gagalang exerted all of her magical powers in order to deceive the King upon his arrival from the journey. She then meditated in front of the eyes of her guards and maids, folding both of her hands in front of her chest. Her eyes were closed and her lips quivered, casting her spells. In an instant, white clouds of smoke came out of her body. The smoke got thicker and wrapped all of her body. A moment later, it dispersed little by little, revealing Galuh Gagalang who now had become like Queen Nyai Ciciri.

The guards and maid were shocked, in particular because they had witnessed with their own eyes how the real Nyai Ciciri was sent into exile outside the palace. They could only stare at each other in awe. However, one of the maids summoned her courage to ask, “Your Highness Galuh, ehm... I mean, Your Highness Queen, what if the King asks for the whereabouts of Her Highness Galuh?” said the maid.

“Fool! Just tell him Galuh had gone away!” scolded Galuh Gagalang who had turned into the Queen.

“Of course, Your Highness,” replied the maid terrified.

“Now I will take a rest. Don’t forget your tasks tonight,” said Galuh Gagalang, before she went to her resting place.

The guards then prepared themselves to accomplish their tasks. The sun had started to set and it was getting dark slowly. A moment later, after it was completely dark outside, those guards sneaked out of the palace. They walked very carefully as Galuh Gagalang had told them, so that nobody would not find out about their trip.

Two guards sent the Queen into exile at the edge of the woods outside the palace while the other two carried the trunk where her babies had been put inside. They marched together along the empty road until they reached a quiet jungle.



When they were already deep inside the jungle, the guards parted ways. Two of them carried the babies to the right towards the river, as Galuh Gagalang had instructed them to, while the other two turned to the left towards the jungle. All of them kept walking without making any sound.

The two guards who were carrying the babies in the trunk finally arrived at the banks of the river, where they hesitated for a while, without being able to throw the trunk into the river right away. One of them finally spoke up.

“Brother, actually I don’t have a heart to do this,” said the younger guard.

“What if we give these babies to someone so that they could live,” continued the younger guard.

“Hush, don’t be careless. If someone found out about it, we would be beheaded,” replied the older guard, who disagreed with the plan of his fellow.

“What should we do then to save these babies?”

“We can only pray that there will be someone willing to help these babies. Now let us take some teak leaves and put them at the bottom of the trunk to keep water from entering inside it, and then cover them with the clothes. Hopefully they will be warm enough and will be able to survive.”

“Alright, Brother, I agree with your idea.”

“In addition to it, I will name them so that we will be able to recognize these babies if they somehow survive.”

“Name them? What names will you give them, Brother?”

“In order to remember the place where the Queen is living now, I will name this baby girl Princess Ringin Kuning. The boys’ names are Sutan and Satin, as I pray that the Almighty will keep them alive.”

“It’s such a great idea, Brother. I agree with you. But how will you do it?”

“Just bring those babies to me and watch.”

“Here they are, Brother.”

After receiving those babies, the older guard exerted a magical power he possessed by rubbing his palms in circle motions. After a while, a white light came out of his palms. Then he rubbed his white-lighted hands to the palms of the babies one by one. It was magical. The name of each baby was then imprinted on their respective palm, and the guards put them back inside the trunk and covered it.

Slowly they lifted the trunk with those babies inside and let it float on the river. After a while, the currents started to move

towards the center of the river, and it kept going further. When the trunk was no longer seen, both guards returned to the palace immediately. They did not know that a giantess followed the trunk along the bank of the river.

### **The Magical Trunk**

The giantess kept observing the currents of the river, staring at the babies' trunk with her bright red eyes. "Hmm," growled the giantess. "What on earth is that?" she wondered.

Coming out from behind the leafy trees, the giantess walked slowly to approach the river. Despite her slow pace, her steps made pounding sound on the ground. When she arrived at the bank of the river, she took the trunk out of the water.

"Hmm, it's a trunk," she mumbled with her round eyes wide open, beaming with joy.

After taking the trunk out of the water, she lifted it and took it home. Having walked for a while, she arrived in a hut in the middle of the jungle. The hut was like a house built on stilts on a tree, on one huge branch to be more exact. The giantess lived there with her husband.

When she arrived at the hut, her husband, who was of course a giant himself, welcomed her warmly. His body was big and sturdy, his eyes round, and his hair in unkempt dreadlocks.

“What are you bringing, My Wife?” said the giant after he got off from their hut. He looked curious to find out what his wife was bringing home.

Out of his curiosity, the giant immediately opened up the trunk.

“Oe, oe, oeeee...,” the babies’ cries were heard when the trunk was opened.

The giants were startled to see three human babies inside it. One of them was a girl, while the other two were boys. They stared at those three little creatures without blinking. The three babies looked very clean, with clear eyes and chubby cheeks.

Despite being little babies, they already looked beautiful and handsome, making the giantess’ affection grow towards them. On the contrary, the chubby babies aroused the giant’s appetite, which was obvious from the drops of saliva drooling from his thick lips.

The giantess stared at those babies without blinking and reached out to lift them up. However, before her hands touched them, she noticed the black marks on their palms, which she carefully observed.

“Husband, look at that. They have black marks on their palms,” said the giantess while turning the baby girl’s palm up.

“How about the two others? Do they also have the same marks?”

“They do,” replied her wife a moment later.

The giant could not contain himself when he looked at those three babies.

“My Wife, bring those babies to me right away and let me eat all of them at once. I am starving since I have been eaten any human being for quite some time,” said her husband.

“Be patient, My Husband. Do not act carelessly,” his wife persuaded him.

The giantess refused to give those babies to her husband since she felt pity for those cute babies. Her affections grew even stronger and now she wanted to take care of them, because they did not have any child yet.

The giant persuaded his wife again to give the three babies to him. But, again, the wife managed to keep him from doing what he wanted to do.

“My Husband, please be patient. These babies are too little. Their flesh is not good to eat yet. When they are bigger, they will be more delicious,” she tried to convince her husband.

The giant could understand his wife’s explanation. Therefore, he tried to be patient and was willing to wait until those babies grew a little bit.

“As you wish, then. But you have to remember that when they become older, you have to let me eat them.”

“Fine, I agree.”

The giantess was already in love with the babies at the first sight. Her affection grew stronger and it even overcame her greed. Yes she was a giantess, and yet, being a female, she also had her maternity instincts.

Having gained her husband’s permission, the giantess was soon busy taking care of those three babies. She started to raise Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers.

They were taken out from the trunk and were quickly given a bath. After that, she took the three of them to her hut and lied them down next to each other, giving them some drink as well.

“Oh, how cute these babies are,” said the giantess while caressing the cheeks of her adopted children. “How could I have a heart to eat such a lovely girl,” she added while patting the nose of Princess Ringin Kuning tenderly.

The existence of Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers made the life of the giant family more colorful. The couple took a good care of them. The three human children were raised up, fed, and taught many things.

Day by day Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers grew up into healthy, agile, and obedient children who always behaved well. Since they started to crawl, the giantess paid even more attention to Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers. She never left them alone because she was worried that the kids would fall from the hut, which was located rather far above the ground. Therefore, she always kept her eyes on her adopted children. Since she was tied up with them, she never went to look for food in the jungle anymore. Now she relied on her husband to fulfill her basic needs. Fortunately her husband could understand her.

When Princess Ringin Kuning had reached adolescence, she overheard the conversation of her adoptive parents.

“My Wife, once you made a promise that I would be able to eat those children when they grew up. Now they are big enough. Keep your promise,” said the giantess’ husband.

Princess Ringin Kuning’s heart was pounding when she heard it. Chills ran down her spine. She was scared to death and at the same time very sad to hear his adoptive father’s evil intention.

“My Husband,” she heard the voice of her adoptive mother. “Those kids are still teenagers. Their flesh is not as good as the flesh of adult humans. You’d better wait until they turn twenty years old before you eat them,” persuaded her adoptive mother.

One day she decided to tell her two brothers about it.

“Sutan and Satin, what do you think about their threat?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning to her brothers.

“What if we ran away from the hut?”

“Yes, I agree. Let’s just run away,” added Satin.

“Run away? But how should we do that?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning.

“If we go through the jungle, we might meet other giants and maybe wild beasts as well. What if we run away through the river? Let’s just use a boat,” suggested Sutan.

“Yes, I think that’s a good idea. But, where can we find a boat?”

“If you agree, let’s just make it.”

“Alright, I agree with your suggestion.”

They agreed to make a boat as their means to run away. Since that day, every time they went to look for food in the jungle, Princess Putri Ringin Kuning and her two brothers started to gather logs of woods at the bank of the river. When they had enough, they started to build a boat near the river, a bit far from their hut. They intentionally picked that place to keep the plan from their adoptive giants.



The place was quiet and covered by shady trees so they could work peacefully. Princess Ringin Kuning, Sutan, and Satin kept working hard, collaborating and helping each other, so that the boat construction was completed in a short time.

After constructing it for several months, the boat was finally built. It was big enough and divided into several rooms. Since then, they started to gather the ingredients for their food. Some of them were taken home and some of them were stored on the boat to be used as their provisions when it was time for them to leave the giant family who had been adopting them.

### **Life on A Boat**

One night, under the full moon, Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers put their long laid plan into action. They quietly came down from their hut and sneaked outside to go to the boat which was waiting for them at the bank of the river.

To tell the truth, Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers actually felt pity for the giant and the giantess. They did not have hearts to leave the giants who were starting to get old. But they did not have any other choice. They had made up their mind to leave their adoptive giants than become their meals.

The three siblings walked on their toes, at first slowly, but they increased their pace once they were already far from the hut, stepping on wild grass and breaking through thorny leaves. They

kept walking towards the boat they had built. After walking for quite some time, they finally arrived at the place where their boat was located.

Then together they pushed the boat into the river, with which they finally left behind the giant family who had raised them since they were babies.

Little by little they rowed it into the middle of the river. Finally, aided by its fast currents, the boat was drifting farther. It kept floating following the stream of the river. However, several hours later, the boat was stuck into thick jumbled roots of a huge banyan tree which had collapsed for quite some time into the river, blocking the stream with its roots.

When they found out that their boat was stuck, they got into a panic.

“What’s wrong, Sister?” asked Sutan out of the blue.

“I don’t know. Why don’t you check outside, Tan?” suggested Princess Ringin Kuning.

Sutan and Satin climbed up to the deck of the boat in a hurry, wanting to know what had happened to their boat. When they were observing the position of the boat, all of a sudden Princess Ringin Kuning climbed up there as well.

“What happened, Tan?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning a moment later.

“Look, Sister,” said Sutan, “our boat is stuck in the roots of a banyan tree,” he continued.

“What shall we do now?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning, feeling a moment of sheer panic.

“Don’t worry, Sister,” said Satin, trying to calm her sister down. “We’ll make it move forward again,” he continued.

Having said so, Sutan and Satin hurried back inside the boat to take some tools they had brought to cut the roots which were keeping the boat from moving forward. And yet, the boat would not budge.

They had done everything, but the boat was still stuck in the roots of the banyan tree. Finally, due to fatigue, they fell asleep inside it.

In the following days, they continued to try to cut the roots which blocked the boat from moving. However, the boat kept getting stuck among bigger and stronger roots and now could not move at all. Eventually, they gave up and decided to live inside it.

One day, when they got bored staying inside, Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers went outside. Through a branch of the banyan tree which stretched to the bank of the river, they

could finally arrive onshore. At first they tried to look for some fruits around the river. However, as time passed by, they continued to wander further, until they reached a village.

Now in the village a traditional festivity was being held. Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers joined the villagers to watch the shows. While they were enjoying the shows, several soldiers watched their movements and behaviors imperceptibly.

“They could be spies from another kingdom,” whispered one of them. Other soldiers were also suspicious because they looked different than the inhabitants of the village.

Out of their suspicion, those royal soldiers arrested Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers and brought them to the palace, where they were immediately brought before the King, who jolted as soon as he saw the those three arrested outsiders. His heart was throbbing fast and his pulse was racing. How could he remain calm? The face of the girl resembled very much the face of Nyai Ciciri, his beloved Queen. And the faces of those two young male prisoners looked very much like him.

The King remained speechless for several minutes, staring at them from head to toe, with a fascinated expression.

“Sweet Girl and Handsome Young Men, I am very happy to receive your visit,” said the King after a while.

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” replied Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers almost in unison.

“Don’t be shy and do not make compliments. You are not prisoners. Here you are my guests,” said the King warmly.

“Thank you, Your Majesty.”

“By the way, what are your names?”

Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers then introduced themselves one by one. Princess Ringin Kuning was the first one.

“I am Princess Ringin Kuning, Your Majesty.”

“I am Sutan, Your Majesty.”

“And my name is Satin.”

“Great. What beautiful names. Are you three siblings?”

“Yes, Your Majesty. We are siblings.”

“Where are you from?”

“We live on a boat, Your Majesty, in the middle of a river.”

“On a boat?”

“Yes, Your Majesty. We have been living there for months. We used to live in a forest with our adoptive parents, who are giants

and they always threatened to eat us someday. Therefore, we ran away with a boat and were stranded on the bank of the river,” explained Princess Ringin Kuning.

Having heard the life story of Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers, the King was deeply moved. Without him knowing, a drop of tear fell to his cheek.

The King felt pity for them. He then asked Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers to work in the palace. Since then, they worked in the palace during the day. However, after their working hours, they returned to their home boat.

The King wondered in his heart why they did not want to live in the palace. But one thing that made him wonder even more was their physical resemblance with himself and his Queen. His curiosity urged him to start investigating the origins of the three siblings.

One day, when Princess Ringin Kuning was working, the King came near her. He told her about his intention to pay a visit to the home of Ringin Kuning and her two brothers. At first she was hesitant. However, having talked it over with her two brothers, she then let the King visit their home boat.

## **A Revealed Mystery**

On the set day, the King did pay a visit to the home boat. He went there alone, disguising himself as a commoner. He did not bring a single guard with him but was just accompanied by the three siblings.

When he arrived at the home boat and saw its interior part, the King was greatly impressed. All of the things inside it were arranged orderly. The rooms were also neat and clean and the roof was very beautiful. The cleanliness and orderly arrangement inside the boat made the King even more convinced of his supposition, that Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers must have not been the offspring of random commoners. They must have not been the children of giants either, the way they had told him before. The King kept investigating further discreetly.

They felt at ease inside the home boat that they were not aware of the night that had crawled in. Finally the King stayed overnight there. However, his heart was always troubled. Curiosity kept tugging at him and stole his sleep away.

With a power he possessed, in the middle of the silent night, he overheard an indistinct conversation of the sparrows nested above the boat. The mother sparrow was telling a story to her nestling, about a queen who had been wronged by her co-wife.

The King was interested in the story. He then listened carefully to the conversation of the sparrow family.

“Mother, please tell me the story again. Is the Queen still alive? Her name is Ciri-Ciri, right, Mother?” whimpered the nestling, again and again.

“Hush, don’t speak too loud. The King might hear you. The King I told you about is right under us now, inside the boat,” whispered the mother sparrow.

Upon hearing it, the King’s heart was pounding. Silently he begged that the sparrow family would continue the story right away because he would like to know about the mystery of his family, as well as the mystery of Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers.

The mother sparrow then told again a story she had heard before.

“The Queen’s name is Nyai Ciciri, not Ciri-Ciri,” said the mother sparrow, correcting her nestling’s pronunciation.

“O, Nyai Ciciri,” mimicked her nestling. “What about the King, Mother, is he still alive until now?” she continued.

“Like I told you before, the King is still alive. In fact, he is now inside the boat under us. However, His Highness does not know that Nyai Ciciri who is now in the palace is actually the



transformed Galuh Gagalang, a witch who has deceived the King. She could turn into anything, including into Nyai Ciciri.”

The King’s heart was now racing when he heard the story. He felt the heat of anger welling up inside his heart. He suddenly did not feel sleepy anymore. He was furious with Galuh Gagalang. He felt betrayed.

“So all these years I have been living with a witch?” he asked himself. He was infuriated. Nevertheless, he tried to refrain from exploding in anger. He wanted to know the continuation of the story.

“How come the King doesn’t know that he has been deceived by Galuh Gagalang?” asked the nestling again.

“At first he was enchanted by Galuh Gagalang. Then he married that witch girl. When Nyai Ciciri was about to give birth, she asked the King to look for a *caping* and a *papaliran* for their oncoming baby.

The King then set out to look for those items for months. He did not even know that his Queen had given birth to triplets, which are the girl and the two young men who are now inside the boat. The King does not know yet that they are actually his children.”

“So they are indeed my own children?” whispered the King to himself, as all of his previous doubts vanished into thin air.

“How did those kids end up inside the boat, Mother?” whimpered the nestling again.

“After they were born, the King’s children were then put inside a trunk by Galuh Gagalang. And then, the trunk was thrown into a river. Fortunately it was later found by a giantess. Since that, the King’s children were raised up by the giant family.”

“How insolent Galuh Gagalang is,” growled the King inside. The woman’s wickedness had made his children suffer and his family scattered apart.

Despite his boiling anger inside, the King tried his best to keep his cool. He wanted to listen to the whole story. “What about Nyai Ciciri, Mother? Is she still alive or has she passed away?” whimpered the nestling one more time.

“The Queen is still alive until now. She was sent into exile outside the palace, Child. Now she lives as a peasant,” continued the mother sparrow.

The King’s heart was throbbing to hear that his wife was still alive. He wanted the dawn to come soon to be able to prove whether the story told by the mother sparrow to her nestling was true or not.

He became very curious and his curiosity made him sleepless throughout the night.

The following day, after he got up and had a simple breakfast, the King excused himself immediately. He returned to the palace with a troubled heart.

### **Back to the Palace**

Upon his arrival at the palace, the King summoned several guards who were ordered to arrest Nyai Ciciri, who was actually Galuh Gagalang, and sent her in prison. The guards who received the order were wondering, not know what the Queen had done wrong. However, they obeyed the order and went to capture Galuh Gagalang.

At the Queen's palace, the fake queen did not suspect anything when she saw the guards coming. She only became aware of their intention when they arrested her and tied her limbs with iron chains. She then was brought and put in a prison. "Apparently the stupid king has come to know about what I did," grumbled Galuh Gagalang to herself.

After arresting Galuh Gagalang, the King asked the guards and soldiers to bring Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers to him. Led by their respective leaders, the soldiers marched towards the bank of the river, walking one after another with synchronous steps which made a thudding sound like a continuous musical melody.

When they arrived at the bank of the river, the soldiers hurried to approach the anchored boat. Princess Ringin Kuning, Sutan, and Satin were surprised when they saw the soldiers coming.

“What’s the matter? Why are you coming here altogether?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning in wonder.

“Excuse us, Your Highness. We have been ordered by Our Royal King to bring you and your two brothers. In addition to it, we will also bring this boat to the palace,” replied one of the soldiers.

“Why is that? What is it all about?” asked Princess Ringin Kuning again.

“We don’t have a right to answer it, Princess. If you would like to know, you may ask it directly to Our Royal King,” replied the soldier.

“Alright then, please accomplish your task.”

“Thank you, Your Highness.”

Your Highness? The honorific sounded so strange in Princess Ringin Kuning’s ears. She wondered why all of a sudden those soldiers called her that way. It made her curious. Furthermore, the King would take her to the palace and she could not understand why. Therefore, while the soldiers were trying to lift up their boat, she and her two brothers came to see the Royal King.

The Royal King was standing at the bank of the river while watching his soldiers work, accompanied by several guards. When Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers came to see him, the Royal King welcomed them gladly. He flashed a warm smile when he saw them coming. “Forgive me for asking you this question, Your Majesty,” said Princess Ringin Kuning politely. “Why did you order the soldiers to take me and two brothers?” she asked.

“Come closer, Child. There is a secret I would like you to know,” replied the Royal King. “Which secret, Your Majesty?” said the Princess while coming closer. “Let me tell you about it, Child. Do you still remember that last night I slept in your home boat? Last night I could not sleep at all. In the middle of the silent night, I heard a story of a bird to its nestling. According to the bird, you and your two brothers are actually my children.”

Upon hearing that confession, Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers were taken aback. They had never thought that the King would say those words. “Really? Is it true that I am a daughter of a king?” Princess Ringin Kuning wondered in her heart. She was hesitant so for a while she just remained silent, not reacting to the King’s statement.

“Why do you keep silent, Child? Are you doubtful about it?” The King’s question dispersed her thoughts right away. She looked flustered. She was confused, not knowing what to say.

“Forgive me for asking, Your Majesty,” Sutan interrupted. “What made you so sure that we are your children?” he asked.

“My Son, don’t you realize how we resemble each other? That was the first reason. We will soon prove the second one. According to the bird’s story, your mother was exiled at the edge of the woods. Later we will look for your mother.”

“Alright, Your Majesty.”

In the meantime, some other soldiers were trying to shift the banyan tree. The banyan tree, which now had become a berth for the boat, was pushed to the bank of the river so that the boat could move. Several robust soldiers were pulling the ropes tied to the banyan tree.

Little by little the banyan tree started to move. However, when it was finally shifted, the soldiers could not hold it. Finally, the banyan tree collapsed into the river.

Along with it, the boat of Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers started to move and they pulled it over.

After the boat reached the bank of the river, the soldiers lifted it up together and brought it to the palace. Having brought the boat

to the palace, several soldiers were asked to look for the Queen at the edge of the woods. The King and his children also came along with them. Not long afterwards, the Queen was found inside a hut at the edge of the woods. Thanks to the grace of the Almighty, Nyai Ciciri was still alive. She even looked young and pretty, though her face was pale and her body weak.

The King and Princess Ringin Kuning as well as her two brothers who came with the entourage looked very happy. They hugged each other with overwhelming joy.

“Now you believe in what I have told you, right,” said the Royal King a moment later.

“Yes, forgive us, Your Majesty,” replied Princess Ringin Kuning and her two brothers almost in unison.

“From now on please stop calling me Your Majesty. Call me Father, will you?” pleaded the King.

“Yes, Father.”

“Well, that sounds much better. Now, let’s take care of your mother.”

“Alright, Father.”

Shortly after, the Royal King with his three children brought Nyai Ciciri back to the palace. When they arrived at the palace, the

King's Queen was immediately attended by a healer. After that, the Queen's health gradually got better.

When the Queen was completely recovered, a jubilant big party was held in the palace. The party was intentionally held to celebrate the reunion of the King with his Queen and three children; Princess Ringin Kuning, Sutan, and Satin.

From that moment, their kingdom was always safe, peaceful, and prosperous and the people continued to live there in abundance.