

WHEN THEY FIGHT OVER THE KELEKAK
Karena Berebut Kelekak

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WHEN THEY FIGHT OVER THE KELEKAK

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KARENA BEREBUT KELEKAK



CERITA RAKYAT DARI BANGKA BELITUNG

Ditulis oleh
Hidayatul Astar



KARENA BEREBut KELEKAK

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Foreword

Literature work is not only series of word but it also talks about life, both realistically and idealistically of human. If it is realistic, the literature work usually contains life experiences, good model, and wisdom which have been added various style and imagination along with it. Meanwhile, if it idealistic, the literature work contains moral lecture, good character, advices, philosophical symbols, culture and other things related to human life. The life itself is very diverse, varies, and full of various problems and conflicts faced by humans. The diversity in humans life also affects to the diversity of literature work because the contents are inseparable from civilized and dignified humans life.

The literature works that dealing with life utilizes language as medium of deliverance and imaginative art as its *cultural land*. On the basis of the language medium and imaginative art, literature is multidimensional and multi-interpretative. Using language medium, imaginative art and cultural dimension, literature deliver messages to be reviewed or analyzed from various perspectives. The outcome of that perspective depends greatly on who is reviewing and analyzing with various socio-cultural and knowledge background. There is a time when a literary reviewer reviews from the point of view of metaphor, myth, symbol, power, ideology, economy, politics, and culture can be refuted by other reviewers who see from perspective of sound, referent, or irony. Even so, Heraclitus said, "However opposite they work together and from different directions, the most beautiful harmony emerges".

There are many lessons that we can get from reading literature, one of which is reading folktales that are adapted or reprocessed into children's stories. The results of reading literature always inspire and motivate readers to be creative in

finding something new. Reading literature can trigger further imagination, open enlightenment, and add insights. For this reason, we express our gratitude for the processors for the story. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to the Head of the Coaching Center, Head of the Learning Division, and Head of the Subdivision of Modules and Teaching Materials and staffs for all the efforts and hard works carried out until the realization of this book.

Hopefully this storybook is not only useful as a reading material for students and the community to foster a culture of literacy through the National Literacy Movement program, but also useful as an enrichment of our knowledge of past life that can be utilized in addressing current and future life developments.

Jakarta, June 2016

Regards,
Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M. Hum.

Preface

I thank God, Allah Swt., for without God's blessing the story *When They Fight Over the Kelekak* wouldn't have been able to be completed.

The story *When They Fight Over the Kelekak* was adapted from bangka folklore titled "Monkey and Langur Fight Over the Kelekak" by Akhmad Elvian and Suhada published in 2002. For its targeted readers are students, this story must have significant moral value that can be taken to heart. Hence this adapted story is quite different from its original form. Various society activities, especially the traditional one, and its local wisdom are brought about in this adapted story.

In this occasion, I would like to say my utmost gratefulness and sincere appreciation to Head of Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M.Hum. and Head of Language Cultivation Center, Prof. Dr. Gufran Ali Ibrahim, M.S. for I was given the chance to compose this story. My appreciation for the committee of the Nation's Literacy Movement who has provided me with necessary information to be used on this book.

I hope that this book will be useful for the reader, especially elementary student of Bangka Belitung Island Province and generally for anyone who read this book. Suggestions, responses, and feedback from readers are welcomed to be used as consideration to improve the quality of this book in the future.

Hidayatul Astar

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	v
Preface	vii
Table of Contents	viii
When They Fight Over The <i>Kelekak</i>	1
The Author.....	49
The Editor.....	51

WHEN THEY FIGHT OVER THE *KELEKAK*

Thousands of years ago, Bangka Island was mesmerizingly beautiful. On its fertile land, myriad kinds of trees and plants thrived, creating a lush green scenery as far as one could see. Fair white sand adorned its beaches, clear blue water filled its seas. Looking at the calm sea, one would always find tranquility. The sound of crashing waves was a beautiful song in the quiet island. Its beauty was so captivating that one would always want to enjoy all the island had to offer.

At the time, there were only a handful of villages in the island. The very few inhabitants of the island lived in peace and prosperity. Conflict between villages was practically unheard of because there was no reason to fight. Nature took care of all their needs. Rice, corn, cassava, vegetables, and fruit plants grew in abundance. What the people planted always grew well, even without any fertilizers. Rivers all over the island were so clear that one could see groups of fish swimming in them. The people caught them using fishing poles or *lukah* (fish-catching device made from bamboo strips or sticks of palm tree leaves).

Among the villages, there was one that was fairly isolated from the others. It was surrounded by hills and thick forests. There were only a few people in the village. Their leader was called Datuk Legam. Like other villages in the island, this village also

had a *kelekak*. It was a vast forest of various fruit plants such as durian, mango, orange, *rambutan*, lanzones, mangosteen, *cempedak*, *binjai*, and many others. Some of these fruits were seasonal, and when they were in season, the *kelekak* was a heaven of fruits.

In the *kelekak* lived many kinds of animals. Birds, gibbons, squirrels, monkeys, lutungs, and other animals stayed in groups and packs. They all lived freely in the forest. Birds in various colors flew and flocked to trees they liked. Gibbons swung on branches of huge trees. At times, they screamed loudly, piercing the silence of the *kelekak*, showing that they were happy. Squirrels jumped swiftly and smoothly from tree to tree. These little creatures seemed to never get tired. Monkeys and lutungs also jumped among the trees, but they were not as swift as the squirrels. These apes often jumped together from one tree to another, and because they were quite big, the branches they hung on to looked almost like they were going to break.

Up on the trees, numerous kinds of birds lived freely, tweeting and chirping happily. Hogs, boars, squirrels, bats, and gibbons all lived peacefully. On a certain part of the forest, two groups of apes lived beside each other, the monkeys and the lutungs. Each group had its own leader.



This was the time when the animals could talk. Monkeys and lutungs were among the groups of animals that regularly paid tribute to the cultural leader in the region. Monkeys and lutungs ate fruits. Their lives depended on what the surrounding environment could provide. However, the two groups had very different ways of living. Monkeys only picked and ate big ripe fruits, while lutungs were greedier. They practically picked any fruit they could find. They ate the ripe ones and threw away the rest. The unripe fruits were scattered under the trees. Monkeys and other animals despised this kind of behavior. They were upset because lutungs ruined their food by picking and throwing the unripe fruits.

Days after days, the lutungs did not seem to change their way. The monkeys were becoming more upset. In fact, all animals in the forest were upset because it was becoming harder and harder for them to find ripe fruits. The lutungs did not give any chance for the fruits to ripen. In a dry season, it came to the point that ripe fruits were scarce. The birds, squirrels, and bats had to compete each other for sustenance. The animals began to dislike the lutungs. Some of them even wanted to harm lutungs in order to stop them from destroying the environment. However, lutungs were smart, it was not easy to harm them.

“This cannot go on,” Monkey Leader thought. “I have to do something about it.”

Without further ado, he and several other monkeys went to visit the lutungs. He would ask them to change their behavior. The lutungs were relaxing atop a tree when the monkeys arrived. Every one of them ignored the monkeys and kept relaxing on the branches. They did not think it was unusual to see the monkeys wandering around their tree. In the forest, every animal group often went around other group's territory.

The monkeys stopped right under the tree where the lutungs were. Up there, all of them were enjoying themselves, some were eating fruits, but none realized that the monkeys were there to visit them. Monkey Leader shouted, asking the Lutung Leader to come down.

“Brother Lutung, could you please come down for a moment?”

Lutung Leader carried on eating fruits, as if he did not hear the Monkey Leader.

“Brother Lutung, could you please come down?” Monkey Leader shouted a little louder.

Lutung Leader looked down and saw Monkey Leader. He did not really want to come down so he shouted to Monkey Leader to climb up.

“Brother Monkey, this spot is too comfortable. I don't want to climb down. Why don't you come up here?” He said.

“He’s so arrogant,” Monkey Leader muttered to himself, a little annoyed.

Reluctantly, Monkey Leader climbed the tree to the wide thick branch where Lutung Leader sat. As soon as he stepped on the branch, Lutung Leader embraced him.

“Welcome Brother! Please sit down. Forgive me for not going down there. It is the time of the day for us to relax. Everything is very good up here. Take a look at the scenery, isn’t it great from up here?”

“My place is way more beautiful than this,” Monkey Leader thought.

However, he did not say it out loud because he did not want to brag. From his place, one could clearly see clear blue sea, white-sanded beach, and dancing waves.

“To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit, Brother? It is not every day you come and visit me,” said Lutung Leader.

Monkey Leader tried to keep himself from getting mad because Lutung Leader was so arrogant. His response to Lutung Leader’s question was flat.

“Brother Lutung, I come here to see you. I also have something important to say to you.”



“Say it, then! Maybe I can help.”

“Indeed, I am here to ask for a favor.”

“What is it?”

“Well, Brother Lutung, we have been having difficulties finding ripe fruits to eat lately. It is because you and your people have plucked most of the fruits and wasted them.”

When he heard the word fruits, Lutung Leader remembered that his group had indeed picked them without ever stopped and thought whether or not the fruits were ripe. Actually, Lutung Leader had reminded, and even commanded, all lutungs in his group to pick only as much fruit as they needed. However, the lutungs disregarded his command. It was in their nature to be greedy. Not even their leader could change it.

“Monkey Leader, I admit that we have plucked the fruits recklessly. It is our nature. As a leader, I had told them not to do it, but I have no power to stop my people from doing so.”

Monkey Leader thought, “Did he truly command them as he said? It does not make sense that they won’t obey him.”

Negative thoughts ran through Monkey Leader’s mind. He believed that it was in their nature to inconsiderately pick the fruits and that Lutung Leader did not even attempt to keep them in check.

“To be frank, I come here because all animals here do not like what you and your group have done, Brother Lutung. Everyone in this *kelekak* is kin. We wish to live peacefully. We hope you and your group can respect others and share the fruits.”

Lutung Leader fell silent. He realized that their behavior harmed other animals. He decided to remind his group to only take what they needed, to pick only the ripe fruits, and not to be greedy.

“Brother Monkey, I will tell everyone in my group to hold themselves and only take the ripe fruits.”

“Very well, Brother Lutung, thank you very much for understanding.”

“You are welcome,” Lutung Leader replied.

However, there was no change at all after that meeting. In fact, the lutungs seemed to be even greedier. Because of that, Monkey Leader called the leaders of other animal groups who were most affected by lutungs’ behavior, the birds, the squirrels, and the bats, to discuss and find a way to solve this problem.

The leaders sat, perched, and hung on a branch of a big tree to find the best way to stop the lutungs.

“So, what should we do to stop the lutungs?” Monkey Leader asked.

The other leaders exchanged a look of confusion. They did not know what to say.

The silence lasted for a while, then Monkey Leader suggested an idea.

“Since none of us have any idea, what if we go to Datuk Legam?”

All animal leaders quickly agreed to that.

“Hear, hear!” said Bat Leader loudly.

“I agree!” the other leaders chimed in unison.

As agreed, the leaders of animal groups went to Datuk Legam, the cultural leader in the region. Datuk Legam welcomed them warmly. After a few minutes of greetings and small talks, Monkey Leader explained the reason why they came.

“Your Honor, we come before you with something in mind,” said Monkey Leader.

“Mmm, very well, do you come to pay tribute?” Datuk Legam asked.

The reason he asked was because the animals often paid tribute to him, mostly fruits. It was a token of appreciation and respect to Datuk Legam as the leader of every group in the region.

“No, we do not, Your Honor.”



“Well, then, what is it?”

“Here is the thing, Your Honor, we have problems with what the lutungs do.”

“What did they do?”

“The lutungs irresponsibly and inconsiderately pick the unripe fruits and waste them, Your Honor.”

Datuk Legam had actually noticed what happened in the *kelekak*. Fruits were scattered everywhere, both the ripe and the unripe ones. Some of them had been half eaten but most were whole. He also noticed how greedy the lutungs were and compared them to the monkeys who only picked and ate ripe fruits.

“Your Honor, we’re worried.”

“We are, Your Honor,” said Bird Leader.

“Yes, Your Honor,” said Squirrel and Bat Leaders.

“Yes, I agree, I have noticed and considered this for a while,” said Datuk Legam.

“What should we do, Datuk?” Monkey Leader asked.

“As the cultural leader, I have considered our options regarding this matter for a while.”

“Datuk, I have come to the lutungs and reminded them not to waste fruits and to only take the ripe ones. But my words have no effect on them. They even turned to hate us.”

Silence followed. Datuk Legam and the animals tried to think of the best way to handle this. A few moments later, Datuk Legam spoke.

“The only way I see is to banish them from the *kelekak*.”

Monkey Leader and the others exchanged glances. They would miss the lutungs if they were no longer in the *kelekak*. However, they had to choose, missing the lutungs or missing their food. As long as the lutungs were there, they would keep wasting fruits.

“I agree!” Monkey Leader exclaimed passionately.

“Hear, hear!” The other animal leaders said as one.

“If we all agree, how should we do this?” Datuk Legam asked the big question to them.

Once again, the animal leaders could only look at each other, hoping that the others have a suggestion. They thought long and hard to find the best way to banish the lutungs.

“How... How to banish them?” Monkey Leader muttered to himself.

The same question echoed in each leader's mind. Suddenly, Bird Leader spoke.

"Your Honor, in my humble opinion, we should tell them nicely."

"What do you mean?" Datuk Legam asked.

"Your Honor should summon Lutung Leader and give him some sort of notice or warning. If after three warnings they do not change, then we banish them." Datuk Legam found Bird Leader's suggestion reasonable enough.

"Excuse me, Your Honor, I disagree with Bird Leader. The lutungs are arrogant, they won't listen to anyone," said Monkey Leader.

"If you disagree, what do you suggest?"

"We can trick them. Let's held a contest, the loser and his group has to be banished from the *kelekak* as a punishment," Monkey Leader suggested.

"What kind of contest?" Datuk Legam asked.

"Riddles, Your Honor. The one who gives wrong answer loses. That way, we can banish the lutungs."

"What if they are able to always give the correct answer?"

"Here comes the trick, Your Honor."

“Please elaborate.”

“If they answer each question correctly, we must state that their answer for the last question is wrong. Even if it is correct, we must state that it’s wrong. I believe Your Honor can make up any reasonable explanation.”

After discussing the available options, they finally decided to use Monkey Leader’s idea. Since it was his idea, Monkey Leader would be the one competing against Lutung Leader.

“Well, since we agree to banish the lutungs with this trick, I would like to ask Monkey Leader to represent us against Lutung Leader.”

In unison, Squirrel, Bird, and Bat Leaders said “Agree!”

Datuk Legam ordered the birds to inform the lutungs about the contest. Few days later, the birds flew to lutungs’ place. They circled the tree where the lutungs were relaxing a few times before perching on the branches. The lutungs did not mind the birds because they figured the birds just needed a place to rest for a while. They were surprised when Bird Leader called Lutung Leader.

“Brother Lutung, may I speak with you for a moment?”

“Why, yes! Please!”

“Well, I bet they’d just repeat what Monkey Leader said few days ago,” Lutung Leader thought.

“Brother Lutung, we come here bearing good intentions. We’d like to tell you something.”

“I know, you want us to change how we live, don’t you? Monkey Leader had said so a while back.”

“Oh, no. Not that. We come here under the order of Datuk Legam.”

When he heard that it was Datuk Legam, Lutung Leader were taken aback and wondered, “What order could it be?”

“Well, Brother Lutung, Datuk Legam asked you to participate in a contest.”

“A contest?”

“Yes, a contest.”

“What contest?”

“Riddles?”

“Well, that would be easy. I’m smart and I never lose on a riddle challenge.”

Hearing Lutung Leader’s response, Bird Leader remembered

what Monkey Leader said.

“Monkey Leader is right. He is arrogant,” he thought.

“So, when will it be held?” Lutung Leader asked.

“This Sunday on the field.”

“And who will I play against?”

“Monkey Leader.”

“O, just Monkey Leader. We have riddled each other so many times and I always win. What is the prize, by the way?”

“There is no prize?”

“No prize? If not for the prize, what is the contest for? What will the winner get?”

“The winner gets nothing. But, the loser will receive a punishment.”

“What is it?”

“The loser and his group will be banished from this *kelekak*.”

“Ha..., ha..., ha..., I’m going to win and I will be glad if the monkeys are banished. They have always looked at us as enemies.”

Hearing Lutung Leader laughed like that, Bird Leader was convinced that Lutung Leader was arrogant and selfish.

“Well, then, Lutung Leader, we shall take our leave now. Thank you and good bye. See you at the contest.”

“Alright.”

That Sunday morning, all people of the village and all animals from the surrounding forests gathered at the field. The contest would start in a moment. Monkey Leader and Lutung Leader had prepared themselves and was sitting on two boulders facing each other. Datuk Legam acted as a judge as well as the quizmaster. He sat on a slightly higher boulder between the two contestants.

Before they began, Datuk Legam delivered a speech and outlined the rules.

“Ladies and gentlemen, today we will witness a battle of wit between the leaders of monkeys and lutungs. I will ask them riddles alternately and each will provide an answer. The one who answers all riddles correctly will win. There is no prize in this contest, but there is a punishment. The loser will be banished from our *kelekak* and cannot set foot here ever again.”

The spectators clap in clamor after that speech. Then, Datuk Legam officially began the contest by sounding the gong. Datuk Legam asked the audience to quiet down and turned to the

contestants.

“Monkey Leader, Lutung Leader, are you ready?”

“We are ready, Datuk,” they replied at the same time.

Datuk Legam then gave the first question.

“This is the first question for Monkey Leader. What color is a ripe lansseh fruit?”

“Light yellow,” Monkey Leader replied.

“Correct,” said Datuk Legam.

Everyone claps for Monkey Leader.

“The next question is for Lutung Leader. What color is a ripe mangosteen?”

“Blackish brown.” Lutung Leader quickly replied.

“Correct,” said Datuk Legam.

The audience claps loudly for Lutung Leader.

“This is a question for Monkey Leader. How do you find out the number of slices in a mangosteen without opening it?”

Monkey Leader thought for a moment, “How do I figure out the number of mangosteen slices?”



Since Monkey Leader did not immediately answered, Datuk Legam repeated the question.

“How do you know, Monkey Leader? You have two minutes remaining to answer.”

Monkey Leader seemed to think hard. The spectators were anxious because they did not want Monkey Leader lose and be banished. The monkeys were a good group of animals around here.

Monkey Leader tried to remember his experiences of eating mangosteen. He often counted the flower-petal pattern on the underside of the fruit before opening it. Sometimes it was five, sometimes it was six. It was very rare to find less than five or more than six petals on one fruit. In fact, he mostly got mangosteen with five-petal pattern. He then realized that the number of the petals corresponded to the number of slices inside. When it hit him, he immediately knew the answer.

“You find out by counting the flower petal pattern on the underside of the mangosteen, Datuk.”

“Correct,” Datuk Legam stated.

Everyone broke out in a clamor of claps and shouts. They felt relieved that Monkey Leader was able to answer correctly.

“Next question for Lutung Leader. How do you know a lanseh’s

seeds are bitter or not without eating or biting on it?”

Lutung Leader took a while to think. “How do I know?” he asked himself. Like Monkey Leader, he tried to draw on his experiences. He tried to remember the difference between lanseh with bitter seeds and that with not bitter ones. He then remembered that lanseh with bitter seeds was hard, the other was not. He answered quickly.

“If you hold or pinch them, lanseh with bitter seeds is hard, while that with not bitter seeds is soft.”

Once again, the audience clapped and cheered.

“He is good,” an audience said out loud.

“He is more clever than Monkey Leader,” said another.

“Thank God Monkey Leader was able to answer the question, if not, he would be lost.” Another spectator chimed in.

“Alright. Next question for Monkey Leader. What is the color of ripe durian flesh?”

“Some is white, some is yellow,” replied Monkey Leader.

“Correct,” Datuk Legam said.

Another round of applause rang loudly in the air.

“Next question for Lutung Leader. What is the color of mango flesh?”

“White if it is unripe and yellow when it is ripe,” Lutung Leader replied quickly.

“Correct,” said Datuk Legam.

Datuk Legam gave the questions one by one to the contestants and they were always able to give the correct answers. And every time they answer, the audience broke into cheers. It seemed that no one would lose. Then it was time for the final question. Both contestants had to answer this one question correctly to win.

“When a durian falls down from its tree in a *kelekak* we own, what will the sound be like?”

With a satisfied smirk, Lutung Leader confidently answered, “The sound of a falling durian is *krasaaak gedebuk*.”

When Lutung Leader had given his answer, Monkey Leader said softly, “When a durian falls from its tree in a *kelekak* we own, it will sound like this: *gedebuk, krasak, saak, saak*.”

“The correct answer is Monkey Leader’s. Congratulation Monkey Leader, you win the contest,” said Datuk Legam.

The lutungs protested. They demanded to know why Monkey Leader’s answer was the correct one.



“*Krasaaak* is the sound of it falling and hitting the leaves on its way down and *gedebuk* is the sound of it hitting the ground,” Lutung Leader explained his answer.

Datuk Legam maintained that Monkey Leader’s answer was more to the point since the question mentioned the fact that it was his own *kelekak*. His reasoning was that *gedebuk* was the sound of the durian hitting the ground and *krasak, saak, saak* was the sound of monkey walking around the bushes and leaves on the ground searching for the fruit. Lutung Leader’s answer was only true if it was other people’s *kelekak*, because in that case one would not searched for the fallen durian. However, the question explicitly stated it was his own *kelekak*, therefore, Monkey gave the correct answer.

The lutungs still could not accept that ruling. That explanation was reaching too far. Clearly that was made up. In fact, Lutung Leader had actually provided the correct answer. Datuk Legam stated it was incorrect for one reason only, he had made a deal with the animal leaders that Lutung Leader had to lose.

As agreed, the lutungs were banished from the *kelekak*. Begrudgingly, the lutungs left. They wandered to other forests to survive. Other animals were glad when they left because it meant that no one would waste the fruits in the *kelekak* anymore.

However, they secretly missed the lutungs. The *kelekak* was not

the same without them. Their only consolation was that it was for the best for everyone. To sustain everyone's food supply, the lutungs had to leave.

Since the lutungs left, all fruit eaters lived peacefully in the *kelekak*.

They had plenty of food.

“Thank God the lutungs are not around anymore. No one wastes our fruits now,” Monkey Leader said to Bird Leader one day, when they were harvesting fruits for their respective groups.

“Amen to that,” said Bird Leader.

Datuk Legam was also glad that peace had been restored in his area, until one day, when a strange thing happened at his house. It was a couple days after the contest. Datuk Legam's daughter was making fish stew in the kitchen. When she stirred the stew, a weird sound came from the pot. It sounded like a voice was singing.

“*Nyit, nyit, Legam belit, nyit, nyit Legam belit, nyit, nyit, Datuk Legam belit!*”

Datuk Legam's daughter was surprised and scared hearing that sound. She then yelled, calling her father. Datuk Legam quickly went to the kitchen to see his daughter.



“What is it, girl?” Datuk Legam asked.

“That, Father,” she replied and pointed to the pot on the stove.

“What is it? What’s wrong with the dish?”

“There was a sound, a voice,…”

“What sound? What voice?”

“A strange sound, Father.”

“What strange sound?”

“There was a strange sound coming from the pot when I stirred the stew.”

Datuk Legam was puzzled. He then asked his daughter to stir the stew. When she did, Datuk Legam heard the strange singing voice.

“*Nyit, nyit, Legam belit, nyit, nyit Legam belit, nyit, nyit, Datuk Legam belit.*”

That voice kept repeating the same thing, saying that Datuk Legam was a cheat. When he heard that, Datuk Legam felt a surge of uneasiness, which quickly turned to anger. He knew he had cheated the lutungs, but it still stung him so bad.

He tried to calm himself because he was curious. He took the

ladle from his daughter and stirred the stew slowly and carefully. He heard a soft sound coming from the pot, a voice singing the same words.

“Nyiiiiit, nyiiiiit, Leeegaaam beeeeliiiiit, nyiiiiit, nyiiiiit. Leeegaaam beeeeliiiiit, nyiiiiit, nyiiiiit, Daatuuuk Leeegaaam beeeeliiiiit.”

The more he listened to the song, the angrier he got. He stirred the stew as hard as he could, and the sound only got louder. In fact, the whole village could hear it. Every villager and every animal heard it.

“What is that sound?” They asked each other.

“It sounds like it comes from Datuk Legam’s house,” said a man.

“It is,” said another.

Everyone was curious and wondered about the strange sound.

Finally, Datuk Legam could not take it anymore. In his rage, he kicked the pot. Everything flew; the pot, the stew, the stove, and the fire. The fire caught the roof made from dried palm leaves. Soon, it spread and burned the house.

Datuk Legam panicked. The villagers and the animals also panicked seeing the fire claimed Datuk Legam’s house. It got bigger and bigger over time, spreading to the surrounding houses.

No one could do anything but run to save themselves. It was impossible to tame such raging fire.

“Fire, fire, fire,” they screamed at the top of their lungs while scrambling away.

“Let’s get to a safe place,” said Datuk Legam who had begun to collect himself.

They all ran together to safety, away from the fire. At the same time, a big wind blew and spread the fire even more. The whole village and the *kelekek* were burned to ashes. With sadness filling their hearts, every person and animal looked at the place where they had been living for so long turned into charcoals. There was nothing they could do.

They stood for a long time, watching their village and *kelekek* burned. Then, Datuk Legam asked every villager to come travel with him, finding a new place to call home. The animals, including the monkey, also went with them.

Before they started their long journey, Datuk Legam felt that he had to say something. He owed them an apology.

“Brothers and sisters, I am truly sorry for this terrible accident. I had caused your houses, your belongings, our village, and our *kelekek* burned to the ground. I beg for your forgiveness. It is my fault. I could not contain my anger. You all heard the strange

voice singing from my daughter's stew. It said I was a cheat. This is a sign from the universe, a warning that we should not cheat. We must not cheat anyone."

"Yes, Datuk, we are sorry too. It's not just your fault. It is everyone's fault. We all wanted to banish the lutungs from our *kelekak*," Monkey Leader replied.

"Yes, Datuk, this is fate," said Bird Leader.

"Very well. I am glad you all forgive me. Let's start a new life. A life of travelers. We cannot stay here anymore. I hope this village can be a fertile land again one day. If that happens, we will come back here."

"Yes, Datuk," said everyone.

They traveled anywhere and everywhere, without a fix destination. All they knew was to keep moving, climbing mountains, exploring ravines, crossing rivers, to find a place to call home. They ate fruits and edible roots, whatever they could find on the road.

After almost a month wandering, they saw a village. From the top of the hill they had just climbed, the village looked pretty similar to their own village. They were very excited and quickly ran down the mountain, heading towards the village. A few hours later, they arrived at the border of the village. There was a *kelekak*

there, a fertile one with various fruits of seasons. Many of them were ripe. Red *rambutan*, yellow lansheh, orange papaya, brown sapodilla and longan, and many others. Because they were starving after such a tiring walk, they immediately picked the fruits and ate them. They ate until they were so full they could barely move. With full stomach and tired bodies, everyone soon fell asleep under the shade of the trees.

It was fate that the lutungs banished by Datuk Legam had been living at the *kelekak*.

Datuk Legam and his people were asleep right at the time when the lutungs were about to pick up the ripe fruits. The lutungs were surprised to find people sleeping under the trees. There were so many people there. Lutung Leader went over them one by one, trying to get a closer look at everyone. He was even more surprised to see that it was Datuk Legam and his people. Looking up, he saw the monkeys, the gibbons, the birds, the bats, and the squirrels all asleep on the branches.

“What? Datuk Legam and the others are here? What happened to the village?” Millions of questions raced through his mind. Out of respect for Datuk Legam, Lutung Leaders ordered his people not to disturb them. He quickly went to the leader of the village, Datuk Pati, to report this.

“Your Honor, I found Datuk Legam, the leader of our old village,



sleeping under the trees in the *kelekak*. I looks like they have been wandering for a long time.”

“Is that so? Do you know why the left the village?”

“I do not know, Your Honor. Everything was fine when we left.”

“Very well, we’ll head to the *kelekak* and ask them why they come here.”

Datuk Pati, followed by several villagers and the lutungs, went to where Datuk Legam and his group were sleeping. When they arrived, Datuk Legam and the others were awake, surprised to see Lutung Leaders and his group. Datuk Pati walked calmly towards them. Everyone stood up, most were scared and ready to bolt. The closer Datuk Pati was, the more scared they were. They knew they had stolen the fruits from the *kelekak*. However, when Datuk Pati was close enough, everyone began to feel calm because Datuk Pati looked at them with peace in his eyes.

“Datuk Legam, welcome to our village. I am the leader in this place. My name is Datuk Pati.”

“Welcome, it is good to see you again, Datuk,” Lutung Leader also welcomed them.

Datuk Legam did not immediately answer. He was surprised and a little confused. “He must know my name from Lutung Leader,” he thought. Before Datuk Legam said anything, Datuk Pati had

spoken again.

“Brother Lutung had been here a few moments ago. It is his duty to check and pick the fruits in this *kelekak*. When he came, Datuk and your people were sleeping. He did not want to wake you up and came to me, instead.

Of course he came after doing his task of checking the fruits.”

When Datuk Pati mentioned fruits, Datuk Legam felt guilty and embarrassed that he and his people had taken the fruits without asking for permission first. Datuk Legam immediately wanted to apologize for his error.

However, Datuk Pati spoke again.

“I know Datuk Legam and the others have taken our fruits and ate them.”

Datuk Legam’s heart was heavy with guilt because he felt like a thief.

“Our village is a peaceful one. There are rules to be followed,” said Datuk Pati again.

“Please forgive us, Datuk, we have taken and eaten your fruits,” Datuk Legam apologized, bowing his head sincerely.

“The first rule in this *kelekak* is to take only the ripe fruits. It is

not allowed to waste the fruits. You should only eat as much as you need.”

“What he said is just like what I wanted back in our village. How come the lutungs can stay here with such rules?” Datuk Legam thought.

“No need to apologize, Datuk Legam.”

Datuk Legam wondered why Datuk Pati said that. Clearly he was guilty of eating the fruits without permission.

“We know Datuk Legam and your group were starving. We also know that you only picked the ripe ones and you took as much as you need. Brother Lutung has reported about the conditions of the fruits in this *kelekak* and you did not break any rule. Therefore, Datuk and your people did not do anything wrong.”

Datuk Legam was relieved and grateful that they did not break any rule of the village. He felt that he needed to say thank you.

“Thank you for being considerate and generous, Datuk.”

“Yes, Datuk Legam, we should thank nature and The Creator. These fruits are for all of us. We did not plant the trees, but they grew and gave us fruits. Therefore, I think everyone can take and eat them, as long as the fruits are ripe and you are not being excessive.”

Hearing that, Datuk Legam and his group were glad.

“If anyone picked unripe fruits, they will be warned up to three times. If they ignored the warning, they will be banished from this village,” Datuk Pati added.

“Let’s shake hands!”

After shaking hands, Datuk Pati asked Datuk Legam how come they got to this village.

“We are sorry to bother you, Datuk, but our village was burned to the ground.”

“Why did it burn?”

“It was my fault, I could not control myself and got carried away.”

“What happened? Why were you angry?”

“It began with the contest involving lutungs that now stay in your village, Datuk.”

Lutung Leader wondered why Datuk Legam was angry. “Shouldn’t he be glad we’re not there anymore?” Lutung Leader thought.

“Here’s the thing, Datuk. When we held the contest, we decided to say that Lutung Leader gave the wrong answer. Even though

he answered correctly, we said it was incorrect just so we would be able to banish them from our *kelekak*. It was because we disliked what they did. They took the fruits without any care whether they were ripe or not, and they often wasted the fruits.”

“O, well, what does it have to do with your village being burned?”

“A couple of days after lutungs were banished, my daughter cooked a stew. Every time she stirred the stew, a sound came out of the pot, saying ‘Datuk Legam *belit*, Datuk Legam *belit*.’”

“When I heard that, I got angry and kicked the pot. The pot and the stove flew to the air and the roof caught fire. A huge wind blew and spread the fire to other houses.

It even burned our *kelekak*.”

“I’m really sorry to hear that?”

“That incident made us realize that we should not lie or cheat,” Datuk Legam concluded.

Listening to Datuk Legam’s story reminded Datuk Pati of an incident he experienced in this village.

“Datuk Legam, we have similar stories.”

“What do you mean?”



“I also had a weird experience like that a few years ago.”

“I’m intrigued. What happened, Datuk?”

Datuk Pati then told the story.

“There was only one lanseh tree in this *kelekak*. When the fruits were ripe, only I and my family were allowed to pick and eat them. Other villagers and animals obviously wanted to have some lanseh too, but I felt that since I was the leader, I had the right to enjoy them all. I could not share since there was only that one tree. I always kept the lanseh fruits in a wooden chest. One night, when I was getting ready to bed, I heard sounds from the chest. It said, ‘Datuk Pati is cheap, Datuk Pati is unfair, Datuk Pati is selfish.’ I heard it repeated over and over. When I walked closer to the chest, the voice disappeared. I went back to my bed, thinking it was just my imagination. But before I even reached the bed, I heard it again. I walked towards the chest again and it disappeared. This happened over and over again that night. As time passed, the voice got louder. At that rate, I was worried that the whole village would hear it by midnight. Finally I decided to stay near the chest the whole night to stop it from saying those things. I thought long and hard that night. By morning, I realized that I should not have acted like that. As a leader, I must not be selfish. I then made a promise in front of the chest that I would share the lanseh to everyone who wanted it. After that, I went to bed and I never heard the voice again.”

Datuk Legam repeatedly nodded while listening to Datuk Pati's story. He felt like he was witnessing it firsthand.

"That's my experience, Datuk Legam."

"It is similar with what happened to me," said Datuk Legam.

"That experience had made me realize that I have to be wiser as a leader. I have to put my people's need before my own and my family's."

"You are right, Datuk Pati. It seems like the universe is always watching and reminding us to do good deeds."

"Yes, Datuk Legam. The universe has ears and eyes everywhere, and it is always watching us."

After listening to Datuk Legam's story, Datuk Pati felt pity and welcomed Datuk Legam, and every one that came with him, to stay in his village. Datuk Legam thanked him for his kindness.

There was one thing that made Datuk Legam wonder this whole time, "Why do the lutungs behave so well here?"

He wanted to ask that question to Datuk Pati or even directly to Lutung Leader. However, he felt it would be better if he did not ask. He was ashamed that he had been reckless and emotional in making decisions. He tried to think and find the answer himself.

Every day, Datuk Legam observed how the lutungs carefully picked the ripe fruits and ate them all. “Could it be their banishment that has changed them? Or is it Datuk Pati’s rules?” Datuk Legam often thought.

Datuk Legam reminisced his discussion with leaders of animal groups. He remembered that Bird Leader had suggested to talk to the lutungs first, but Monkey Leader had disagreed. He realized that at the time he had been inclined to follow Bird Leader’s idea if not for Monkey Leader’s persuasion. What Bird Leader had suggested was exactly what Datuk Pati implemented in this village.

“If I had followed Bird Leader’s suggestion, maybe the lutungs would have changed and behaved the way they do here. The village would not have been burned,” he muttered to himself.

Datuk Legam did not regret what had happened. He vowed to always learn from his experiences and be a wiser, more considerate leader.

One day, Lutung Leader came to talk to him.

“Datuk, maybe you wonder why we have been able to leave harmoniously side by side with the monkeys in this village,” said Lutung Leader.

Lutung Leader did not fail to see what had gone in Datuk

Legam's mind regarding lutungs' behavior here. Datuk Legam was taken by surprise. He did not think Lutung Leader would say that to him. He admitted that he had been wanting to ask the question so many times.

"We were sad to leave the village, Datuk, but we could not disobey your decision."

Datuk Legam felt guilty that he had banished the lutungs.

"Please forgive me, Brother Lutung, I made a rushed decision that day."

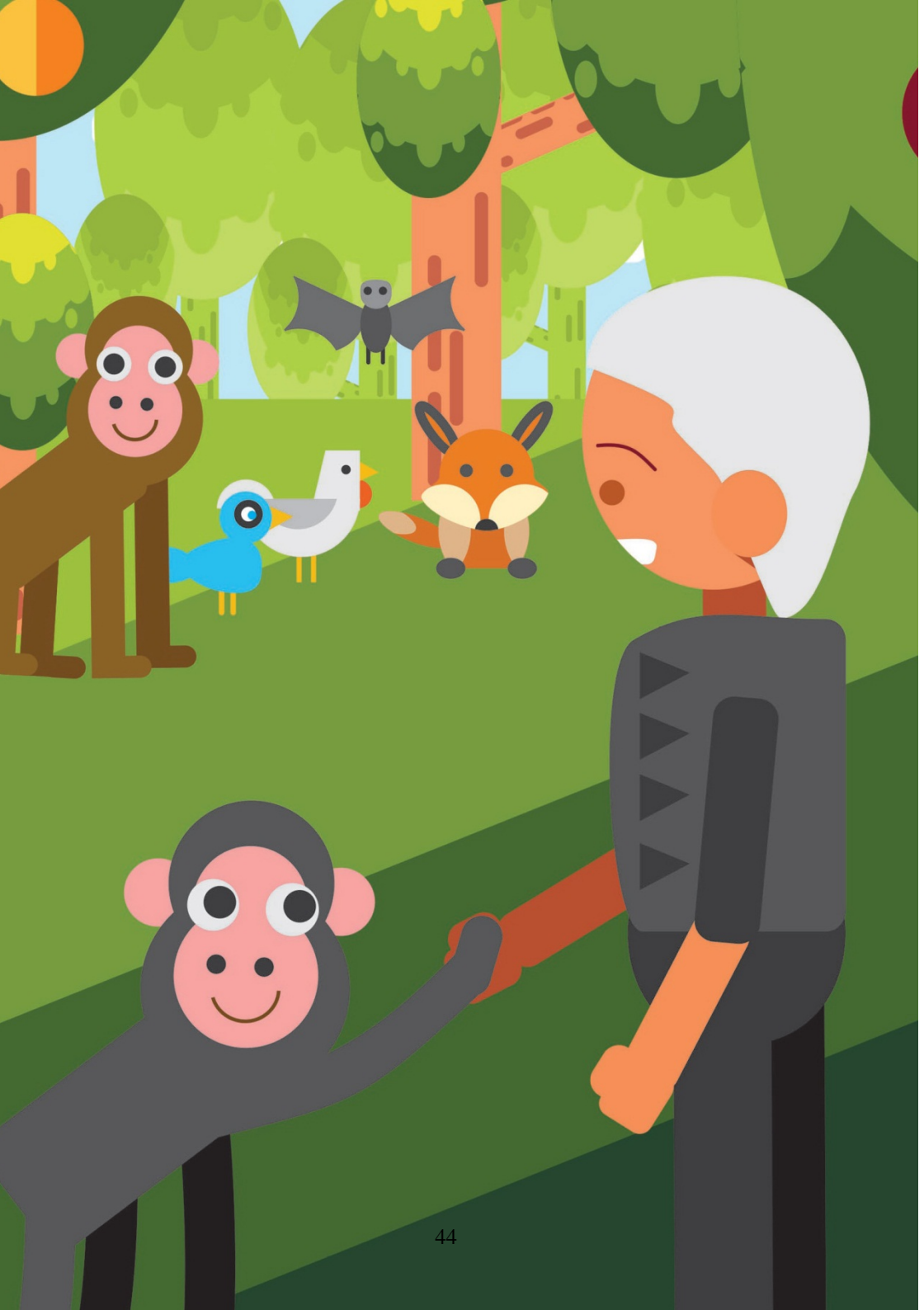
"We're sorry too, Datuk. We're sorry that we picked all the fruits and wasted them, disregarding the other animals."

They forgave each other. Datuk Legam finally asked, "So, how come you change your behavior here?"

"Well, at first, the villagers captured us because we ate the fruits the way we had done in our village. They took us to their leader, Datuk Pati. However, Datuk Pati did not get angry with us. He just reminded us that we were welcome to eat any fruit we want in the *kelekak*. We just need to follow the rules."

"What are the rules?" Datuk Legam asked.

"Datuk Pati had told you the day you came here, hadn't he?"



“We can only eat the ripe fruits and take only as needed,” said Datuk Legam.

“Yes, that’s the rule, Datuk.”

That confirmed Datuk Legam’s suspicion. Datuk Pati made the rules for everyone entering the village, not just for their group.

Monkey Leader and other animal leaders heard the conversation between Datuk Legam and Lutung Leader. They all felt a tug in their hearts.

Monkey Leader then said, “Brother Lutung, we would like to apologize to you and your people. We had gotten you banished from the village.”

Lutung Leader forgave them. He then asked for their forgiveness for lutungs’ bad behavior in their *kelekak*. They all vowed to rebuild their old village together if they ever returned there.

It had been five years since the day Datuk Legam and his people came to Datuk Pati’s village. Datuk Legam and everyone that came with him missed their village. Lutung Leader and his group also felt the same way. They planned to go back to their village and *kelekak*. They believed that it had grown back to its former glory. With that thought in mind, Datuk Legam, Monkey Leader, and Lutung Leader paid a visit to Datuk Pati.

“Datuk Pati, we have been living here for five years. We missed

our village and would like to go back there. We believed that it has grown back to the way it was.”

“Are you sure it has returned back to normal?”

“I cannot explain it, Datuk, but we strongly believe that it’s time for us to go back home. It feels like the universe has called us back.”

“Well, if you are sure of course you can leave. If you are not sure, you are welcome to stay here as long as you want.”

“Datuk Pati, we are sure that our village has returned to the way it was,” Monkey Leader chimed in.

“If that is your decision, how can I not let you go back to your village. I, on the behalf of everyone in this village, will not prevent you from doing what you want to do.”

“Thank you, Datuk, it is hard for us to leave this peaceful and beautiful village. We have grown to love it very much. However, we miss our own village. We have been away for too long.”

When the day came, Datuk Legam and all his people started the journey back to their village.

They brought enough provisions for the long trip. After a month on the road, they arrived at the top of a hill where they saw that their village had returned to its former glory. They were so happy



that they ran all the way down the hill. Soon, they arrived back where they started it all. They found new trees had grown in the *kelekak*, some of them bore ripe fruits. No words could describe how glad they were. They rebuilt the village and decided to live like Datuk Pati and his people. No one, people and animals, wasted the fruits. They only picked the ripe ones and only as much as they needed. They followed the rules implemented in Datuk Pati's village.

No group was greedy, arrogant, or selfish anymore. Every group lived in harmony, always helping and respecting each other. Thus, they lived in peace and prosperity. Datuk Legam, Datuk Pati, and all people living in Bangka Island at that time lived happily together.

A few years later, Datuk Legam's village grew into a fertile and beautiful place. People lived in prosperity and peace. Datuk Legam and his people were very grateful for all the blessings and happiness they received from the Almighty.

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