

SARUDIN THE TURTLEDOVE CATCHER
Sarudin Pemikat Burung Perkutut

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SARUDIN THE TURTLEDOVE CATCHER

Orphaned

One sunny morning, the cool air made its way lazily through the village of Pasirluhur and blanketed much of the surrounding countryside. The village, located in West Java, was very fertile, serene and was home to the friendliest people one could ever meet. The morning rays shining through the green of the trees, casting a golden glow on the rice paddies made Pasirluhur all the more beautiful.

It is said, that in Pasirluhur village lived a young man named Sarudin. He was clever, hardworking and was always glad to lend a helping hand to those in need. Sarudin, known to most as Udin, loved – and had an uncommon knack for - catching turtledoves. His father was Ahmad Bahrudin. He was a tenacious farmer and a much respected teacher of the Quran. Every day Sarudin's father would go to the rice paddies or the garden which was no bigger than a few plots. He was hardworking and diligent, eager to work to ensure that Sarudin would have a chance at a higher education.

“How do you feel about continuing school in the city, Din?” asked his father one morning just before leaving for the garden.

Sarudin was taken aback by his father's question. He walked

towards his father. "I'd sure like to, Dad, until I become a teacher. I want the people of Pasirluhur to prosper." His voice clear and full of conviction.

"Good, good, Din. I'm happy that that is what you want. I will work hard to save money for your aspirations," his father replied as he tapped Sarudin's shoulder. He knew better than to doubt his son's strong will.

"I also want to be a successful farmer and cultivate our rice paddies and gardens well," continued Sarudin.

"A noble goal, son. I'm proud to hear it. From now on you need to study harder or else you'll never achieve your dream," said Ahmad Bahrudin. He looked deeply into his son's eyes. He loved him so much. He then walked to the garden which was not far from his home.

As time went by, Sarudin did not manage to fulfill his desire to continue his schooling because his father died after suffering from a deadly disease for two months. At that time, Sarudin was only six years old and sat in first grade in elementary school. Not long afterward, Sarudin's mother, Nurma, had to work hard every day. She also cultivated rice paddies or gardens. Over time Nurma fell ill. Sarudin tried to comfort her and ease her suffering, but to no avail. Her pain was getting worse. One month later, she passed away to God the Merciful. Sarudin was devastated. He could not

imagine life without his parents.

Since then, Sarudin lived with his aunt in a modest home.

Sarudin's aunt was a poor widow. She made her living from a few rice paddies and gardens. After graduating from elementary school, Sarudin could not continue his education because his aunt did not have enough money to pay for his school fee. He became very sad every time he saw his friends go to school.

"Never mind, Din. If we have money later, you can go back to school," Auntie said one afternoon.

"I do not know, Auntie ... I'm not sure I can continue my schooling."

"Do not feel like that, Din. You should not be discouraged and despair. Pray that you can continue your schooling later," Auntie continued. She looked at her brother's son lovingly.

Now Sarudin had grown up into a young man. He grew into a handsome, well-built, good-looking, yellow-skinned man. His perfect body did not make him arrogant and proud. He was very respectful to the elder, affectionate to the young, and helpful to those who needed help. He spoke very politely. He was well liked and loved by Pasirluhur villagers. Sarudin began to cultivate his parents' rice paddies and gardens. Almost every day Sarudin went to the rice paddies and the gardens. He gave the income he earned

from the rice paddies and the gardens to Auntie to meet their daily needs.

Bird-Catching Hobby

Sarudin had a close friend named Juarta. He often entertained, accompanied, and even invited Sarudin to spend the night at his home. Juarta's parents also loved Sarudin and regarded him as their own son.

"Din ... Din ...," called someone from outside the house.

"Hi Ta, rarely do you come at this time in the afternoon. What's up?"

"Look, Din, the bird you gave me last week is off. Now I have no more birds. If you don't have much work tomorrow, I want to ask you to catch birds on the hill," said Juarta.

"Oh ..., a good idea, Ta. I have not caught birds for a long time. I also want to know if the birds in our hill are still many," replied Sarudin with a happy expression.

"Then tomorrow we meet at 09.00 at my house," said Juarta while tapping his friend's shoulder. Pleased, he left Sarudin.

The next day, at 09.15, the two close friends walked through the hills around their village. Sarudin carried two cages and a lure.

Similarly, Juarta also brought a cage and a lure. After arriving on a hill, Sarudin and Juarta stopped and started to prepare their luring tool.

Sarudin put a hook on a place where they expected lots of birds. Sarudin whistled several times imitating the sounds of birds. The two best friends then hid behind a tree while watching it. It was not too difficult for him to attract the bird because Sarudin was good at luring it. At about 14:00 they had caught four birds. They came home feeling proud and happy.

In the afternoon, when Sarudin was sitting on the front of his house and whistling to make his turtledove sing, Auntie came over.

"This afternoon Agan Amir came looking for you."

"Oh, did Agan Amir come from the city, Auntie?" asked Sarudin.

"Yeah ... he said he was on school vacation," Auntie said as she picked up a piece of cassava.

"Din ..., Din ...," called a young man from the fence.

"Well, that's Agan Amir coming," said Auntie.

Sarudin ran to the gate to welcome his friend. They had not met for a long time. The two friends embraced each other to satisfy their longing. Auntie watched their closeness with emotion.

Agan Amir was a son of a wealthy family in Pasirluhur village. He lived in town with his parents. When his school was off, he came to Pasirluhur village to visit his grandmother. His father was Abdul Basir and was often called Juragan Pensiun (which literally meant *the Retired Master*). He still had a family relationship with Sarudin.

"Look, Din. I'm here not only because I want to visit you, but I also want to bring a message from my father," said Agan Amir.

"Oh, yes. What is Juragan Pensiun's message?" asked Sarudin.

"Dad really wants to buy one of your turtledoves. Dad's turtledove which had beautiful feathers died a month ago," continued Agan Amir.

"Then, choose one which you think is good."

"Do I have to choose, Din?"

"Yes, pick your own," Sarudin said as he passed to the well. He wanted to take water for his birds.

"I want this, Din," said Agan Amir while pointing the cage located in the corner.

"You are good at choosing Gan. I named the bird Bono. Its feathers are more beautiful than the other birds'. You see for yourself. There are blue, yellow, and purple ones. Its voice is also

better. If Bono sings, its voice is long and melodious," explained Sarudin. He then climbed onto the bench and took the bird's cage.

"Din, here is the money from Dad to pay for your bird," said Agan.

Sarudin looked at his friend. He then said as he handed the bird's cage, "Just take the money back, Gan."

"Take it, Din! Dad would be glad if you accept it," said Agan Amir.

"Thank you Gan. I do not sell birds to Juragan Pensiu," replied Sarudin.

Agan Amir paused to see his friend's sincerity. He placed the cage Sarudin gave him on the bench, and then he approached Sarudin.

"Din, I have other news from Dad," Agan Amir's voice sounded rather serious.

"What's the news, Gan?" Sarudin asked curiously.

"Dad wants you to catch a turtledove in Karawang area. The turtledove's voice is good, but it's very wild and difficult to catch. There were a lot of bird catchers coming for it, but no one has caught it. Dad wants to have that turtledove," said Agan Amir. He hoped his best friend could grant his father's request.

"I just heard the story about the wild turtledove. Gan, tell your Dad that I will try to catch it," said Sarudin, tapping his friend's shoulder.

"Then tomorrow we go to town to meet Dad. You can discuss the continuation of this plan. Dad would love to hear your willingness to catch the bird," Agan replied. He looked very happy.

Leaving for the Town

The early next morning, Sarudin got up. After performing the morning prayer, he went to his aunt and conveyed his wish to go to the town with Agan Amir.

"I'm sorry, Auntie. I forgot to tell you something last night. Agan Amir invited me to go to town. Juragan Pensiun asked me to catch a turtledove in Karawang area. We're leaving today," Sarudin said as he approached Auntie. He looked sorry for having not told her before. He did not want to make her sad.

Auntie understood well what Sarudin was thinking. She held Sarudin's shoulder.

"Never mind. Next time you want to go to town, you have to tell me first. I will make a favorite food for Juragan Pensiun and his wife. They are also our relatives, Din." "I'm sorry, Auntie," Sarudin begged in a low voice.

"Assalamu 'alaikum, Assalamu 'alaikum."

"Wa 'alaikumussalam," Sarudin replied, running to the door.

Apparently Agan Amir was already standing in front of the door. He carried a bag in his right hand and a bird cage in his left hand. Before leaving, Sarudin asked Agan Amir to have breakfast. Then the two best friends got ready to leave.

"Auntie ..., I'm leaving!" Sarudin said while asking for his aunt's permission and kissing her hand. Agan Amir also asked for her permission and greeted her.

"Be careful. When your business is over, go home soon. Send my best regards to Juragan Pensiun and his wife," Auntie said as she led the two young men to the door. She looked sad. Tears began to float down her cheeks. She was very afraid to lose Sarudin. At about one o'clock they arrived at Agan Amir's house.

"Assalamu 'alaikum," greeted Agan Amir from the veranda of his house.

"Wa 'alaikumsalam," said the voice from inside the house. Sarudin was sure it was Juragan Pensiun's voice.

"Ah, you have come," welcomed Juragan Pensiun with his wife as he opened the door. Sarudin shook hands with them and bowed to them.

"Din, you've grown up now. What do you do in the village?" asked Juragan Pensiun while sitting next to his wife.

"As usual, Juragan, farming. I cultivate my parents' rice paddies and gardens. The harvest is enough to meet both my needs and Auntie's," said Sarudin politely.

Juragan Pensiun paid close attention to Sarudin. He remembered Sarudin's father. Sarudin's way of speaking was exactly the same as his father's.

"How is your aunt?" continued Juragan Pensiun.

"She's well, Juragan. She sends her best regards to you and your wife," Sarudin said a little awkwardly. He did not think that Juragan Pensiun would ask about him and his aunt.

"Dad, Sarudin gave you a turtledove. Here it is," said Agan Amir, pointing to a cage containing the bird. Juragan Pensiun stood up and walked toward the cage. He held the cage with his left hand, then made a sound with his right fingers. The sound of those fingers made the turtledove sing. Juragan Pensiun nodded his head with a small smile.

"It's a good turtledove, Din. Both its feathers and its voice are beautiful."

"I caught him on the hillside of our village, Juragan," explained Sarudin.

They looked absorbed in the turtledove. Suddenly Juragan's wife called out from the kitchen."Gan ..., Gan ..., ask Daddy and Sarudin to eat!"

"Come on, now we eat first," called Juragan Pensiun while laying the bird cage on its hanger. They walked into the dining room. There, a delicious meal was already served. Sarudin and Agan Amir ate ravenously. Not only were they already hungry but the meal prepared by Juragan's wife was also very delicious.

After lunch, Agan Amir and Sarudin took a rest in Agan's room. In the afternoon after taking a bath, Agan Amir asked Sarudin to go around the town. They went by bicycle. Along their way, they looked very happy and laughed merrily during their bicycle journey. Juragan Pensiun and his wife were delighted to see his son and Sarudin come home with happy faces.

The next day Juragan Pensiun expressed his wish to Sarudin.

"In Karawang area there is a very fine turtledove, Din. Its voice is very melodious. But the turtledove is wild. Many people have tried to capture it, but to no avail. I am sure you are able to catch the turtledove," said Juragan Pensiun while looking at the young man. His voice sounded very authoritative, yet not pressing.

"Okay Juragan. I will catch it for you," Sarudin replied without thinking.

"But ..., if you allow, I would like to invite a friend to join me. Karawang area is still foreign to me. I've never been there," he added.

"Okay, okay. You can go with a friend. What is your friend's name that you will invite Din?" replied the Juragan Pensiun. He was glad to hear Sarudin's answer.

"Juarta, Juragan. He is my friend in the village and he is also skillful at attracting birds," replied Sarudin with joy.

As they were busy talking about the turtledove, two guests arrived. One guest was middle-aged. Juragan Pensiun called him Pak Haji. The other guest was young. He was twenty-five years old. His face was handsome and his clothes were neat. Juragan Pensiun called him Bara. They seemed to have known each other. Sarudin wanted to move from his seat and intended to get back. He felt improper and impolite to listen to other people's conversation.

"You stay here, Din. This is not serious business, is it Pak Haji?" asked Juragan Pensiun to his guest.

"Yes. We're just visiting because we happened to pass in front of this house," replied Pak Haji with a smile.

Sarudin, who had lifted his buttocks from the back, sat again politely. Then, Juragan Pensiun introduced Sarudin to his guests.

Meanwhile, Bara always looked suspiciously at Sarudin.

"You're the one I've been looking for, Din," he told himself in his heart.

After the two guests asked permission to go home, Juragan Pensiun explained who the guests were.

"The strong and handsome young man is named Bara. He is a wealthy merchant in Cilegok. Pak Haji is his uncle. He is also a wealthy merchant. Several months ago Bara divorced his wife whom he married for just three months," said Juragan Pensiun.

"Bara always consults a shaman before doing something. Because of believing the shaman, Bara divorced his wife," said Juragan Pensiun. He then adjusted his sitting.

"Does he often come here?" Sarudin asked again.

"He often comes here to visit me. I know that he intends to marry Enden Ruheini, my niece," Juragan added in a low voice.

Sarudin was very surprised to hear Enden Ruheini's name mentioned. His chest was pounding. He loved Juragan Pensiun's niece. However, he was aware that it was impossible for him to marry Enden Ruheini.

"Why does not the Juragan accept it?" asked Sarudin suddenly. The words appeared unnoticed. He did not know why he asked that far.

"I do not like Bara myself. He is not the right man for Enden Ruhaeini because he can be easily provoked. The one thing I do not like the most is his belief in shamans. He often goes to shamans to solve all his problems. You know Din, in our religion such deeds can lead us to disbelief in God and are deeply cursed by God! "

"Okay, Juragan," Sarudin replied curtly. He then drove Juragan Pensiun to the door.

Catching the Turtledove in Karawang

Juragan Pensiun, his wife, Agan Amir, and Sarudin were sitting on the front porch. Suddenly Sarudin saw someone coming down from the horse-drawn carriage.

"That's Juarta coming," he said, catching up to the front yard. Agan Amir followed his best friend. Sarudin and Agan Amir greeted Juarta while inviting him in. The three of them were about of the same age.

"Juragan, this is my friend I told you about. He will accompany me to Karawang," said Sarudin introducing Juarta. Juarta greeted Juragan Pensiun and his wife.

"Oh ... this is Juarta," said Juragan Pensiun.

"Please sit down, son," Juragan's wife interrupted as she went to the kitchen. She then came with a drink for Juarta.

After lunch and afternoon prayer, Sarudin and Juarta were getting ready to leave.

"Juragan, maybe we'd better leave now. We are afraid of reaching Karawang at late hour in the evening," said Sarudin while looking at Juragan Pensiun.

"Okay. You must be careful. The forest in the area is very dense," advised Juragan while standing.

"Hopefully we can take care of ourselves. Please pray for us that we can catch the turtledove," said Sarudin.

Sarudin and Juarta shook hands of Juragan Pensiun, his wife, and Agan Amir. Later on, they took their bags and luring tools. They were provided with various foods and money for their needs while in Karawang.

"We leave first, Juragan, Ma'am, Gan. Assalamu 'alaikum," said Sarudin and Juarta almost simultaneously.

"Wa 'alaikumsalam," replied Juragan and his wife at the same time. Agan Amir escorted his two friends to the front yard.

They stood waiting for the horse-drawn carriage which would take them to Karawang. From a distance, the carriage was moving toward them.

Sarudin told the driver of the carriage about the destination of their trip and bargained for the fare. After the fare was agreed upon, they went up and left for the destination. They arrived in Karawang area before sunset.

"Sir, please find us a café which also runs an inn," said Sarudin while looking left and right. "All right, son. I know a good place," the driver replied, turning his carriage to the right. The carriage driver stopped his carriage in front of a café.

The café looked crowded. In the front right corner there were two people eating. In the left corner there were three people drinking coffee and smoking. On the bench somewhat to the back were three people chatting. Sarudin and Juarta greeted as they entered the café. Sarudin and Juarta's voice attracted the attention of the people inside the café. Some of them replied to the greeting and some others did not answer it. Sarudin met the café owner. He said he wanted to stay together with his friend. Then, they put their gear in a place provided by the café owner. After that, Sarudin and Juarta asked for some rice and side dishes. They also ordered two cups of coffee.

That night there were seven people who would stay. The owner of the café and his wife had started to close the café. They were getting ready for bed. Sarudin and Juarta began to lay themselves down on a bench covered with mats. Sarudin looked very tired. He immediately fell asleep. Meanwhile, Juarta still could not sleep. He looked uneasy. His feelings were not good. Until late night Juarta still could not sleep. All around him was quiet and lonely. Suddenly Juarta heard a noise outside the café. He tried to sharpen his hearing. He only heard people whisper about a lost wallet. Juarta awaited the continuation of the person's conversation, but it was no longer heard. Juarta could only sleep about two o'clock in the morning. He awoke after hearing the dawn call to prayer. Sarudin was awake, too.

"Din, come to the well and make ablutions for prayer. It's already dawn," said Juarta as he took a small towel from his bag.

After the morning prayer, they sat eating fried bananas and drinking coffee. It was then that Juarta conveyed the events he heard last night.

"Just that word you heard?" Sarudin asked.

"Yes. I did not listen to anything else!" replied Juarta. He then took another piece of fried banana. "Who is the one who said it?" Sarudin asked curiously.

Before Juarta had answered that question, Sarudin suddenly

spotted the wallet under the bench. "That's the wallet you said," he whispered.

Juarta took the wallet and handed it to Sarudin. They were very surprised. The wallet contained a lot of money.

"Who is the owner of this wallet?" Sarudin asked as he looked at his friend.

"I do not know. Save it first. Later if the owner comes up, we give it!" replied Juarta.

Feeling anxious and doubtful, Sarudin kept the wallet in his bag. He wished the owner of the wallet came to the café where they were staying.

A few moments later Sarudin and Juarta prepared to leave for the hill to the south. According to the owner of the café, the good-sounding turtledove was on that hill. After walking for an hour, they reached the southern foothill.

There they met two young men. One of them was a tall, well-built man. His chest was broad. He dressed like a fighter. He was wearing black pants usually used in *silat* (a kind of traditional martial art). The other man was wearing a sheathed Samarinda cloth. His body was also tall and large.

"Where will you go, dear friends?" asked the man dressed as a fighter.

"We want to catch the wild turtledove which is famous for its sweet voice," Sarudin replied. "If you can catch it, could I buy the bird? I have long heard about the greatness of the bird," said the man who was wearing Samarinda cloth while issuing a wad of money. "Sorry friend. If we succeed in catching this bird, there's already someone who will take it," said Sarudin shortly.

Soon the two men excused themselves to continue their journey. Sarudin and Juarta also continued their journey into the forest.

The forest that Sarudin and Juarta entered was filled with large, shady trees. The path they passed was still wet by the morning dew. After walking a few steps, they met again with a young man. He was about twenty-three years old. As they passed, they greeted each other.

"Where are you going?" said the man starting first the conversation. His voice sounded very friendly.

"We're going to the forest to catch the turtledove. Its voice is good," Sarudin replied.

"Oh, yes. My name is Nari," the man said, extending his hand to Sarudin.

"I am Sarudin and here is my friend Juarta," Sarudin replied, taking the young man's hand. The young man then greeted Juarta.

"I've heard about the turtledove, but no one has been able to

capture it," Nari explained. "Yes ... pray that we can catch it," continued Juarta.

"All right, friend. I'm leaving first. See you again," Nari replied as he stepped on his foot.

Sarudin and Juarta only looked at each other. The young man looked very friendly and kind. The two best friends went back into the forest. The farther they walked into the forest, the more birdsong they heard.

"Din, do you hear the sound of a turtledove?" said Juarta.

"Yes. That's a sign we are close to the location of turtledoves," said Sarudin.

"Ta ..., I have not heard the beautiful sound of the turtledove," he continued.

"Yes ..., we'd better set the lure here. That good turtledove will certainly come," Juarta advised, stopping walking.

"I think so. We will also attract other turtledoves," Sarudin replied.

They were busy preparing the lure. Sarudin then climbed the tree in front of him. He attached the lure to the two trunks. Having finished installing the lure, they took a rest under a large shady tree. They opened the packed meal that had been prepared this

morning by the owner of the café.

Feeling satiating, Juarta began to yawn out of sleepiness. He leaned his body and head against the tree trunk. The cool breeze and the calm atmosphere made Juarta fall asleep. Seeing Juarta sleeping, Sarudin also began leaning his body and head on the trunk of the tree. Suddenly he heard a very sweet voice of turtledove. He opened his eyes and sharpened his ears.

He looked at the tree beside his left because the voice came from the left. He sharpened his eyesight to find out where the bird was. Finally, he saw the bird perched on a branch of a tree about ten meters from where they rested. He did not wake Juarta who was sleeping. He felt sorry for Juarta who looked so exhausted. Sarudin climbed up the tree and put on a strap. The wild turtledove flew to another tree.

Sarudin smiled to see the bird fly. "You will surely enter my lure," he murmured to himself. After putting up the lure, Sarudin leaned back against the tree where Juarta was sleeping. He turned right and saw that Juarta was still asleep. Finally, Sarudin fell asleep as well. Moments later Juarta woke up. He turned to the left and saw Sarudin still asleep. He sat watching the lures on the tree. Some of the lures were already entered by birds. "Ta, you did not wake me up," Sarudin said, rubbing his eyes. "I saw you sleep very soundly. I could not bear to wake you up. I'm just watching our lures in the tree," said Juarta. Sarudin was surprised

to hear the word lures. He quickly turned to the tree on the left. He watched as the lure moved. "Ta ..., Ta, the bird has entered the lure," shouted Sarudin as he ran to the tree. Juarta did not understand why Sarudin ran to the tree on the left. In fact, they put a lure on the tree in front of them. Without thinking, he caught up with Sarudin. He helped Sarudin lower the lure. He watched the beautiful-sounding turtledove.

"This bird's feathers are not good, Ta. Its legs are also ugly," said Sarudin.

"When did you put in a lure here, Din?" asked Juarta in surprise.

"Earlier, when you were asleep."

"Look ... there are some birds that have been attracted," continued Juarta, pointing at the tree in front of them.

"Yeah ... let's take them down," said Sarudin as he walked toward the tree.

They were busy lowering the lures. There were four turtledoves that they could catch. Then, they prepared to return to the café where they were staying. The sun had leaned to the west when they reached the café where they were staying. Juarta immediately threw his buttocks on the bench in front of the café. He leaned against the wall. On his face were visible signs of fatigue. Sarudin also did the same. After a short rest, they cleaned

their bodies and performed the ablution at the well behind the café.

Then, Sarudin and Juarta sat inside the café while ordering coffee.

"Sons, there was someone who left two letters for you," said the owner of the café while serving drinks.

"Letters! From whom, Sir?" Sarudin asked curiously.

"I do not know the person. I saw him for the first time," replied the café owner.

"Wait a moment, Son ..., I get the letters for you," he added.

The owner of the café gave the two letters to Sarudin. Sarudin accepted them with a questioning face. So did Juarta. In the envelopes there were no sender's name. They looked at each other in amazement.

"Hurry, Din. Who knows there is an important message," ordered Juarta.

Sarudin opened the envelopes one by one. The first letter contained the order to return the wallet they found this morning to the original place. The second letter contained a ban that they shall not go outside the café at night. Under the two letters was the name of the sender, Nari. Sarudin handed over the letter to Juarta.

"Nari? Is not he the one who met us this morning?" Juarta asked as he looked at Sarudin.

"Yes, the young man whom we met this morning mentioned his name Nari," Sarudin replied in a rather low voice.

"How does he know we found the wallet and why are we banned from going outside the café tonight?" He added.

"Din, we better just follow the message," suggested Juarta.

"Yes ... we try to follow the message in this letter. Hopefully this message is good for us," continued Sarudin.

It was getting dark. The café light was not yet turned on by the owner. Sarudin hurriedly placed the wallet under the bench where it had been found. Not long afterward, the call to dusk prayer was heard aloud. Sarudin and Juarta went to the well for making the ablutions. The atmosphere in the café was very quiet. There were no suspicious signs whatsoever.

Murder Attempt in A Café

One by one the buyers came to the café where the two close friends were staying. Some came just to drink and eat. There were also those who came just to sit around and chat leisurely after a day working in rice paddies and gardens. The atmosphere of the café was rather excited with laughter and jokes. Sarudin and Juarta had been sitting in the corner watching the people coming.

Not a single person who came inside resembled Nari. They did not see anything suspicious.

Later on, the visitors and buyers were leaving one by one. They went home because the night was almost late. The night was quiet, silent, and dark, just like the night before. However, Sarudin and Juarta felt that tonight was not the same as last night. They were curious, anxious, and worried remembering the message in the letters. They did not know what Nari wanted and knew. Everything felt so mysterious. Juarta tried to close his eyes while reading prayers. He could not sleep. Beside him, Sarudin felt the same too. Both of these teenagers looked very anxious.

In the middle of the quiet night Sarudin and Juarta heard the kitchen door of the café being opened. They heard footsteps entering the café.

They began to worry. Their hearts throbbed. Juarta took Sarudin's hand. Sarudin looked at his friend. They looked more alert. The boys' hands were clenched.

Suddenly they heard the shouts of a man.

"Help! help ...!"

After waiting a while, the shout was not heard anymore. Juarta wanted to see what happened, but Sarudin forbade him. Not long afterward, they heard the screams and cries of a woman. The

woman was dragged out of the café. Juarta could not bear to hear her scream. He suddenly jumped from his seat.

"Hey..! Who are you guys? What are you doing to that woman?" he cried, grabbing the machete next to him. He hunted the men to the kitchen door.

Sarudin could not bear to hear her scream either. He intended to go out and help her. However, he looked doubtful. He remembered Nari's message.

Some of the men who stayed at the café also came out. Suddenly he stood up and grabbed the machete that already lay beside him. He jumped to the kitchen door, where Juarta had gone outside. When he opened the door of the café, his hand was gripped by someone. "Ssssst ... I am Nari ... calm down. I do not mean evil," said someone from the corner of the kitchen. After he presented himself, it turned out that person was really Nari.

"Don't go outside. Stay inside this café," Nari whispered to and approached Sarudin.

Soon a group of people came to carry a man's body, followed by the man who carried a woman's body. The man and the woman being carried were wounded. They groaned in pain. Everyone in the café looked surprised. Apparently the injured man and woman were the café owner and his wife. People started coming to help treat the two people. Sarudin was getting worried because Juarta

had not returned yet."I will look for Juarta, why hasn't he got back?" Sarudin said as he stood up.

"Fine, Din. If you want to find Juarta, I will accompany you," said Nari.

When they just stepped in, Juarta came in bloody clothes. His right hand was wrapped in a glove that was damp with blood. He was escorted by two men.

Sarudin ran to his friend. "Ta, what happened? Are you all right?" he asked.

"I'm okay, just a little bit wounded with a machete."

"Your wound is deep enough, Ta. I should not have let you out on your own," said Sarudin regretting him.

"I will take revenge on that person. They have dared to hurt my best friend," said Sarudin to Nari. His voice trembled with anger.

"Never mind, Din. I am alright. You better clean my wound," said Juarta while looking at his friend.

Sarudin took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. His face seemed to still contain anger. Then, he went into the kitchen to take hot water to clean up Juarta's injured hand. Meanwhile, Nari looked for some leaves to treat the wound. Juarta grimaced in pain as Sarudin cleaned his hand. Sarudin was very sorry to see his best

friend. In order to divert Juarta's attention, Sarudin asked about the event.

Juarta told how he wrestled with the criminals.

"The criminals master high martial arts. Alhamdulillah, I can defeat them. The criminals ran away to escape," said Juarta.

Sarudin knew his friend mastered high martial arts. Despite being beaten by some people, he was able to defeat them.

Back to Home Village

This morning the atmosphere around the café was very calm and serene. The café owner and his wife were feeling rather good. Sarudin was very anxious about Juarta's condition. A fight with three criminals last night made him very tired. Occasionally Juarta seemed to wince in pain. The wound in his right hand still looked wet. His body temperature increased.

"How are you, Ta?" Sarudin asked.

"Looks like I have a fever. My body temperature is rather hot. "

"Is your hand still sick?" said Sarudin while wiping the sweat that dripped on his friend's forehead. Slowly he felt his friend's forehead.

"We'll take a rest and get treatment here first, Ta. After your

wound heals, we shall go home," he added.

"No, Din. We'd better go home now. I'll take a rest and seek some treatment in our village," said Juarta. "Are you strong, Ta?" Nari asked suddenly. Nari did not want to leave them since last night. He was worried about his two friends' safety.

"Thank you friend. You have helped us a lot here," said Juarta, looking at Nari. He turned to Sarudin. "Din, we'd better leave now. We can arrive at Pasirluhur village in the afternoon," he continued.

Sarudin and Nari only looked at each other. They did not answer Juarta's request. Later, they were busy packing up their luggage, including the birds they had caught. After that, Sarudin paid the lodging fee to the café owner.

"We're going to town. Where are you going Nari?" Sarudin asked.

"We happen to go in the same direction. I also want to go to town. I live not far from Juragan Pensiun's house," Nari replied.

"Then we can go together!" interrupted Juarta.

They departed from Karawang at 11.00. Juarta's body grew hotter, his face was red, and his injured right hand was still bandaged. When the wheels of the horse-drawn carriage passed into a hole, Juarta winced in pain. Sarudin was very sorry to see Juarta's condition. He wished that his friend would recover

quickly. They just arrived at Juragan Pensiun's house at 13.00. Sarudin and Juarta directly met Juragan Pensiun who was sitting on the porch of his house.

"Assalamu 'alaikum," Sarudin said.

"Wa 'alaikumussalam. Oh, you guys," replied Juragan.

"Yes, Juragan. We came with a turtledove that you ordered," Sarudin said, putting the cages on the floor.

"Very quickly you caught it," said Juragan with an admiring face. Juragan Pensiun stood up and approached the two young men.

"Where's that sweet-sounding turtledove?" he continued.

"Here it is, Juragan, the ugliest of all the birds. Its feathers were matted and dull. Its legs are not perfect. Its voice is indeed melodious," said Sarudin while handing over the cage that contained the bird.

Juragan Pensiun liked to see the turtledove that always became the talk of the town. Juragan Pensiun also asked for another turtledove. Sarudin and Juarta did not mind because they already had birds at their homes. Suddenly Juragan Pensiun was surprised to see Juarta's right hand wrapped in cloth.

"Why is your hand, Ta? Your face is also red," asked Juragan as he approached Juarta.

"Last night we were fighting with the criminals, Juragan. My right hand was thrust by his machete," said Juarta.

Sarudin told everything that happened in Karawang. He also praised Juarta for beating three criminals.

"Ta, take a rest and get a treatment here. You can stay here until your wound is completely healed," said Juragan Pensiun.

"Thank you Juragan. My wound is a bit healed. I've been given wound antidote in Karawang. We'd better go home and take a rest in Pasirluhur village," said Juarta.

"Right, Juragan. We want to go straight back to Pasirluhur village," Sarudin interrupted.

"If that's what you guys want, all right. However, you should pray and eat first," invited Juragan. He ordered his maid to take the birds to the back of the house.

After praying and eating, Sarudin and Juarta excused themselves. They greeted Juragan Pensiun and his wife. Juragan Pensiun gave Sarudin and Juarta money. He also gave them some food and gifts.

"Send our best regards to your aunt Din, as well as to your parents, Ta!" said Juragan Pensiun when Sarudin and Juarta were going to depart. Sarudin and Juarta went back to Pasirluhur village riding a horse-drawn carriage. They just arrived there in

the afternoon. Sarudin escorted Juarta to his home. He just arrived at his home almost in the evening.

Enden Ruheini's Portrait

Almost every day Sarudin came to Juarta's house. He was very concerned about his friend's condition.

"If I did not invite Juarta to catch birds in Karawang, he certainly would not experience this kind of disaster," he told himself.

After a week in Pasirluhur village, Juarta already felt healed. His right hand was no longer painful when moved. That afternoon Sarudin and Juarta took a walk to the rice paddies. They had not seen their friends play kites for a long time.

When Sarudin got home, Auntie handed over two letters to Sarudin.

"Who delivered these letters, Auntie?" Sarudin asked.

"I do not know, Din. I've never met the man. "

Sarudin read the two letters. One letter came from Juragan Pensiun who asked him to come to town. The other letter came from Nari whose letter's contents were rather strange.

Nari inserted Enden Ruheini's photo and told Sarudin to bring the photo to town.

Sarudin did not understand what Nari wanted. Sarudin guessed that Nari lived near Juragan Pensiun's home because he was interested in Enden Ruheini. He looked at Enden Ruheini's picture once more. In fact since meeting Enden at Juragan Pensiun's residence, Sarudin had been interested in her. Enden Ruheini was not only beautiful, but also soft and smart. After doing household chores, she usually sewed or embroidered. She always filled her days with useful work. Sarudin took a deep breath, then breathed it slowly. He did not really expect to be able to propose to Enden Ruheini. He knew his condition. He thought that Enden Ruheini was kind to him and served him because he was Juragan Pensiun's guest.

A few days after receiving a letter from the town, Sarudin looked uneasy. He was very curious and eager to come to town. However, circumstances did not allow him because his aunt was sick. He did not have the heart to leave her sick.

This morning Sarudin noticed that Auntie was getting better. She had started working and cooking.

"Din, if you want to go to town, just go. I've healed," said Auntie as she sat beside Sarudin. He knew Sarudin was keen to fulfill Juragan Pensiun's invitation.

"But you're still sick," Sarudin said, looking at her.

"No, I already feel well. My body is very fresh this morning," his

aunt replied in a soft voice. "Right Auntie?" "Right!" Auntie assured Sarudin.

"Then, can I leave today?" Sarudin asked hopefully. "Yes, okay," Auntie smiled.

Sarudin packed up his clothes and put them in a small bag. He then went to meet Juarta at his home. He asked his friend to accompany his aunt because he was going to town. Juarta agreed. He promised to accompany Auntie while Sarudin was in town. Sarudin left for the city quietly.

Sarudin arrived at Juragan Pensiun's home at two o'clock. He saw Juragan Pensiun's home was so quiet. He greeted many times, but no one answered him. When Sarudin was stunned, an old servant of Juragan Pensiun came from behind the house.

"Have you been waited for a long time, *Den*?" asked the old man.

"Not yet, Sir. Where are Juragan and his wife, Sir?" asked Sarudin.

"They have not got home yet, *Den*," answered the old man. He then invited Sarudin in. Not long afterward, Juragan Pensiun and his wife came home. They were very happy to see Sarudin at home.

"Sorry, Juragan. I cannot leave upon receiving your letter. At that time, my aunt was sick," said Sarudin while greeting them both.

"Is your aunt sick? Now how is she?" asked Juragan heartily.

"She's already well, Juragan. Now she is accompanied by Juarta," said Sarudin.

As they chatted on the veranda of the house, from a distance came the call for late evening prayer from the mosque. Juragan Pensiun stood up and left for the mosque. He often prayed in the mosque. Sarudin performed the prayer at home. Then, Sarudin wandered into the front yard to see the beautiful flowers. Sarudin believed these flowers were planted by Enden Ruheini. Enden was very smart to arrange and organize the flowers. "Din, when did you come?" greeted Nari.

Sarudin looked surprised. He did not see Nari coming. "This afternoon. I have a hitch to go directly here," said Sarudin.

Nari took Sarudin to his rented house not far from Juragan's house. Sarudin tried to refrain from asking Nari's intention to send him Enden Ruheini's photo.

He waited for Nari to tell him. However, Nari did not tell him about his intention to send the photo. Nari only asked about the situation in Pasirluhur village.

Finally, Sarudin could not stand it and began to approach Nari. He wanted to know Nari's intention to send the photo.

"Nari, what do you mean to send me a letter and insert a photo of

Enden Ruheini?" Sarudin asked in a rather serious voice.

"Oo ... that. I did it, of course. However, I will not say it now. One day you will understand!" said Nari.

Sarudin became more curious. He asked him to explain it now. Nari was still unwilling. Nari advised Sarudin again to bring Enden Ruheini's photo to Bara's party.

Sarudin became more curious. He did not know why everything was kept secret.

Sarudin was invited by Juragan Pensiun actually to train the birds caught in Karawang. The bird whose voice was already good did not need to be trained any more, but other birds needed to be trained to produce good voices. Juragan knew Sarudin often trained his birds.

That morning Sarudin was training the birds. He whistled to imitate a turtledove's voice. The birds began to imitate Sarudin's whistle. Juragan was very happy to hear the birds' voices.

While sitting on the verandah accompanying Juragan Pensiun, Sarudin suddenly saw someone coming. He watched the man. After the man was close, Sarudin just remembered. The man turned out to be Bara. Once he came with his uncle.

"Assalamu 'alaikum," Bara greeted.

"Wa 'alaikumsalam," answered Juragan and Sarudin almost simultaneously.

Bara then shook the hands of Juragan Pensiun and Sarudin. Juragan Pensiun invited Bara in. Bara told the purpose of his arrival. He invited Juragan Pensiun's family to attend the thanksgiving party to celebrate his new house tomorrow night. He would hold a whole night puppet show. He also hoped that Sarudin could be present at the event.

"In sha Allah. We'll come together to your house tomorrow night," said Juragan Pensiun. He also thanked Bara for the invitation.

"Thank you, Juragan. I really expect your presence with your family," replied Bara with a hopeful face. Bara then excused himself because he still had much to do.

Two Guests' Arrival

After a week at Juragan Pensiun's house, Sarudin returned to his village. He had trained Juragan Pensiun's turtledoves. He did not want to stay in town longer because he was worried about her aunt's condition. Along the way back Sarudin always thought about why Nari told her to bring a photo of Enden and who had taken the photo. Suddenly Sarudin remembered both his parents.

"How happy I am if my parents are still alive. They will certainly

help me deal with this problem," he told himself. Quite for a long time Sarudin thought about his parents.

"Where will you get off, son?" asked the horse-drawn carriage driver surprising Sarudin.

"I'll get off at a corner near the mosque, Sir," Sarudin replied, wiping his eyes. Sarudin took the money he received from Juragan Pensiun from the front pocket of his shirt. Then he gave it to the horse-drawn carriage driver.

"Here's the change, Son." "Thank you," he said. He kept the change in his pocket.

Sarudin arrived home at about four o'clock in the afternoon. His face looked dull and pale. He looked very tired.

"Why did you come home too late, Din? Your face looks pale," Auntie asked Sarudin. "It's okay, Auntie. I'm just exhausted. "

"Then, take a bath soon. There are two guests who want to meet you," Auntie said as she went to the kitchen.

"Who are the guests, Auntie?" Sarudin asked curiously.

"Just be patient. You better take a shower before the time for the late afternoon prayer runs out," his aunt said as she handed him a towel.

Sarudin obeyed his aunt's will. Sluggishly, he went to the mosque next to his house. After the shower and the prayer, Sarudin returned home. Whistling and jogging, he wagged his wet hair.

After putting soap and the towel, Sarudin went into the room to change clothes, then came out to meet the guests. "Assalamu 'alaikum," Sarudin said.

"Wa 'alaikumsalam," said the guests and Auntie almost simultaneously. They then shook hands. "How are you, Din?" asked the tall, muscular guest.

"Fine," said Sarudin shortly. Sarudin remembered both of them. They had once met in Karawang. The tall and burly guest was Rasidin. While in Karawang, he wore Samarinda cloth. The rather white guest was Nari. He was the one who forbade Sarudin and Juarta to go out of the café when the murder attempt was taking place.

"The female guest may be the wife of this second man," Sarudin said in his heart. He did not know what the two men were coming for.

"Please drink the tea," Sarudin said, sitting down beside his aunt.

"Thank you," the two guests said, taking a drink.

"Excuse me, what is the purpose of your arrival, friends?" Sarudin asked suddenly.

"We want to stay here because we do not have a house in this village," said the guest named Nari.

"Yes, we are from Sumatra although our place of origin is also Priangan area," continued the guest named Rasidin.

"Sorry, it's not our intention to forbid you to live here, but our house is just like this. It's not improper for you to live in such a place like ours," said Auntie in a slightly choked voice.

"It's okay, Auntie. We are very happy if we can stay and sleep at your house. We can all sleep in this room," Rasidin replied. He looked at Nari as if asking for approval.

Considering their words and behavior, Auntie believed the two guests were really good people.

"If you do not mind sleeping in this room, go ahead. We do not have any other rooms," Auntie continued.

The two guests looked very happy. "Thank you, Auntie," they answered in unison.

"Then we'll sleep in this room. My brother's wife will sleep in my room," Sarudin said, looking at the two guests.

Nari and Rasidin were stunned to hear Sarudin's words. They did not expect this handsome young man to give his room to his wife.

"Thank you, Din. You are not only a handsome young man, but also virtuous," he said, looking at Sarudin.

Unnoticedly, it was almost evening. The call for dusk prayer was already heard aloud. Sarudin and the two guests went to the mosque for evening prayers. When Sarudin and the two guests went to the mosque, Auntie prepared dinner at home.

Auntie just added some vegetables to the dinner because the fried fish made that morning was still left over. Auntie was assisted by Rasidin's wife and Nari.

"Assalamu 'alaikum," came a voice from outside the house.

"Wa 'alaikumussalam," Aunt replied as she walked to open the door. "Come on, come on in," she continued.

"Thank you, Auntie" replied the two guests. Then they walked into a rather spacious middle room. There, the dinner was already served.

"Well ... today you're really busy cooking, Auntie," teased Sarudin while glancing at his aunt. Auntie just smiled at her nephew's temptation. She then went to the kitchen to get some plates. Sarudin helped his aunt bring drinking water and glasses.

"Come on ... now we're enjoying Auntie's cooking. My aunt is good at cooking," Sarudin said. Auntie just smiled at Sarudin's compliment.

"Come on ... please. You must be hungry," said Auntie, sharing the plates with her visitors.

The life in Auntie's little house grew vibrant with the presence of the guests. Usually the house looked deserted. Only Sarudin's and his aunt's laughter was heard. Now the atmosphere at the simple home was more vibrant. Sarudin and Auntie were very happy because the house became so lively. When the night fell, they gathered together.

One day, Sarudin, Nari, and Rasidin were sitting on the front of the house to get relaxed. In front of them were served hot tea and boiled cassava. They heard Mr. Postman's cries.

"Thank you, Sir," Sarudin said, hurrying to see the name of the sender.

"From whom, Din?" Rasidin asked.

"From Agan Amir, my best friend in town," Sarudin answered shortly. He immediately opened the letter.

"What's in the letter, Din?" asked Nari.

"He asked me to go to town because he was on holiday. He cannot come here because his mother has a fever," Sarudin replied.

Sarudin hesitated to fulfill Agan's wish because the planting

season was about to begin. However, Nari and Rasidin supported Sarudin's departure to the town.

"Go away, Din. Leave the work here to us," said Nari reassuringly.

"Right, Din. I'm sure all the work here will be solved by Nari and Rasidin!" Auntie came from behind. "You just go to town," she added.

Sarudin looked at his aunt lovingly. "How wise and prudent you are," he told himself.

That morning Sarudin was preparing to go to town to fulfill Agan Amir's wish. Nari and Rasidin accompanied Sarudin to wait for the horse-drawn carriage. Sarudin arrived at Juragan Pensiu's home during the day.

"How are your father and mother?" Sarudin asked when greeting Agan Amir.

"Mother was sleeping in the room, just returned from the hospital. Father went to buy medicine at the pharmacy," said Agan Amir.

"Din, I'm lonely. I want you here during my holidays," he continued, looking at his friend.

Sarudin understood Agan's feelings. It was not good to be an only child, not having a brother to play and joke around. Sarudin also

sometimes felt something like that.

One morning they went around the town by bike happily. They stopped in front of a café for thirst. The people in the café were talking about what had just happened. Sarudin and Agan joined the people. Sarudin and Agan Amir were surprised to hear their conversation. They're talking about Bara's death. Some said Bara died of being poisoned. Some others said Bara died of suicide by drinking poison.

Agan and Sarudin returned home quickly. They shared the news of Bara's death to Agan's parents. Juragan Pensiun and his wife were very surprised. They did not expect Bara's death to be so tragic. Enden Ruhaini was also very surprised to hear the news. She also looked sad. Nevertheless, her face showed some kind of relief.

After a week at Juragan Pensiun's house, Sarudin returned home to Pasirluhur village. He told of Bara's death to Nari and Rasidin. Nari and Rasidin were very surprised to hear it. They did not think Bara's fate would be like that.

Meeting with Half-Brother with the Same Mother

One night, Sarudin, Rasidin, and Nari were busy talking about their childhood in the living room. Auntie, Rasidin's wife, and Nari also sat there. They talked about their own experiences.

"If you don't mind, may we know about your parents' whereabouts?" asked Nari to Sarudin.

Sarudin was surprised to hear Nari's question. He paused and looked at his aunt. Auntie understood the purpose of Sarudin's gaze. Unbidden, Auntie told about Sarudin's late parents.

"Sarudin's father was named Ahmad Bahrudin. He was the brother of Juragan Pensiun's wife. Sarudin's mother was named Nurma. She had been married before and had a son. Her son died of burning when he was nine years old. Not long after the fire, the boy's father died of sadness," said Auntie in a low voice.

"I'm sorry, Auntie. I do not mean to make Auntie and Sarudin sad," said Nari. His face reflected very deep remorse.

"Never mind, Brother. No need to feel guilty. That's the way my fate is. Both my parents died when I was a kid. Since then I was treated and raised by Auntie," said Sarudin while holding Nari's shoulder. His voice still vibrated with pain.

Nari looked at Sarudin and said, "I'm sorry to ask about your parents, Din. That question makes you and Auntie sad."

"Never mind. We no longer need to remember events that have long passed. We must be grateful now that Sarudin has grown up. We can live on farm produce from our rice paddies and gardens," Auntie broke the silence. Auntie turned to Rasidin who had been

silent. "Are you already sleepy, Rasidin?" asked Auntie.

That question broke Rasidin's reverie. "Not yet Auntie," he replied as he straightened himself up. "I see you've just kept quiet."

Rasidin just smiled at what Auntie said. He did not dare look at the middle-aged woman. "You said that you are also from Priangan. What's the name of your village?" continued Auntie. Rasidin was surprised to hear the question.

"Yes, yes ... Auntie. I also come from Priangan, precisely from this Pasirluhur village," Rasidin replied nervously. He drew a deep breath, then breathed it slowly.

Auntie and Sarudin were surprised to hear it. They did not think that Rasidin came from this Pasirluhur village.

"How's the story, Rasidin?" Auntie asked as she leaned her back against the wall.

Rasidin turned to Nari. Nari knew that Rasidin was unable to tell the events that happened to him. While stretching his legs, Nari took a deep breath.

"There used to be a family that lived in harmony and peace. The family had a nine-year-old child. The family's happiness did not last long because of a fire caused by the eruption of fireworks. The fireworks were fired by a boy and his friend near the family's

home. Fearful, the boy whose name was Idin ran away with a friend of his, Kardi. They ran to the house of Kardi's uncle outside the village. Uncle Kardi gave Idin to Mas Suta in exchange for money. Mas Suta was actually Kardi's uncle. He and his wife were very fond of Idin because they had no children. Mas Suta took Idin to Sumatra and sent him to school there. When Mas Suta died, Idin and his adoptive mother returned to Priangan. In Sumatra Idin had a close friend named Iran. Their relationship was very close and they looked like brothers. Idin's close friend had returned to Priangan first," said Nari.

Auntie and Sarudin were very surprised and astonished to hear Nari's story. Auntie remembered the child of Sarudin's mother who had died of a fire long ago. Auntie still remembered that the boy was named Rasidin.

"What's the full name of the boy who fired the fireworks?" Auntie asked suspiciously. "His name is Rasidin," Nari replied, looking at Auntie.

"Rasidin ...!" Auntie and Sarudin interrupted almost simultaneously.

"Right, Auntie. The boy whose name is Rasidin is now about twenty-four years old," continued Nari.

Auntie became more convinced that Rasidin was Sarudin's half-brother with the same mother. He was the boy who was rumored to have died.

"What's the name of Rasidin's mother?" Auntie asked to reassure herself. She looked at Nari as if asking for reassurance.

Nari straightened up himself while turning to Rasidin.

"Nurma," Rasidin answered shortly.

"Who?" Sarudin asked as if he did not believe it.

"Mrs. Nurma," replied Nari repeating Rasidin's reply. "So ..., Rasidin is ..."

"Right, Auntie. I am the boy who was reported to have died," said Rasidin.

Suddenly Auntie embraced Rasidin. They seemed to cry.

"I'm sorry, Auntie. I am guilty. Because of my deeds, Dad and Mom died," Rasidin said in a sad voice. "Never mind. Now we've met," Auntie continued.

Sarudin just stared at the event before his eyes. He was not so sure that Rasidin was his half-brother with the same mother.

"Udin, Rasidin is your brother. He is your half-brother with the same mother," Auntie said, looking at Sarudin who was still confused.

Sarudin and Rasidin stared at each other. Not a word was spoken from their lips. They then embraced. The two young men's eyes were red. Then, tear drops fell on their cheeks. They did not expect to see each other after a long separation.

Everyone in the house was very moved and happy. Apparently, Rasidin (Idin) is Sarudin's (Udin's) elder half-brother with the same mother.

After expressing his emotion, Sarudin leaned his back against the wall.

"Now where is Kardi?" Sarudin asked Nari.

"Kardi is Bara who hated Rasidin very much. He wanted to kill Rasidin and his brother, Sarudin." "Why would he want to kill them?" asked Auntie.

"Bara was very envious of Rasidin and Sarudin because the inheritance of his uncle, Mas Suta, was given to the two brothers," said Nari again.

"Sorry, I do not understand. How do you know everything?" Sarudin asked Nari.

Later, Nari recounted that he was Iran, Rasidin's close friend in Sumatra. He returned to Priangan first and became a servant at Bara's house for wanting to know Bara's plan.

That was why he forbade Sarudin to go out of the café when there was a plan of murder in the café where Sarudin and Juarta stayed in Karawang. He knew that the one to be killed was Sarudin.

Sarudin took a deep breath. He was very happy. The puzzle that had been blanketing his mind had been answered. Sarudin then approached Nari. He thanked him as he put his arms around Nari. Auntie and the others smiled to see him.

"Have you prayed the evening prayer?" Aunt asked suddenly.

"Not yet," they answered in unison. Without being told, the three young men walked out of the house to take ablutions.

After praying the evening prayer, they slept. The happiness they had just discovered seemed to accompany their sleep.

Marriage with Enden Ruheini

Juragan Pensiun and his wife were also happy to hear Sarudin had met his half-brother. One day Juragan Pensiun and his wife came to the house of Sarudin's aunt. Both Sarudin and his aunt were surprised to receive the two respected people's arrival. After a long chat, then Juragan Pensiun conveyed the purpose of his arrival.

"We come here because we want to ask Sarudin to be Enden Ruheini's husband," said Juragan Pensiun.

Everyone in the house was surprised to hear what Juragan said. They did not expect Juragan Pensiun to come to express such a wish. Sarudin seemed silent. He could not look at Juragan Pensiun. His face looked red and his heart was pounding. Suddenly he turned to his aunt.

"Excuse me ... Juragan, does Sarudin deserve to be Enden's husband? Sarudin is an uneducated child. He had only very little schooling. Besides, our family's circumstances are far different from those of your family," Auntie said, representing Sarudin's family.

"Respect people not from their wealth, but from the properties they have. I see Sarudin is a good young man. He is polite and virtuous. I'll be happy to hand Enden over to him," Juragan Pensiun replied in a voice of dignity. He looked at Sarudin who had been silent.

"Sarudin, do you accept my proposal to marry Enden?" asked Juragan Pensiun.

Sarudin was surprised to hear the question. He did not say a word. He stretched his head to avoid Juragan Pensiun's gaze. He was very happy to hear Juragan Pensiun's remarks, but he suppressed his emotion.

Seeing Sarudin speechless, Rasidin then said, "It seems to us that Sarudin does not mind, Juragan. We leave everything to you," Rasidin added.

"How, Din? Do you agree?" asked Juragan again.

"It's up to you and Auntie. If everyone agrees, I agree too," Sarudin replied curtly.

"Nice. I'm glad to hear your answer, Din," said Juragan Pensiun.

"Now we just need to set the wedding date. After you get married later, you can stay at our house," added Juragan Pensiun's wife while looking at Sarudin.

A month later, a large wedding party took place at Juragan Pensiun's home. Juragan Pensiun invited all his acquaintances. Some people from Pasirluhur village also came. They were very happy to see Sarudin marrying Juragan Pensiun's niece. In the evening, a whole nightly puppet show was held.

A week after the wedding, Sarudin invited his wife to move to Pasirluhur village. They decided not to live in Juragan Pensiun's home. They lived in the house passed down by Sarudin's parents. Pasirluhur village people were very happy to see Sarudin and his wife living with them. Both people who loved each other lived happily and loved each other.