

HOW OWL WAS CREATED
Asal-usul Burung Hantu

Property of the State
Uncommercial Product

**Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture
Republic of Indonesia
2018**

HOW OWL WAS CREATED

Translated from
Asal-usul Burung Hantu
written by Prima Duantika
published by
Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture
in 2016

This translation has been published as the result of the translation program organized
by The Center for Language Strategy and Diplomacy Development,
Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture
in 2018

Advisory Board	Dadang Sunendar Emi Emilia
Project Supervisor	Dony Setiawan
Translator	Agnes Cynthia
Reviewer	Raden Safrina
Editor-in-chief	Theya Wulan Primasari
Editorial team	Andi Maytendri M., Ayu Dwi N. Didiek Hardadi, Ferry Yun Hardina Artating, Herfin A. Lale Li Datil, Larasati Meili Sanny S., Putriasari R. Bambang Eko, Rizky Akbar Saprudin Padlil, Syukron Ramadloni Toni Gunawan, Yolanda

All rights reserved.

Copyrights of the original book and the translation belong to
Language Development and Cultivation Agency,
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia.

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

HOW OWL WAS CREATED

The Story

Once upon a time, in the West Kalimantan jungle there lived a mother and her only daughter named Dayu. They lived on the Bird River bank, which flowed into the Kapuas Besar River near the jungle. The sick, elderly mother felt sorry for her daughter who was busy taking care of her every day. Dayu could only catch fish in the river for their daily meal.

“My daughter, Dayu, come here for a minute, child. I want to talk,” said the mother.

“What's wrong, Mother?” Dayu replied.

“Dayu my daughter, you have grown up. It is time you seek a life companion. How long are you going to live by yourself? Now is the time for you to find a better life and someone to accompany you. Mother really wants to see you happy, Dayu.”

“Mother, I've been perfectly happy taking care of you all this time. I don't want to leave you alone just for my personal gain. As for my life companion, I haven't thought about it, Mother. Right now I just want to look after you.”

Listening to the reply of her beloved child, the mother was moved to tears. She was gratified that her daughter loved her so much even though she could not provide her daughter an easy life. Her mother's illness worsened. Dayu was very sad seeing her mother get thinner day by day.

Until one day her mother called, "Dayu!"

"Yes Mother. Why do you call me?" Dayu replied.

"I feel that my time has come, Child. I wish you can live a happy life soon. Find a life partner who can take care of you!" the mother said with a hoarse voice due to her illness. Dayu felt really sad as she listened to the words of her beloved mother. She did not want to lose her only family.

"Mother, why did you say that? Don't leave me, Mother. Dayu loves you."

She could not hold back her grief after listening to her mother's words. But fate separated Dayu from her mother. Her mother finally breathed her last. Dayu was overcome with grief. For days she confined herself at home. She missed her mother terribly. She could not receive her mother's counsels and guidance anymore. It continued for some time until she finally realized that she could not live by feeling sad and alone forever. She remembered her mother's last words to find a life companion and intended to

fulfill her wish. Dayu decided to leave her remote village in order to seek life experience.

Learning How to Farm

Dayu eventually met Apu, a kind and modest young man, and they got married afterwards. They lived their life as simple farmers. They opened up new plots in the middle of the forest to grow rice in addition to maize, peppercorns, yams, and other vegetables. Actually Dayu did not know how to farm. However, Apu diligently taught his wife how to grow crops well. Dayu was very happy as she finally knew how to open new land to farming. They were hard-working farmers. Every day, they left early in the morning and came home late. They toiled away to be able to earn enough so that their children could have a better life and future and were not lacking in anything.

Not long afterwards, Dayu was pregnant and gave birth to a little girl. Now, Dayu had become a mother. They named the baby girl Dara Ranti. Dara Ranti grew into a lovely little girl. When she turned seven, Dayu conceived her second child and gave birth to a boy named Bujang Ampan. Days turned into months and without realizing it, the two children grew into adolescents. Dara Ranti turned out a diligent girl, while Bujang Ampan grew into a handsome but lazy boy. Therefore, the mother thought that she needed to teach her children on how to farm. She hoped they could help with her work. Their father could no longer work in

the field because of his illness and only stayed in bed all day. All farm-related matters that should be handled by the father were now taken over by the mother. One day she took her two children along to the field. Dayang Ranti was happy hearing it unlike her brother Bujang Ampan, who was annoyed for having to be there. With her deft hands Dayang Ranti wanted to work in the field right away.

“Mother, you have brought us here. So, how can we help you?” Dara Ranti asked her mother.

“Come here, child. I took you along in order to teach you how to grow crops. I’m not young anymore. It would be hard for me to do all the work here by myself,” she said to her children.

“Let me do it, Mother. I will try helping you with the farming,” said Dara Ranti.

Listening to her daughter’s reply, the mother felt reassured that Dara Ranti would be able to help her. However, it was a different case for her younger son, Bujang Ampan.

“No way!” Bujang Ampan retorted. “I don’t want to work in the field, it’s hot and humid, dirty and must be very exhausting,” Bujang Ampan continued haughtily. “Besides, why do I have to go through a lot of work to put food on the table, while the other kids are living a good life and didn’t have to bother with work just to be able to eat?”

“My son, not everyone is destined to live in the lap of luxury. We have to be grateful for our life. It is our destiny to live this way so that we can learn to strive earnestly in order to succeed later,” the mother replied gently.

“Hah, the point is that I don’t want to work in the field, so I better go home,” said Bujang Ampan as he rushed back to his house. Seeing her son’s attitude, she could only smile helplessly. However, she had misgivings as she looked at her son’s behavior. She hoped that in the future Bujang Ampan could change. Still, she was eager to teach Dara Ranti how to farm. She taught her that opening up a new plot of land required loads of energy and it must be done according to the season.

“Dara Ranti, if the sun radiates its scorching heat for a month continuously, it’s a sign to open and clear the fields,” her mother said.

“Why should we wait for a month, Mother?” Dara Ranti asked her.

“The field would be ready for clearing by then. Overgrown bushes, weeds and wild plants could be easily removed from the ground as they would have dried up and withered by that time. Afterwards, you can plant the seeds. It would be harder to grow crops when it rains,” her mother replied.

“Okay, I will remember that,” Ranti promised. She swiftly took out a machete, ready to cut the weeds and wild plants so that they could farm. Days went by.

Every day Dara Ranti and the mother toiled in the fields. Meanwhile, Bujang Ampan still did not care and refused to help his sister and mother.

In addition to growing rice, Dara Ranti and her mother also planted corn, yam, and cassava. A portion of the harvests was sold and the rest was set aside for their meals.

Losing the Father

The condition of Apu, the father, worsened. So the mother had to spend most of her time staying at home to take care of her husband. Dara Ranti was given the task to tend the field. She got overwhelmed with her work and it caused wild plants to grow all over the fields.

“Dara Ranti, Mother is sorry for not being able to help you work in the fields. As you can see, your father desperately needs my care,” her mother said.

“Yes, Mother. I understand. But what should I do? There are countless unfamiliar plants there.”

“Child, you should remove any foreign plants as they can affect our harvest. Once you have uprooted all the wild plants, place

them on the middle and on the side of our fields, and burn them,” her mother replied.

“Why do we burn them, Mother? What if our fields also get burned?” Dara Ranti asked.

“That’s why you need to be careful as you burn them. It would be beneficial because the ash could be used to fertilize our plants to make them thrive and produce bountiful yields. Furthermore, the smoke can be used as mosquito repellent,” her mother answered. Listening to her mother’s explanation, Dara Ranti’s knowledge in farming increased. She was happy to be taught directly by her mother.

“Very well, Mother, I shall do it,” Dara Ranti replied. During that time, the father’s health declined even further until he finally breathed his last.

The Curse

Dara Ranti mourned her father. Now she only had her mother and younger brother. After the father was gone, their lives became increasingly difficult. The mother now became the pillar of the family. Dara Ranti always helped her mother work in the field.

She did not want her mother to get sick due to exhaustion. When her mother came back from a whole day of work, Dara Ranti immediately served food and drink to her. “Mother, please drink

this. You must be thirsty. And please eat the corn. I'm sure you must be starving," said Dara Ranti as she served food and drink to her mother. Looking at how hardworking her daughter was, the mother felt so happy. All of her tiredness were instantly gone.

"Dara Ranti my daughter, a life without a husband for me is indeed difficult. However, I'm proud to have you. You are adept in work just like your father used to be. Although your brother is very lazy, I still love you both," she said while enjoying the corn that Dara Ranti had served.

"All right, Mother. I will remember your advice," Dara Ranti replied.

As the days went by, the mother continued to tend the fields alone. Since their fields covered a huge area, they could not manage everything. Several plots of land that had been left unattended were overrun with weeds and shrubs and overgrown by bushes. Dara Ranti and her mother could only manage one small plot of land. Meanwhile, Bujang Ampan the younger brother did not really try to help. He used most of his time sleeping away at home. The mother worked hard to support her two children. She worked hard night and day that there was no time to rest at home. Her days were mostly spent in the field tending the crops. Sometimes later, the rice and corn they grew could be harvested but the yield was very little, only about one sack. It was not worth the effort they spent all this time. However,

they still felt grateful and brought their harvest home. The next day the mother put the rice and corn in the yard. After arranging them to dry in the sun, she went to the field to remove the remnants of the harvest.

Before leaving she said to her children, “I need to go to the field first. Dara Ranti and Bujang Ampan, you need to watch over the dried rice and corn so that chickens and birds will not peck on them,” she told her children.

“Yes, Mother. We will guard them carefully,” Dara Ranti gladly replied. However, Bujang Ampan pretended not to hear his mother’s instruction. Then, the mother left. Dara Ranti and Bujang Ampan stayed at home. Dara Ranti was watching over the dried crops. Too occupied with her duty, she forgot to prepare meal for her mother and brother.

Dara Ranti rushed to the kitchen to cook, but before that she gave a message to her brother Bujang Ampan to watch them.

“Bujang Ampan, watch them for me. Mother will be back soon and I have to cook,” said Dara Ranti to her brother.

“All right, just go cook in the kitchen,” said Bujang Ampan.

However, the younger brother did not carry out his duty properly. He went to the river to play instead. He left the dried rice and corn unattended. As no one was there to watch, chickens and

birds came pecking on them. Dara Ranti who had finished cooking went to see the rice and corn. She was dumbstruck when she saw chickens and birds feed on the dried rice and corn. She immediately chased them away. She was furious at Bujang Ampan and shouted for him to go back. Bujang Ampan went home as soon as he heard his sister yelling. Dara Ranti was angry at Bujang Ampan because there was very little rice and corn left.

“Mother will scold us,” said Dara Ranti. Bujang Ampan was silent listening to his sister’s tirade. They waited for their mother to come back. At her arrival, she was stunned and got distressed seeing the rice and corn had dwindled further.

“Why couldn’t you watch the rice and corn properly? Don’t you know that our harvest is so little? One sack of rice is not enough for us to eat until the next season. Now you saw it, only half a sack of grain remains,” said the mother with a disappointed tone. She wanted to punish her two children, but Dara Ranti quickly stopped her.

“Mother, please don’t!” she exclaimed.

“If you want to punish someone, don’t punish Little Brother. Punish me instead!” Dara Ranti said. “It was my fault,” she cried.

Listening to what her eldest child said, the mother, who was in a highly emotional state, cursed her daughter. Suddenly Dara Ranti’s body was engulfed in a thick white smoke. As the smoke

began to dissipate, a bird appeared. It was Dara Ranti who had transformed into a bird. The bird then flew high, leaving the house and went into the forest.

A Name

Dara Ranti, who was cursed into a bird felt very sad. She cried every day. In the end, she soared up high into the sky and came to an unknown place. The place was really beautiful. All around her, soft white cotton-like cloud was drifting gently. There were trees here, full of beautiful and fragrant blooms. Her eyes were attracted to a group of exceptionally beautiful angels. When they saw a strange creature come, the angels also drew near.

“What are you? It looks like you’re not a creature of heaven and why do your eyes look swollen?” one of the angels asked.

“Is this heaven? So beautiful, I’ve never seen such lovely scenery before,” said the bird. However, the bird suddenly wept. Sadly, it continued. “My name is Dara Ranti, a human who was cursed into a bird for failing to carry out my mother’s order. I’m very sad because it means I couldn’t take care of my mother and brother like before,” the bird said dejectedly.

“What a poor bird. Your eyes got swollen from crying. Your voice and face were scary, like a ghost,” said the angel.

“Are my face and voice really appalling?” she doubtfully asked.

“Yes, that is so. Since you’re no longer a human and you have transformed into a bird, what do you think if we name you Owl, the ghost bird?” an angel proposed.

“The ghost bird,” she sighed inwardly.

“Will I frighten everyone with this appearance? Can I go back to being a human?” The Owl asked pitifully.

“I really hope that I can go back and see my mother and brother again. I want to help my mother. She has suffered enough so far. And it was my fault,” the Owl continued in tears.

“Owl, though you are no longer a human being, you can still help people and meet your family and help them.” An angel gave her hope. “Have faith that someday you can turn back into a human again,” the angel said.

“Is it true, Angel? But how? What should I do? Quickly, tell me.” The Owl eagerly asked.

“Be patient, all you need is to do a lot of good deeds. A pendant necklace will be bestowed upon you. Inside the pendant there’s a packet of heavenly powder that you can give to anyone. If you sprinkle it on an object, as long as it belongs to a kind-hearted person, a wonderful miracle will happen. On the contrary, if you scatter it on an object that belongs to a black-hearted person, bad

things will befall them. Therefore, use the powder wisely,” said the angel.

“But how can I turn into a human?” the Owl asked.

“With patience, Owl. With patience.” answered the angel who suddenly faded away from sight.

“Wait, don’t go! You haven’t answered my question,” the Owl cried in frustration. However, the angels still vanished without a trace, leaving her alone in the paradise.

When she found out that no one else was there, she intended to leave the paradise and returned to the real world. But as she was about to fly, a ray of light suddenly shone brightly in the distance. It was so bright that the Owl did not dare open her eyes. The blinding light came closer and closer and arrived in front of the bird. After the light dimmed, the bird could finally see again. It actually came from a pendant necklace that was wrapped in a beautiful golden fabric.

“Could it be the necklace told by the angel?” the Owl thought. “I have to hurry back to my world. The sooner I do it, the faster I get to be turned back into a human and reunited with my mother and brother.” The bird hastily flew out of the paradise.

Rice Betting

The Owl flew aimlessly. She was still regretting her mistake very much. She continued to fly until morning, when she finally came across a verdant tree and perched on one of its branches to rest. She saw a married couple was looking at the people who worked in a considerably big field. The husband was tall, with a forbidding look on his face, and the wife wore pretty nice clothes for an ordinary farmer.

The man unexpectedly burst into laughter. “Hahahah, we will get a lot of money soon, Wife. With our bountiful harvest, surely no one would be able to rival us as the most respected people in this village. The villagers’ harvest this year is surely going to fail because they don’t get water from us, hahahah,” the man said.

“Indeed, Husband. Tomorrow we’ll definitely win the bet and have a big harvest celebration. Just look at our paddies. We have so much that our silo will not fit,” said the wife with a smile.

“A bet? Harvest? Tomorrow? What happened with all of that?” the Owl began to suspect the couple.

“Ah, I can’t just leave it be and do nothing about it. It will be dark soon. Tonight I’m going to take a look around this village to find out what they mean,” she made her resolve inwardly. When evening came, she flew around the village to investigate, and saw

that the villagers had gathered at the office hall. So, the Bird perched on a tree not far from there.

“How could we win the bet, just look at our harvest, it was less than Mr. Kosih’s. In fact, we have gathered harvest from the whole village but we still lost to him. It’s obvious. Our crops did not grow well because there was no water. This is really unreasonable,” a thin man with white hair exclaimed.

“Don’t be like that, please think about it. If you win the bet, we’ll be getting all his wealth. We can share it with the unfortunate people in our village. Furthermore, we’ll be able to enjoy water that was under his control so we don’t have to rely on rainwater anymore to irrigate our fields and fulfill our everyday needs,” said another man who looked rather plump with slightly curly hair.

“Then, what if we lose? Don’t we still suffer in the end? He will take everything we have,” a mother cut in.

“Actually, whatever the outcome is, we still get nothing in the end. Our harvest could not rival his harvest. Therefore, it’s unlikely for us to win the bet. But if we lose, we would still be oppressed by the situation anyway. So let’s just proceed with it, hopefully a miracle will happen. If there’s no miracle, we should be ready to leave this village to look for a better place to live and start everything from scratch. How do you think?” said the man

who looked respectable and wise. The others nodded their heads, indicating their approval to his statement.

“We agree with Ngah’s opinion. All right, let us face it together. May God give us miracle tomorrow,” said the plump man.

“Oh, so it’s like that. Poor villagers. What Kosih had done was simply too outrageous. Hopefully God will grant them a miracle,” said the Owl to herself.

“Mi-ra-cle. Well, my necklace contains heavenly powder that can create a miracle. Perhaps I can help them. I hope this powder can bring miracles just like what the angels had told me. Fortunately, I remember it. However, how to do it?” the bird flew away while thinking for a way to help the villagers. She saw people leave the hall one by one, with a face full of doubt and anxiety, hoping that tomorrow a miracle would happen and set them free from Mr. Kosih’s greedy clutches.

“Aha, I know. I will sprinkle this heavenly powder in the villagers’ harvest as well as that of Mr. Kosih. Didn’t the angel say that it will produce something good if it was scattered on an object that belongs to a good person? And conversely, if it was scattered on an object owned by a bad person, it will give them trouble. Okay I will do it,” she said to herself. Excitedly, the Owl removed the necklace from her neck and opened the yellow cloth containing a packet of heavenly powder. She took a pinch and

spread it on the villagers' harvest. After that, the Owl flew to Mr. Kosih's place and scattered the powder on his bountiful harvest. She could not wait to see what would happen tomorrow. Sunlight began to filter through the cracks on the wall of the villagers' houses. People started to flock at the specified location. The scribes began counting both parties' yield. Mr. and Mrs. Kosih smiled triumphantly because they were convinced of their victory. Meanwhile, the villagers anxiously waited for the result.

All of Mr. Kosih's harvest had been counted, so the scribes began counting the villagers' harvest. They were transporting sheaves of rice that actually looked less than Mr. Kosih's. However, those bundles of rice seemed to have an infinite number. The scribes got tired because they had to go back and forth endlessly to pick up the villagers' bundles of paddy. Witnessing such miracle, the villagers felt very happy, while Mr. Kosih was furious and accused them of cheating. However, the villagers and scribes stated that it was all God-given miracles.

“Mr. Kosih, please don't fight against what God has decided. Accept the defeat gracefully. This incident proves that greed is bound to be defeated by honesty. Learn from your mistakes. Because the villagers win the bet, you have to fulfill your promise to them,” said the wise village head.

“That’s right, give away all your wealth and open the waterway for us and then leave this village,” one of the villagers yelled in anger.

“Don’t be like that. Regardless of everything, Mr. Kosih is still a long-time residence of our village. Give him another chance to live with us. After this incident, I’m sure he can change his ways and attitude with us.” The head of the village gave another advice. Mr. Kosih who was bowing his head low started to speak. “We admit our fault to all of you. Forgive us and give us another chance to fix them. We will keep our promise to you. We’ve been swayed by greed and we regret that. God has shown this to all of us. So please give us a chance to redeem our mistakes,” he said remorsefully.

“All right, we’ll give you another chance to live in this village. However, do not repeat your misdeeds and trickeries again,” exclaimed one of the villagers.

Seeing the event that was unfolding before her eyes, the Owl was moved. Apparently, thanks to the heavenly powder all of the villagers’ problems could be wisely resolved. When she saw that everything had been amicably settled, she left the village with ease.

An Old Woman

The Owl flew back to her house, which was still quite far from the previous village. She felt tired after a long journey and rested on a tree. There, her eyes were trained on a small patch of field where paddy and corn grew and ready to be harvested. She saw a woman work alone in that field. The Owl continued to observe her as she worked from morning 'till noon. Sweat ran down her forehead. The Bird looked at the woman in sadness. She realized that tending the field was not an easy job. She was reminded of her mother. "Oh Mother, how heavy the burden you've carried all this time. No wonder you became really angry at me. In fact, my duty was really easy, just to watch the dried rice, but I couldn't do it. Mother, I'm really sorry. Now, I realize it and can understand your decision." It was what the Owl felt in her heart. She was aware of her mistakes. Her feeling of regret as well as her longing for her mother increased.

The old woman's figure was now resting under the shade of the tree where the bird had perched on. The old lady muttered to herself in distress, "What should I do? The harvest is not enough to repay my entire debt."

The Owl got sadder as she heard the old lady's words. It crossed her mind to sprinkle the heavenly powder again to help the old lady. The Owl had not finished thinking when suddenly three burly men approached the old woman, grim-faced. "Hiya, old

lady, pay off your debt to us. Don't keep looking for excuses. We've fed up with it," said one of the men with a pretty thick mustache.

"Yes, Sir. I will pay it off, but I beg you just for this last time, please wait until tomorrow. I promise to pay it fully," said the woman softly with tears brimming in her eyes.

"Why you, old hag! Remember, if you couldn't pay off your debts tomorrow, don't expect us to be kind to you. Remember that well," the man with the mustache bellowed. The old woman went home still in tears and in low spirit. Witnessing the event, the Owl decided to sprinkle heavenly powder on the old woman's field so she could have a bountiful harvest. The Bird believed that the old lady is not someone who likes to break her promise. She was just an old woman working alone with all the problems that she had to face. When the night arrived, the Bird immediately sprinkled her magical powder on the old woman's field, wishing that it could help her. As the sun began to rise, she saw the old lady was already in the field. She started harvesting from morning. By noon, she was still not finished and started to really wonder why the rice she harvested seemed endless. It was as though the rice grew back and gave her a bountiful yield. She was surprised, felt really happy and full of gratitude when she finally learned about it. Not long afterwards, the three burly men from yesterday came to collect the old woman's debt as she had

promised the day before. A short while later, they left with her harvest, but the old woman's face radiated happiness because she had paid off all of her debts. She still had more than enough from the leftover, even though mostly had been taken away by the debt collectors.

“O God, thank you for your miracle today. You really listen to my prayers that I can pay off my debts to them,” said the old lady in gratitude.

The Owl also felt happy. She was glad to be able to help. If she could do the same for her mother, she would be overjoyed. Finally, the Bird decided to fly back to her house. She had not met her beloved mother and brother for a long time. Her longing got too big to bear. The bird remembered her conversation with the angels about how she could meet her family.

“Is it true? But how?” the Owl eagerly asked.

“You can meet your family only at night time and because you are no longer a human, you have to be patient!” said the angel. She was very sad when she listened to what the angel had said, but she believed that someday there must be a miracle for her. And so, the Bird immediately headed to her home. She flew through the dark of night enthusiastically, hoping to be able to reunite with her family again. Finally, the Owl arrived in the house yard. The cold air and stillness of that night could not

suppress her longing to meet her beloved family. Upon arriving, the bird perched on tree a trunk. She waited for her mother and brother to come out of the house to look at their faces, as it was impossible for the bird to get to them directly in her present form. However, after some time waiting, her mother and brother still did not come out. She flew to the window and saw her mother wept in her prayer. The bird heard her mother pray for her.

Apparently, she regretted cursing her. After witnessing and hearing her prayer, the Bird felt very sad. She really wanted to embrace her mother and kneel down at her feet. But it was no use crying over spilt milk. Dara Ranti who had turned into a bird already resigned herself to her fate. She flew away into the forest with sorrow. However, she still wished that one day she would be able to reunite with her mother and brother again. Now, there was only Bujang Ampan and his mother living together. He had changed a lot, and he diligently helped his mother. He regretted his attitude before. It was not only Dara's mother who missed her. Bujang Ampan also missed his sister dearly. As days went by, their field produced less and less. When Bujang Ampan learned about it, he who also helped tending the field was surprised. However, he and his mother could not find the cause.

“Bujang Ampan, have you ever wondered why our crops dwindled? Yesterday I saw piles of corn and rice stubbles in the field, like someone had just eaten it,” the mother said.

“It’s true, Mother. I also saw the same thing. However, until now I don’t know who stole our corn and rice,” Bujang Ampan replied.

“We’ll be starving if this continues. However, don’t worry, Mother. I’ll find the culprit. Tonight I will guard the field. I’m sorry, Mother. If only I had obeyed your instruction that time, surely our life will not be like now,” said Bujang Ampan. “Everything was my fault,” Bujang Ampan continued remorsefully.

“My son Bujang Ampan, everything that happened in our lives had been predetermined. We just have to go through it. Really, if we can turn back the time, Mother also wants everything to return as before. Not only you, son, I also feel very guilty to both of you,” his mother replied with tears in her eyes.

“There is no changing the past. We could not remain sad. We must live our life resolutely with lots of prayers and hard work,” she continued gently. Listening to his mother’s words, Bujang Ampan laid his head in her lap. He was still regretting what he did that time. As the night arrived, Bujang Ampan prepared himself to guard the field. He had brought everything he needed to spend the night there. “Mother, tonight I might be sleeping outside. I’ll be watching over our field. I want to know why the harvest is declining. Please stay at home, Mother,” said Bujang Ampan.

“Be careful when you’re there, because the air at night would be very different. Have you got everything ready?” his mother asked.

“Yes, Mother. I have prepared everything. Goodbye, Mother,” Ampan said.

He went to the field with the intention of finding the culprit behind their declining crops. Bujang Ampan strolled around the field, but nothing strange happened. There was only one thing that disturbed him, the strange trill in his ears. It was unnerving. He also looked around at the area in front of him and towards the trees. At a tree, he finally saw a bird that made the spooky sound. Feeling uncomfortable with the bird’s call, Bujang Ampan tried to chase it away. He did not know that the bird was actually the incarnation of his sister who wanted to talk to him.

“Hush, hush, go away. Your voice is very scary,” said Bujang Ampan.

“Brother, it’s me Dara Ranti. I have turned into an owl. Brother, please listen to your sister,” the Owl said as she tried to approach her brother.

Bujang Ampan kept chasing the bird away. He did not understand what the bird’s call meant. Furthermore, he did not want his attention to be distracted by the bird when he was guarding the field. Being chased off constantly, the Owl had no choice than to leave the field for the time being. Meanwhile, his brother kept

watching over the area until late at night. Exhausted, her brother finally fell asleep in a hut there. When she returned, the Owl saw her brother was soundly asleep. The bird did not have the heart to wake her brother up.

“Poor Brother. You must be tired guarding this field. Let me return again tomorrow night,” the Bird thought. In the end, the Owl decided to let her brother sleep further and go into the forest.

Meeting A Mouse

The Owl returned to the forest near the field. She perched on a branch of a large tree. Not long after, a mouse scurried past carrying corn and rice. However, as she could not see things close up, the Bird did not know who or what was near.

“Bird, what are you doing this late at night?” the mouse asked.

“Who is it?” the Bird asked. “I cannot see you.” She continued.

“I’m a mouse. I’m standing right in front of you.” the mouse replied.

“You cannot see me? Looks like your eyesight is rather bad, but it’s fine. By the way, I have corn and rice. Do you want some?” the mouse asked.

“Yes, I do. Thanks. However, where did you get the corn and rice this late at night?” the Bird asked.

“Do you want to know? I got them directly from the source,” replied the mouse briefly. “Well, don’t bother about it. Just eat them,” the mouse continued. They spent the night eating the corn kernels given by the mouse. Afterwards, the mouse said goodbye and darted away. The bird could finally see the mouse only after it went further. She just realized that she could see the shape of her new friend sharply from a distance and she was happy to know about it. The night after, the Owl came back to the field. She perched on a large tree that grew on the edge of the field near her house. She observed the field that was full of corn and rice, ready to be harvested, and looked around. However, her brother was not there. Curious, the Bird flew to the window. Apparently, her brother was looking after her mother who got sick.

The Bird got depressed upon learning that her mother fell ill. If only she could help taking care of her mother. However, she couldn’t do anything about it since with her present form it was but a hopeless wish. Her intention to help her mother and brother continued to burn in her heart and prevented her from falling into despair. Finally, it crossed her mind that she could take her brother’s place to guard the field.

The Bird flew back and perched on the tree near the field again. This time, there was something strange. She saw corn stalks and rice straws scattered on the ground like someone or something ate them away. With her sharp eyesight, she could see that something

was carrying the crops that were ready to be harvested. She was really surprised when she saw that the one who stole the crops was none other than the mouse from yesterday. It turned out that the mouse was not working alone. There were many other mice. She quickly swooped down to catch it. When the mice saw that something was hunting them, they fled as fast as they could. The bird kept chasing while yelling at the mouse, “Rat, what have you done in my mother’s field?”

“Hah, are you blind? I’m gathering our food,” the mouse replied as it darted away. Seeing them fled, the Owl gave chase. The mice snuck between corn and rice plants. It was quite difficult to catch them amidst the dense plants in the field. But the Bird insisted on pursuing them. The Bird still could not capture the mouse. Chasing it, she furiously said again, “Rat, why are you and your friends destroying and stealing the rice and corn in that field? Don’t you know that in doing so you have harmed the owner?” the Owl said. “You’re a bad rat. Apparently, you’re the one who stole our crops. How could you. You should be foraging your own food. Not stealing from somebody else’s crops,” the Bird screeched angrily.

“Indeed, my friends and I have been eating corn and rice from your field all this time. It’s because the corn and rice in your field are very delicious,” said the mouse. “Besides, why should I work hard to grow them if there is readily available food there?” the

mouse retorted. The mouse saw that many of its friends were still in the field. Instead of telling the other mice to leave, the mouse actually ordered its friends to take all the remaining corn and rice.

“Hurry, grab the remaining corn and rice away! Let me face the bird.” The mouse challenged the Owl haughtily.

The mouse remembered that she could not see its body because of her poor sight so it dared to challenge her. The mouse did not know that she actually had a very sharp long-distance vision due to her large, forward-facing eyes. The mouse bolted and evaded the Owl at the same time. Looking at what the mouse did, she got even more excited in her chase. The mouse darted away, however, the Owl was finally managed to capture it with her strong claws and sharp nails.

She brought the mouse to a field where it was tied up on a tree. There, she dug the ground vigorously to make a hole. After that, she tossed the mouse in the hole and filled it back so that the mouse could not get out.

“Rat, you shall not be able to get out ever again. From now on enjoy your life underground,” said the Owl, stomping her feet on the sealed hole.

“Owl, please get me out of here” the mouse yelled in fright. “I promise that I will not steal from your mother’s crops ever again. I beg you, get me out quickly,” the mouse continued, crying in

regret. However, it was all in vain since the bird had no longer concerned herself with the mouse and left. The Owl returned to the field. She saw many other mice steal the crops there. Seeing it, she was furious. She captured all the mice that were scuttling around the field one by one until there was not a single one left.

The Fruit of Virtue and A Mother's Prayer

Ever since the incident, the Owl continued to watch over the field every night from rodent attack. As days went by the next harvest season arrived. But this time her family had a bountiful harvest. Since then, they never suffered from declining harvest anymore. Her mother and brother were thankful for the bountiful harvest and they always hoped that Dara Ranti somehow was in a safe and happy place too.

Meanwhile, the bird that was perching on the branch of a tree to guard the field was shocked when an angel suddenly appeared near her. "O Bird, we have seen what you have done so far. You did a very wise thing. Therefore, we are ordered to remove your mother's curse and transform you back into a human being as before," said the angel. "However, because it brings a lot of benefits, birds like you will still exist to help humans."

"Is it true? Can I really turn into a human again?" The Owl could not believe her ears.

“It is true, Bird, you will turn back into a human as a result of your atonement and your mother’s prayers.” And so, the angel immediately turned the Bird back into Dara Ranti like she was before. Dara Ranti was ecstatic. She gave her thanks to God. Her face broke into a smile. The angel went back to heaven. Without much thought, Dara Ranti immediately headed to her house and went inside. Her mother was so shocked seeing Dara Ranti there. They were crying with tears of joy and longing that had been buried for so long.

Dara Ranti knelt down before her mother, who welcomed her with open arms. They hugged each other, including Bujang Ampan who was also happy seeing his sister back. They lived in happiness ever since and their experience became the most precious lesson in their lives. Since then, owls are always present at night. The bird is an omnivore or meat-eater. It has a fairly sharp night vision. Its diet, among other things, is mice. In some areas, owls are considered effective rodent control and generally used as pest control agents in paddy fields.