

BANTERANG SURATI

Banterang Surati

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The night got quieter. The crescent moon lighted every corner of Blambangan. The fog arose, gripping the trees. The wind blew softly that the leaves swayed gently. It was tranquil and solemn. Almost everyone was fast asleep in the safe and peaceful Blambangan Kingdom.

However, the peaceful night could not send King Banterang to his sleep. Just like several nights before, King Banterang thought long and hard. His face looked restless. That restlessness was known by one of the royal advisors, Aki, King Banterang's best friend.

“Your Majesty, in the past few days, I noticed that your Majesty always looked restless, your Majesty did not eat well, nor did your Majesty sleep soundly.”

“What is in your Majesty's mind actually?”

King Banterang did not immediately give answer to his advisor's questions. He stared with flat eyes, gazing at the moon and then staring down at his beloved Blambangan.

He slowly walked to the edge of the balcony. His advisor then followed him.

“You see that Aki, in the name of the Great Gods, we are granted with fertile soil. The people live prosperously.” Banterang opened the conversation as an answer to his advisor. Blambangan is truly blessed with prosperous land, and most of the people diligently cultivate the land. There are many types of agricultural and plantation products in Blambangan.

Banterang went on, “I wondered what would happen if we carried on the plan to expand to areas around us, so that they can also experience our prosperity.”

“What do you mean, your Majesty?” His advisor hesitantly asked.

“I would like to take the regions of Nusa Lembangan and Semenanjung Purwa together under my control. I want the people in the two regions to be able to enjoy prosperity, just like Blambangan people do.”

King Blambangan stopped talking for a moment as if he was trying to reckon something. At that very moment, his father, King Dedali Putih, came to his mind.

“But, your Majesty, expanding regions has proven to be hard and difficult. The regions put up wars, and there are still wars in some places. Pardon me, your Majesty, even King Dedali Putih was not able to oust them. To this day, the wars are still raging in many places. If we allow this to drag on, the people of Blambangan will

grow tired in a long time to come. Warfare has also drained Blambangan's economy.”

“Yes, you are right, Aki. My father was not able to completely gain triumph over the war, but for my goodwill, hopefully the Great Gods are willing to take side with Blambangan, thus putting an end to this war.

“I really do hope so, your Majesty. There should be no wars, murders.”

“That’s right, Aki. Murders certainly cannot be avoided, but you should know that’s not my goal.”

King Banterang walked back and forth at his palace’s balcony. The moon was leaning to the western sky. King Banterang stared at the moon for a long time.

“Tomorrow, you have to gather the commanders of warriors. I would like to hold an important meeting. Right after midday”

“As you wish, your Majesty”

King Banterang left the balcony, but not to take a rest; instead, he headed for the meditation room. Banterang always sharpened his body and soul to be a tough human. He had been practicing a simple and austere life since his childhood, thanks to the upbringing given by his father, Dedali Putih.



In another kingdom, bordered by the sea and Blambangan, there was a kingdom named Klungkung. In the proximity of Klungkung Kingdom, there were Gianyar Kingdom and Karangasem Kingdom. Although these kingdoms were separated by sea, Klungkung Kingdom was directly adjacent to Blambangan Kingdom. At which time, Klungkung Kingdom was governed by a king named I Gusti Agung Rake.

On a bright, sunny morning in the back garden of the palace that was grown with palm trees, mangoes, avocados, and grass, I Gusti Agung Rake was chatting with his younger sister, Princess Surati. Gusti Rake set his eyes on the avocado tree.

“This avocado tree was planted by Father Kusumba. At which time, he was still young and healthy. Oooo, I miss Father Kusumba,” said King Rake. His face turned somber all of a sudden.

“My brother Rake, just let it go. Forget it. Let Father Kusumba to rest peacefully in the eternal world there. No need to constantly regret his passing.”

“That’s right, my sister. But, I will never forget his passing that easy. Our father died defending his country, his kingdom. Later on, there will be a time when I pay my revenge for our father’s death.”

“When it comes to war, everybody’s wrong. It’s called war anyway; anyone getting killed is a common thing. After all, our father and his troops were not defeated. Up until now, our father’s kingdom still stands proudly and its people live properly.”

“That’s right. Wars between kingdoms are not uncommon. Unfortunately, when Klungkung Kingdom was under attack, our father had come to his old age, so he surely wasn’t as fast as he was in his younger time. Our father’s enemy happened to be supernaturally powerful as well.

I Gusti Rake was distraught, but he did not want to make his sister to grow anxious even more. Rake dearly loved his beautiful younger sister that he did not want to further upset her. Rake slowly got up and left the park. The sound of the birds accompanied his departure. The princess remained on her seat as she contemplated. In her heart, she wanted to pray and calm her mind. She would also deliver her prayers for the peace of the people of Klungkung.



King Banterang was leading the meeting inside the palace. King Banterang chose a place that was not so big. It was measured about six by ten meters wide. Several paintings decorated the walls of the room: paintings of the ancestors of Blambangan and the paintings of the predecessors of King Banterang. In the room,

there were five men dressed in soldier uniform, looking immaculate and fancy. Some of the soldiers wore red, black, blue, yellow, and white *iket* (traditional headbands). They appeared to be men with gallant, sturdy, and confident physical appearance.

The five of them were in the presence of King Banterang and his advisor.

“My commanders, I deliberately gathered all of you because I would like to discuss something.”

“At your command, your Majesty, they replied in unison.

“My commanders, we know that our kingdom now has grown much stronger. Our troops are better trained than ever before. It is the time for us to sort out many unresolved problems.” Banterang deliberately chose such statement to foster the spirits of his commanders.

“Your Majesty, we must put an end to this war with more strategic manners,” interrupted the royal advisor.

After thinking for a moment, King Banterang carried on to explain.

“Commander of the White Forces,” said the king as he glared at the figure called by the name White Commander. “Now, you send

five of your troops to spy on Klungkung, Nusa Lembangan, and Semenanjung Purwa. Gather information about everything; the strength and strategy of Klungkung troops. Also, learn the ins and outs of Nusa Lembangan and Semenanjung Purwa.”

“As you wish, your Majesty.”

“Commanders of Red Forces and Black Forces, send several of your soldiers with their distinctive skills! Instruct them to inflict riots in Klungkung and its surrounding areas. Avoid killing people. It’s just meant to distract the people there.”

“As you wish, your Majesty.”

“Commander of Yellow Forces, you have to strengthen the soldiers to the east. The Commander of Blue Forces, send your troops to the south and southeast. Everything has to be done in secret. Do not make any striking movement. The people should not know anything about it. Let them do their daily routines as usual. I will be in Purwo Forest tomorrow to go hunting to give the impression that we are not making any moves. Perhaps, it will take about a few days there.

“Your Majesty, Aki the Advisor, wanted to express his opinion carefully.

His Majesty gave a sideway glance at Aki the Advisor.

“Please,” Banterang excused the advisor to speak.

“According to information from *telik sandi*¹, there are underground movements in several suburbs. I’m worried that it’s not safe enough to go hunting. According to this information also, King Klungkung is secretly preparing a strategy to retaliate for the death of King Kusumba.

“Oh, I see. Well, it is fine, Aki. I still will go hunting. We have to give the impression that we have no knowledge about what is happening in Klungkung. Get the special troops ready to go hunting there with me.”

The meeting did not take a long time. Banterang was a man who managed his kingdom in effective and efficient manner. After bowing to Banterang, the commanders returned to their respective barracks.

In their barracks, the commanders gathered their respective commandants and held a brief meeting. After giving some instructions, fast movements appeared to be organized in the palace complex.

The governance center in Blambangan was located in the palace, the living place of Banterang. It could be seen from several main buildings in the center of the palace complex. For confidants and commanders, they occupied the settlements in the second ring. The houses of the commandants were located in the third ring,

¹ A spy

whilst the soldiers lived around the fourth ring, and a large majority spread in the township.

Blambangan Kingdom, at around the 10th and 11th centuries, was a fairly large kingdom in the region of East Java. The kingdom was bordered by several other kingdoms in Bali and East Java with minor populations. In those days, the populations of Blambangan Kingdom embraced Hindu and some other local faiths. It was because the kingdom did not overly control religious issues. The people were free to choose their religions according to each of their belief.

As a kingdom, Blambangan Kingdom appeared to be prosperous and religious. It was also evident from many places of worship, such as temples.

There were a number of temples in Blambangan, for example Purwo Temple, Kawitan Temple, and Agung Gumuk Kancil Temple.

The signs of Blambangan's prosperity were visible since the governance of King Dedali Putih. The king had passion to expand to areas around the kingdom, leading to wars between King Dedali Putih and Klungkung. King Dedali Putih did not gain victory in that war though it had taken a toll on his life. But it was not expected to be a prolonged problem in the future.



As a kingdom that was once defeated by Blambangan, Klungkung was surely made discreet plans to pay their revenge. That was why Klungkung Kingdom also sent their spies all over the place to read the power of their opponents long before. Someday, a middle-ranking soldier came to the presence of King Rake.

“Why do you come here in a rush?”

“Pardon me for my impudence, your Majesty. I have just received the information from a spy that there are suspicious movements in Blambangan. According to the analysis of the spy, Blambangan is preparing to launch attacks to our kingdom. What should we do, Your Majesty?”

After listening to the information, King Rake became angry. King Rake frowned and seemed to think hard. Rake calculated his military force which was minor compared to that of Blambangan’s troops. If Rake insisted on defending his kingdom at the risk of the war, he thought that his soldiers would be defeated, but if he forced himself and finally dethroned, then it would be one ridiculous strategy. It was equal to letting his people lose and die in vain.

After contemplating it for considerable amount of time, King Rake said, “You have to gather all the troop commandants. I will give orders.”

“At your service, your Majesty,” the soldier bowed down to his king’s order.

Shortly afterwards, a number of soldiers dressed in high-ranking uniforms came to the presence of King Rake.

“My beloved commanders,” Rake opened the conversation, “Blambangan might launch attacks against us soon.

“I am ready to wage war, your Majesty.”

“I am ready to die, your Majesty.”

“I’m sure and believe that Klungkung soldiers are amazing and courageous. But, if that happens, we will lose. Blambangan is not only strong at the moment, but King Banterang is also supernaturally powerful. We might have to suffer defeat. If we can see that we are losing, our courage will serve nothing but foolishness. I think we must anticipate the war with a strategy.”

Everyone present at the meeting was listening carefully.

“Let’s put it this way, but I’m just trying to avoid the foolishness, not because I’m afraid,” King Rake asserted.

“One third of our forces should guard the palace, while the remaining should spread on the border where Blambangan troops will find their way in. Employ guerrilla warfare. Do it in the forest at the west of Klungkung. That’s our forest. We have better

knowledge about every detail of that forest. We might lose, but at least Blambangan will take a considerable amount of time to get into the palace.”

“At your command, your Majesty,” the Rake's troop commandants answered in unison.

“Bear in mind, you have to always plead for strength and patience to the Great Gods.”

As in Blambangan, within a second, there were considerable systematic movements happening in Klungkung. When viewed from above, a number of people in brown shirts moved closer to the palace, while several people in black shirts moved into the forest in the west of Klungkung. Although they did not make much noise, the people of Klungkung felt an intense atmosphere in their minds.



The forest in the western area of Klungkung was covered by big trees. It was hilly with many valleys around, thus creating plenty of dynamics therein. Small caves could be found in some places.

It was a public knowledge that the forest was haunted, but not haunted by supernatural beings; rather, haunted by evil people running rampant all over the forest, attempting to escape from the punishment imposed by Blambangan Kingdom.

Nevertheless, if one had the intention to go to Blambangan or Klungkung, taking a trip through that way would be the most effective and fastest choice.

In a war, especially, effectiveness is very crucial for victory. And, as people had expected, the tension between Blambangan and Klungkung culminated in the forest.

After traveling quite a distance, the troops and warriors of Blambangan concurrently set up some tents in the forest. Indeed, what ensued was not only a fight between the soldiers, but also battles of strategy.

Some of Klungkung soldiers could sneak into the forest first. Every night, they ran riots. Fights were always happening and some of them were killed.

However, some of Blambangan soldiers managed to gain entry into the townships in Klungkung areas, at the command of their commanders. In Klungkung, they set the people's houses on fire, whilst some of them intentionally committed house robberies, yet the people of Klungkung were going through these hardships with patience. Such situation lasted for more than three months.

That heightened tension and energy-draining situation eventually became tiresome for both sides. That was why both parties came up with new strategy designs.

A commandant of Balmbangan sent a soldier to Banterang to convey the latest information to him.

“Your Majesty,” a soldier bowed to Banterang.

“Go ahead,” Banterang responded chilly.

“We have already conducted your Majesty’s command. The war in the forest actually did not show progress because they employed guerrilla tactics. It was quite troublesome for our soldiers, but some villages in Klungkung are in relatively chaotic situation, while Klungkung is arguably in rather weak condition in general.

“Go on!”

“It is the time for us to bombard them with bigger blow, your Majesty”

After receiving more detailed information and analyzing the possibilities, Banterang decided to give order:

“Proceed! Send the whole battalion!”



Meanwhile, inside Klungkung’s palace, Rake held a family conversation.

“My sister, Surati, the condition is getting more unfavorable for us. Sooner or later, our kingdom will face a bigger invasion. We will not make it.”

“Oh, my beloved brother, how did it come to this?”

“Yes, my sister, we have made our efforts. It is already written in the stars.

“I’m going to die fighting with you, my brother.”

“It does not have to be this way, my sister Surati.”

“So, what do you have in mind, my brother?”

“I have contacted our relatives in Gianyar and Karangasem. We will go there. My plan is to evacuate myself and the queen, your sister-in-law, to Gianyar. Some of us will flee to Karangasem.”

“I shall go wherever you go, my brother.”

“This is the reason for our conversation, my sister. There is no safe place for us. I even suggest you to disguise yourself as a commoner in Blambangan. Nobody recognizes you there. You will be safe there.”

“No, my brother. I will come with you.”

“Oh no, my sister. It’s my command. I have a long-term plan. It is why I am asking you to evacuate yourself to Blambangan and settle there. Just wait for me. I will come to you someday.”

“I don’t understand your plan, my brother. But, because it is your command, then I agree to this.”

The day was getting late and the sun appeared to have withdrawn itself to the western horizon. Klungkung was a kingdom with many beautiful places. Some of its coastal areas overlooked the sunsets, creating wonderful afternoon scenery. Perhaps that was why Blambangan had interests in gaining control over Klungkung.

The night was getting late. It was silent, but the tense atmosphere was growing in the air. King Rake made some emergency preparations and gave instructions to his family and troop commanders.

As expected, not long after, the uproar was heard here and there. And it was true, Blambangan troops made their way closer to the palace. Many battles and fights happened sporadically. The gallant and courageous Klungkung troops made a stand with burning passion. However, Blambangan troops came in much more significant number. The remarkable thing was that Blambangan troops were directly led by Banterang.

According to the scenario of both parties, Klungkung soldiers did not foolishly defend themselves. They were actually trying to buy time for their king to flee. In this way, the war would not cost so many lives, nor would it cause too many physical damages.

The King of Blambangan bravely made his way into Klungkung palace with some of his inner troops. Rather than killing Rake, they intended to make him declare his defeat and loss. But, unexpectedly, Klungkung Kingdom was already empty.

“You go find Rake wherever he went!” he ordered his troops.

Several soldiers sneaked out to carry out the orders of their supreme commander. After searching throughout the place, they could not find anybody. It turned out Klungkung palace had been left empty.

Nevertheless, Banterang still kept his hope to find the King of Klungkung. As he was watching his troops doing their jobs, Banterang decided to take a rest in Klungkung palace with them for about two or three days.

King Banterang spoke: “We did win this war, but we should not be overjoyed with this, we should not get carried away. We ought to pay respect to our enemy. Hopefully, the relationship of Blambangan and Klungkung will get better in the future, but unfortunately, I cannot meet Rake.”

After taking some rests for a couple of days and nights, Banterang and his troops prepared themselves to get back to Blambangan. Banterang even intended to go to Purwo Forest for his hobby; going for a hunt.



Rake with his queen consort and his two little children sneaked out through secret door and passage. Either secret door or passage was available throughout the palace. They would be highly useful if the king and his family were under serious and unpredicted threats.

Ten soldiers kept Rake under guard in the four carriages that transported him. Rake quickly left Klungkung behind. Two carriages headed to Gianyar, while the other two left for Karangasem. Rake and the queen consort head to Gianyar, while his two children and the other relatives went towards Karangasem. They parted ways on purpose to avoid anything worse in the future. Rake was convinced that Karangasem was capable of protecting his children.

According to the command, with two soldiers and one handmaiden on guard, Surati sneaked out westward, towards Blambangan. Surati was terribly sad for going separate ways with Rake, her brother, who also played a role as her father since the

passing of King Kusumba. She had no idea where to go. For all she knew, she had to walk westward to Blambangan.

After several days of walks and going across to the other side using a small boat, Surati finally found herself in the land of East Java. The originally group of four ultimately split-up on the beach.

“Gentlemen, you can leave me here.”

“Your royal highness, I was ordered to guard you all the time,” replied one of the soldiers.

“That’s correct, gentlemen. You have implemented the order given to you. You really are good and tough warriors. Go back to Klungkung. Take a look around the palace, find out what happened there. I also command you two to find my brother, Rake, and inform him that I’m doing just fine here in Blambangan.”

The two soldiers were confused. On one hand, they received orders from their commandant to escort Princess Surati, whilst Princess Surati herself requested them to return to Klungkung.

“I don’t have the nerve to disobey the command of my commander, Princess Surati.” One of the soldiers answered, holding his head down.

“No need to be confused, gentlemen. If you are being held into account later, just tell your commander that the two of you return to Klungkung at my command. I’m sure that your commandant will understand it.”

Step by step, the two soldiers halfheartedly left Surati behind and crossed to Klungkung. They relentlessly set their eyes on Surati and her handmaiden until they finally disappeared from their sights.

Surati herself decided to keep on walking westward. After three days and three nights of walking, in addition to feeling exhausted, Surati finally stopped in a beautiful forest. The trees there grew in neat formations. The air was cool and a clear stream flowing there. In her heart, Surati said she would really love to settle in this forest.

“Handmaiden, we should build a hut here. We are about to stay here for undecided period of time. Start collecting materials that can be used to build a hut. We will gradually make some renovations to the hut until it becomes a decent place to live.

The handmaiden who was a bit fat worked quickly and skillfully. Surati herself actively joined in the work.

“Your royal highness, you should take a rest, I am able to do this. Don’t worry. It is the time for me to show my true strength, said the handmaiden, trying to make light of it. She knew that he

princess was in sorrow, thus she tried her best to bring a sense of joy.

While singing *rengeng-rengeng*², a typical song from her village, the handmaiden swiftly finished her work. Surati wondered where the handmaiden got the skills to build the hut from. Nevertheless, the grief overflowing her heart made her reluctant to ask about her skills.

Surati slowly took a step and choose a place to sit. As usual, Surati always took a moment of silence when she was in distraught. She had been doing this since childhood. While taking a moment of silence, Surati recited a prayer:

“O, the Great Gods

give us your protection against all sorts of dangers,

confer love upon us, the weak and the mortal

grant forgiveness for our mistake

take sorrow and grief away from our hearts,

send Your help and affection to us Your servants”



² Singing in undertone

Benoa Forest was one beautiful forest. The forest was included in the territory of Blambangan. In that forest, many animals swarmed around, especially deer and tigers. Banterang usually went to the forest to find some entertainment and exercises. One of his favorites was to hunt deer and shoot them with his arrows. Other than his expertise in supernatural power, Banterang also mastered skills in archery. He would never release his arrows unless hitting the target precisely.

Usually, Banterang would stop hunting once he managed to get one deer. For him, it was enough to get one to be eaten together with his guards. He had been doing this habit since young, allowing him to know the ins and outs of Benoa Forest like the palm of his hand.

That afternoon, it was not too hot, the sunshine shone through the leaves of the trees in Benoa Forest. Banterang was going around for more than three hours, but not even one deer came into the sight of his entourage. As he felt a bit tired, he decided to get a rest.

“Soldiers, put up a tent on that hill. I want to take a rest for a while.”

The agile soldiers who were accustomed to building up tents quickly did Banterang’s order. Before long, a tent stood firmly. Banterang entered the tent and laid his head down. He hoped to

fall asleep right away, but unfortunately, it was not the case. He was wondering: “Why isn’t there any deer to see this afternoon?”

He had trouble falling asleep.

As it was difficult to sleep, he sat back outside the tent. Without realizing it, he laid his eyes on the movements of white cloth in the distance. Banterang was curious, who could it be? Who had the guts to play in this forest? At first, Banterang did not believe in his own eyes. He called one of his guards.

“Soldier, take a look at that! What is that? Human or ghost?” said Banterang while pointing at a distance, slightly downward.

The soldiers rapidly looked to the direction that Banterang was pointing.

“Perhaps it is just the reflection from the shadow of the sun, your Majesty.”

“Ah, you are belittling my eyesight.”

“Forgive me, your Majesty.”

The thing seen by Banterang was actually located quite far from him. Since Banterang was in the heights, he was able to see things around him. Suddenly, the shadow of the white movement disappeared again. Banterang decided to cancel his intention to go there.

After feeling refreshed, Banterang prepared himself to go hunting for more.

“Let’s find the deer again. If we don’t, what will we eat tonight?” Banterang made a bit of joke.

“Ah, that was a good one, your Majesty.”

The sun was setting further to the western horizon. Here and there, the dim twilight began to settle. In the lower corner of the pine tree, about 200 meters away, there was a very familiar movement for Banterang. He gave a signal that no one would move, thus keeping the deer from running away, but apparently the deer went on trotting. Banterang’s entourage stalked behind it slowly.

The deer was getting further away. Banterang’s troupe sped up their paces. The deer movement became visible again. Banterang prepared his arrow.

“If I do not take my chances now, we won’t be able to eat later,” Banterang joked once more.

“It is still farther away, and the deer keep running around, your Majesty.” One of the guards explained.

“That’s right but I will keep on trying.”

“Banterang stretched his arrow. He built up his concentration and aimed his arrow up. He took a pause and saw the leaves to see to which direction they were being moved by the wind. Again, Banterang stretched his arrow and aimed it up, somewhat tilted towards the deer. After stretching his arrow for two or three seconds, he released it. All the soldiers witnessed where the arrow dashed into.

Slowly, Banterang’s troupe followed where the arrow landed. Nobody knew whether or not the arrow hit the target. Every one of them was curious and wondering. The greatness of Banterang as archery expert was at stake. Of course, the one with his heart pounding the hardest amongst the troupe members was Banterang, for his archery skill was being witnessed by the soldiers.

However, there was some other thing that made Banterang became even much more nervous. The position of the deer where he aimed his arrow at was aligned with the direction of the white cloth movement he saw before.

As they got closer towards the direction of the arrow being released to, Banterang was getting more nervous, while his heart pounded even faster. What made Banterang’s heart pounding and nervous was then proven. The eyes of the entourage members popped out of their heads when they saw that the arrow released by Banterang hit the deer, leaving the arrow stuck in the back of

the deer. The remarkable thing was a very beautiful woman in white was trying to remove the arrow from the deer's back. That woman was Surati.

Banterang froze like a statue. He was not amazed to find his arrow hit on the target in a great distance; instead he was amazed to see a mesmerizing woman in the forest. Up until sometime later, Banterang still froze on his spot. The king with tremendous bravery to fight in wars, archery expertise, horse-riding skills, and martial arts skill, was powerless in the face of Surati's beauty.

Once Banterang snapped back to reality, he said: "O beautiful woman, who are you? Why are you here? Where is your family?"

Surati did not immediately answer. She was not any more shocked than the people who came approaching her. What made her equally amazed was that she could guess the identity of the person asking the questions to her. By looking at the Banterang's clothes, Surati suspected that Banterang must be a high-ranking aristocrat around the forest. Surati paused and came to standstill because Banterang was incredibly charming and handsome.



For a moment, Surati was torn to pieces. If this aristocrat was the ruler of Blambangan, it meant he was related to the murderer of Grandfather Kusumba. Besides, he had just attacked Klungkung. Surati became confused on how to answer Banterang's questions.

But, Surati began to lose herself because of her inner voice and the attraction of love at first sight towards Banterang. Surati nervously said: “I’m just nobody, my Lord. I’m only a homeless commoner. I just happen to love this place so I decided to stay here.”

King Banterang surely did not just simply buy it. Judging at her beauty, there’s no way that she was a commoner. But, Banterang did not think it was important. He did not care about who the beautiful girl before his eyes was. What he cared about was he had fallen in love with that gorgeous girl.

The soldiers there, including Surati’s handmaiden, stood still like statues. No one made any movement. Even Banterang was mesmerized with the beauty of Surati, let alone the soldiers. After a few moments being caught up in the strained atmosphere between the two parties, a soldier braved himself to whisper to Banterang.

In the beginning, Banterang did not really understand what the soldier whispered. Once he made sense of it, he dared himself to say something to Surati.

“It is not a proper place for you to stay, O beautiful princess, not only because of your incredible beauty, but also because of dangerous wild animals and evil people in this place.”

Surati did not respond to what Banterang said. Her heart pounded, as she was on chaotic state of mind.

“Let’s make it this way: because it is Blambangan territory and it’s getting late, I command you to come with me to the palace,” said Banterang while turning his head to the soldiers. “Soldier, get everything ready. We are coming home this very night.”

As usual, the soldiers moved fast and swiftly. They then did Banterang’s command.

Surati neither knew what to say nor what to do. No words could escape her lips. She did nothing when the soldiers asked her to join them and board the prepared carriage. Not that she didn’t like it, not that she despised the whole situation, nor she was delighted, she completely had no idea of what to do as she was confused. For her, Banterang’s words were like magnets that she must follow.

That very night, Banderang troupe walked back to Blambangan palace. As usual, the journey took about half a day. A soldier with a chosen horse was asked to go before the entourage to inform the palace that King Banterang was coming home soon. The palace was ordered to prepare for the welcoming ceremony.

On the journey home, Banderang had his heart set on marrying Surati. Also, on the way home to Blambangan Palace, Surati was sure that Banterang would be her future husband. She had no

doubt that someday; Banterang would be her faithful husband. The carriage did not go fast because they took a night journey. In fact, Banterang's entourage stopped in some places to relax. The sky in that night happened to be adorned with full moon. Banterang intentionally enjoyed the evening to witness the grace of the full moon all the way home.



The people of Blambangan were well-informed of the victory gained by their king in the war to conquer Klungkung. Some of the warriors had returned home ahead of their king, but Banterang did not immediately return to the palace, since according to the plan, he was about to go hunting with his guards. The people of Blambangan could not wait to hail their king. That night, a horse entered the city. The news about the king's return was spread throughout the places.

The next day, after the high noon, Banterang's entourage made an entrance in the gate of Blambangan. The crowds gathered in droves on the roadside and chanted for Banterang.

“Long live Blambangan”

“Long live his Majesty”

“God save the King.”

“Reign, Blambangan!”

“Rule, Blambangan!”

On his carriage, Banterang waved his arms. King Banterang displayed a gallant physical appearance. What shocking was the presence of a beautiful woman in white, sitting in that carriage. Then, the people of Blambangan whispered to one another, wondering about the beautiful woman.

“Who could she be?” An old man whispered to an old lady.

Another one said: “I have never seen a woman that beautiful!”

Once entering the square, Banterang told them to stop the carriage. Still sitting on the horse, Banterang responded the astonishment of Blambangan people.

“My beloved people, all of you can celebrate the moment of joy for Blambangan has conquered Klungkung. However, we have to respect the people of Klungkung. We will be united and working hand in hand in the future.” Banterang stopped his speech, and then turned his head to the beautiful woman in white.

After pausing for a moment, Banterang continued his speech: “Hereby, I’m announcing to the people of Blambangan that Blambangan soon will have its queen.”

“The cheering got louder all over the places. But, in the midst of the crowd’s cheering, Surati was shocked. She nearly swooned to hear Banterang’s unconsensual statement. She was surprised not

because she did not like Banterang, but because the dynamics of things went too fast and exceeded her expectations. Surati was certainly over the moon to hear Banterang's statement as she was in love, too. But, when everything is being fast-tracked, it went beyond expectation. One can imagine the festivity in a royal wedding, especially a king's wedding. A few days prior to the wedding, colorful banners were put up all across the area of Blambangan, and when viewed from above, one could see that Blambangan was full of colors, like a rainbow.

Various art performances from the regions in Blambangan were displayed in the palace. The wedding procession lasted several days until the peak of the event, in which open reception on the palace's courtyard was attended by thousands of Blambangan people.

The people of Blambangan witnessed how their rulers stood side by side, wearing regal clothing. The wedding ceremony was held in solemn, sacred, majestic, and festive manner. Such ceremony needed to be held to further convince the people of Blambangan that they were in prosperous and victorious condition.

The grand party had to come to an end. As is the custom, the story of Banterang, Surati, Blambangan, and Klungkung should have been finished here. Nevertheless, the will of the Great Gods was to endlessly put trials to their servants.

One night, on the terrace next to the palace, Banterang and Surati were shooting the breeze with the accompaniment of few handmaidens. In the meantime, Banterang suddenly asked a question: “My dear wife, we have been married for nearly four years and we are very happy. Isn’t that right? Are you happy with me?”

“Yes, I am, my dear husband, there is nothing that can make me happier other than being your wife.”

“Praise the Great Gods,” Banterang wished his gratitude. “But, I’m sorry my dear wife, every now and then I saw you there, daydreaming and looking sad. May I know, what becomes the burden of your mind?”

When being asked with that question, Surati was rather surprised because Banterang actually caught her daydreaming.

“I neither did that nor sad, my dear husband.

“Don’t be so discreet with me, my dear wife. We are husband and wife. Your problem is my problem, and the other way around.”

Surati stared at Banterang’s face for a long time. She was sure that those said by him were sincere and affectionate. Then she said, “Sometimes I yearn for Klungkung and my brother Rake,” Surati finally came clean.

After being Banterang's wife, Surati told many things to him. She told him that she was actually the princess of Klungkung Kingdom.

At that time, Banterang was actually shocked. However, he ultimately became happy when he was sure that his marriage to Surati actually had strengthened the relationship between Blambangan and Klungkung.

“Later, we will plan a trip to Klungkung. I also wish to explain that King Kusumba was not murdered by my father Dedali. That was not the real incident. It was a misunderstanding. Thereby, if your brother Rake is willing to accept my visit to Klungkung, then I will be pleased to go there.”

After receiving such answer, Surati then became overwhelmed with joy.

Banterang further explained, “Indeed, our mistake was why my father Dedali and I launched attacks against Klungkung. Sometimes, there comes a desire for greater power. It was a mistake,” Banterang paused briefly and seemed to take a moment to think.

Then, Banterang said, “As you know, myself lately have contemplated and meditated for many times. I thought about many things and had drawn many conclusions from that contemplation. I concluded about how unavailing the wars are,

how vain the feuds are, and how futile hostility against each other is. Warfare and opposition can only give rise to resentment, and it can take up a very long time to exist.”

Surati carefully paid attention to the words spoken by Banterang with sparkly eyes. The night was getting late, the sound of nocturnal birds were heard from a distance.

“Very well, my dear husband, once I get better, we can visit Klungkung. I’m sure my brother Rake is willing to accept you. I will try to convince him,” Surati gave explanation with a smile.

Indeed, after some time, Surati had not recovered from her cough, in fact, her cough was getting worse. Perhaps the burden of her mind had deteriorated her physical strength. Surati was truly in distress and was between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, she deeply loved Banterang, but on the other hand, she thought to have committed an act of treason against Klungkung Kingdom and the royal family of Klungkung for being married to Banterang, the enemy of Klungkung.



Not long after, there was news about the emergence of a highly knowledgeable young healer who could heal any kind of diseases in Blambangan. Not many knew where the young healer came from. According to hearsay, he came from Madura. But, no one could confirm the truth of the story. Day by day, the young healer

rose to prominence even more. That young healer was commonly called Healer Mandra.

Over time, the news regarding Healer Mandra finally reached Blambangan palace. At first, Banterang was wondering about the origin of the healer. Under some consideration, he did not make a fuss about it. Banterang had hopes that this Healer Mandra was able to cure the cough suffered by his wife, Surati.

“Oh my wife, may I talk to you?” asked Banterang to Surati one afternoon in the room.

With a sweet smile, Surati replied, “My lord, you are my husband and my king, so you can say anything to me.”

“But you should not take it with hard feelings.”

“Ah, my dear husband, just say it right away.”

“Look, my dear wife, I heard that in Blambangan there was a powerful healer who could cure many kinds of diseases. If you don’t mind, I intend to ask the healer to come see you.”

Surati giggled. “Oh that is not a problem, my dear husband. I’m even excited to meet the healer. Who knows I’m going to recover soon and we can immediately pay a visit to Klungkung. Oh, how wonderful it will be to be able to see my homeland.”

Apparently, the evening conversation was not as complicated as Banterang imagined it would be like. He was afraid that his beloved wife would be offended, but in reality, Surati strongly agreed and even requested him to arrange a meeting for her and that powerful healer. The next day, Banterang ordered the palace worker to go see Healer Mandra and ask him to come to the palace.

That evening, time went slowly for both Surati and Banterang. Surati hoped that morning would arrive soon so that she could meet the healer for her treatment or assistance to cure her illness. In the meantime, Banterang's curiosity about the identity of the healer reappeared in his mind. Who is the healer coming into his territory? It is surely not a coincidence, he thought about it that night, but he kept it in his mind.

Banterang tried to sleep, while Surati was asleep beside him. Only a few moments later, there was a tap on the door and a soft voice. The tap and the soft voice informed him that he was needed by his advisor and main guards in a secret place. It was code shared by Banterang and some of his confidants; if unfavorable situation was taking place, he could be asked to appear in the meeting, anytime and anywhere.

While watching his wife, Banterang moved slowly and delicately to avoid waking up his wife. Banterang took his robe and put it on. He didn't forget to retrieve a dagger and tucked it in around

his hips. Before leaving the room, Banterang once again stared at the face of his beloved wife.



The next morning, when Surati woke up, she was very shocked to find her husband, Banterang, was not there by her side. Surati hurriedly called the palace servant.

“Have you seen His Majesty?”

The palace servant who was asked by Surati was no less confused. He honestly did not know the whereabouts of his king. The servant was completely uninformed of Banterang’s departure. As a rule, the servant would have been informed if Banterang was about to go travelling because the servant was the one preparing for Banterang’s necessities.

“I do not know, your Majesty.”

Surati ran to the garden next to the palace, yet she saw no one. She then ran to the palace backyard, still, she could not find her husband. Surati ran to palace courtyard, thinking she could find Banterang in one corner of the palace courtyard, but she did not find Banterang there.

For more than two hours, Surati walked around looking for her husband but she failed to find him. Finally, she sat in one of the

chairs in the backyard, thinking what the next step she should take to find her husband.

Surati told herself: “My husband rarely leaves me without notifying me. Is there anything urgent that he didn’t have time to tell me?”

Surati shed tears. She felt lonely. Just a few moments away from his husband already left her into a feeling of empty life. “Or, did I make a mistake?” Surati asked herself. “Ah, my husband, forgive me if I made any mistake.”

Until high noon, Surati was yet to enter the palace. Surati was still sitting in the palace backyard; even her servants saw that she was sitting there, resembling a statue.

Up until afternoon, Surati was still sitting in the very same place. The servants began to get anxious. They did not know what to do. Several guards have been deployed to search for Banterang. Amazingly, the advisors and main guards of the kingdom were nowhere to be seen.

When evening came on, Surati showed no signs of moving on to her room. She remained frozen like a statue at the same spot. The servants eventually plucked up their courage to approach her. One of them spoke to her but not before bowing to her in the first place. “Pardon us, your Majesty.”

No response.

“Your Majesty, please come inside, your Majesty might become ill here.”

No response.

“If so, please have your dinner, your Majesty. We have already brought your Majesty’s favorite food.”

No response. Surati’s body showed no movement at all. That night, several servants joined her to sit around the palace backyard. They were wide awake up until morning to accompany queen consort Surati.

The next morning, Surati was yet to show any signs of taking a break from her rumination as she waited for Banterang’s return. It seemed like she was taking a form of meditation. But fortunately, at around midday, she finished her meditation. With inert movement, Surati turned her head to one of her servants.

“Handmaiden Ijum,” called Surati in hoarse voice.

Someone called by the name Handmaiden Ijum was surprised and quickly bowed to her,

“At your service, your Majesty.”

“Convey my orders to other servants. Set up a tent in this courtyard, complete with simple shower cubicle. I shall never set my foot in the palace before the return of His Majesty. I will be waiting for him in this place,” said Surati beyond the shadow of doubt.

“Oh, your Majesty, It cannot be, your Majesty. What if your Majesty falls ill?”

“Do as I say.”

Days went by unnoticed, whereas Surati had spent a week waiting for Banterang in the palace backyard. Meanwhile, there had been no news regarding Banterang yet. After finished doing her daily routines, such as bathing and eating, Surati returned to her seat, as if she went into meditative state. She was waiting and praying. She did those things every day, in addition to reciting the mantra:

“The Great Gods, the one defines my life

The Great Gods, the one defines the lives

The Great Gods, the one decides my life

The Great Gods, the one harbors the lives

The Great Gods, the one puts us through trials

The Great Gods, the one puts an end to trials

Grant me the strength to get through this trial.”



Where did Banterang go that night? Certainly there were only very few people who had the information. As was the custom, in a kingdom, a king had plenty of advisors. There were advisors with the expertise in political, economic and legal fields, and what equally important was spiritual advisors. The position of the said spiritual advisors was very special. In general, they were people with highly advanced supernatural powers. As clairvoyants, they were the first to know the things unbeknown to any ordinary person.

The spiritual advisor of Banterang was named Ki Empu Dharma. Besides playing role as his spiritual advisor, Ki Empu Dharma happened to be Banterang’s teacher. He was the only person with the ability to summon Banterang to his presence.

The conversation that night took a short course. After Banterang’s advisor knocked on his door with the secret code, Banterang soon came out of his bedchamber. Due to considerably serious situation, his advisor spoke to him straight to the point: “your Majesty, tonight, your Majesty is asked to leave the palace.”

Banterang did not ask much. The code of summon command could only be used during emergency situation. He knew that his spiritual teacher, Ki Empu Darma, was the one summoned him.

However, Banterang could not help but asked: “What on earth is going on?”

“I have no idea, Your Majesty. I received a certain message from Ki Empu.”

As the two men were the people of high supernatural ability, they quickly jogged towards a mountain. On the hill is where Ki Empu Dharma dwelled. He lived in a clean small lodge. When Banterang and his advisor arrived at the lodge, Ki Empu Dharma was in meditative state.

Ki Empu Dharma was a very old man. He was about 80 years old. Not that Ki Empu unaware of Banterang and his advisor’s arrival to his lodge, but for some reason, he did not move from his meditation seat.

He carried on his meditation. Banterang approached Ki Empu, bowed to him, and then sat not far away from Empu Dharma, waiting for his teacher to complete the meditation.

Only a few moments later, Ki Empu Dharma was seen to move his body and slightly turned his head towards Banterang, “Stay here for some time. Please take time off or pray.” Ki Empu Dharma said nothing else, and then carried on his meditation.

Banterang did not say a word. Such a thing was commonly instructed by his spiritual teacher. Not once he ever retorted to

this, regardless of his position as a king. That night, Banterang preferred to do prayers and meditation not far from his teacher's position.

The next day, his spiritual teacher neither said a thing nor do something. Such thing happened until afternoon and up to the next day. It was a remarkable thing that Ki Empu had not said anything to Banterang for two days. Only after the third day, Ki Empu spoke: "You have to stay here for few more days. Based on my vision, the palace is being exposed to danger. Where the danger came from is rather unexpected. I shall let you know when the time comes for you to return home."

Banterang was a bit surprised. He asked himself: "The palace is being exposed to danger? From rather unexpected source?"

That night, Banterang had trouble falling asleep. He was thinking and pondering about the person who was bold on him. Who is that person? Is that person so powerful that even his teacher conceals his identity? Nonetheless, his teacher did not make a reference to supernatural powers, so it meant it had nothing to do with supernatural powers. And it came from rather unexpected origin, thus it meant that where and when it happened remained unknown. Who is this unexpected person?

By nightfall, as Banterang finally was inches away from falling asleep, Surati, his wife, the princess of Klungkung, occurred to

his mind, but he then get rid of that thought as far away as possible.



One morning, a guard came to the presence of Surati. After bowing to her, Surati let the guard speak: “A guest would like to meet Your Majesty. He claimed to be the traditional healer who was asked to come before Your Majesty the other day.”

Surati thought for a moment to whether or not giving permission to the healer to meet her while her husband was not here with her.

“How does he look like?” Surati asked.

“He is handsome, your Majesty.”

Surati frowned. That was not the answer she expected to hear from the guard.

“What I meant is whether he is old or young?”

“He is fairly young, your Majesty.”

Surati frowned once again. She was thinking what the people of Blambangan would say if she received a visit from a male, young and handsome healer when her husband was actually not in the palace.

“Tell him that King Banterang is out of town, so he will be welcomed back here if His Majesty is home with me.”

“Your Majesty, that guest insisted!

“Insisted? How dare that man set his foot in the palace and insisted on being received here!”

“That is right, your Majesty. He actually did not insist. He said: “I came all the way here at your king’s request, and now I’m here, so let me in.”

He said so, your Majesty.

“Well, that’s right. The king did ask him to come to the palace but he is not the palace at the moment, so just cancel it.”

“But, your Majesty.....” the guard did not finish his words.

“What else?”

Before Surati could finish her words, a handful of palace guards entered the courtyard, closely escorting a man dressed in priest clothing. At the beginning, Surati wanted to scream at the top of her lungs because the man impudently gained entry without her consent.

One of the guards bowed to her. “Excuse us, your Majesty, this is not to say that we could not deny his entry, but he persisted on

claiming that he was ordered by the king to cure your Majesty's illness, said the guard.

Once Surati was trying to see the figure of the man who imprudently gained entry to her palace, her face began to turn white as a sheet, but then she was able to pull herself together. At the meantime, Healer Mandra did not show any changes of facial expression. He was aware that the queen consort of Blambangan was his own sister.

Surati must pull herself together because at that time, it was impossible for her to come clean. She was well aware that the eyes of Blambangan Kingdom's guards were on her. If she made a misstep, there could be uproar.

"Gentleman, I will ask you directly. Is it true that you can cure my illness? I have been suffering from cough this whole year. I have tried all kinds of medicine yet nothing could cure me."

"I would put my efforts into it, your Majesty," replied Healer Mandra in a flat voice.

"Why is your Majesty on the yard? Sleeping on this yard? How could it be?"

The opportunity came to Surati to explain her condition to her brother.

“Gentleman, I’m waiting for my husband who abruptly had to get out of town. Perhaps he is on meditation or taking up lessons. As a very loving wife, I’m practicing austere way of life. I’m waiting for the return of my dear husband, Banterang, in this place.”

After seeing the happiness in his sister’s face, as well as his sister’s loyalty to her husband, King Rake alias Healer Mandra was deeply moved that he cancelled his intention to kill Banderang. He had been thinking and doing various plans to avenge the death of his parent, though the one killing his parent was Blambangan instead of Banterang. However, Banterang meant the same thing as Blambangan, so Banterang must be held accountable for the destruction of Klungkung.

For that very reason, King Rake Salah became a healer, as he believed he would have an opportunity to gain entry to Blambangan palace, and later he would take an unexpected opportunity to pay his revenge. He had been thinking about these thoroughly.

Surati did not miss that good opportunity. All of a sudden, she spoke in different language. She said something that was not understood by the people accompanying her. She spoke the language of the Klungkung people in Bali, which meant: “My brother Rake, I love Banterang. I love you as my brother. I love Klungkung. But, please be advised, my brother, it’s all over now. I’m doing just fine. You should also know that Father Kusumba

was not killed by Father Dedali. We all knew Father Kusumba was at his old age with a poor health condition. The war is indeed wrong, and it has been acknowledged by Banterang. Banterang himself has also apologized to me. Our father died from illness.”

A soldier braved himself to say, “Pardon me, your Majesty, we do not understand.”

Surati quickly replied, “Take a look at him; he is carrying a Balinese dagger around his hips! So I asked him whether he was Balinese and could speak Balinese, since I heard that he came from Madura. I need to make sure which one is true. The man said he was from Bali, but he had been living in Madura in the last few years.

When Surati explained the matter, Healer Mandra interrupted, “I don’t see that your Majesty is suffering from serious illness. The cough was only resulted from your Majesty’s mild depression, in addition to lots of things going on in your Majesty’s mind. Later on, if your Majesty truly paid a visit to Klungkung which would lead to a better relationship between Klungkung and Blambangan, then your Majesty would be automatically cured.”

Healer Mandra really had power in treating people because he seriously learned about it since a long time ago. But, how did he know that Surati was sick due to depression and yearning for Klungkung or even himself? Healer Mandra could easily tell

about it. Surati was his sister, and no matter what he knew what she secretly kept in her heart.

“Praise be to Great Gods,” replied Surati.

“Get plenty of water. I will put spell on the water later, and that would be all.” Healer Mandra illustrated how he would treat Surati.

The servants prepared the water in a jug at the healer requested. The jug was placed beside Surati’s tent. Healer Mandra sat facing the jug and recited a mantra. Then, he unfolded his dagger and dipped it into the jug.

“I think this will do. Maybe, your Majesty won’t be instantaneously cured, as it could take up about several days. If your Majesty is yet to recover, your Majesty could pour new water into the jug and then briefly dip this dagger. By this, I would like to present this dagger for your Majesty.”

Thereafter, Surati and Rake briefly exchanged glances. It was visible from their eyes that they loved and missed each other.

“I think it is enough, your Majesty. Please, excuse myself because I shall continue my journey.”

“Yes, gentleman, thank you. I believe I would be cured,” told Surati as she bowed.

“Handmaiden Ijum, give plenty of supplies to this gentleman for his journey.”

Healer Mandra quickly interrupted, “It is not necessary, your Majesty. I still have sufficient supply. I want for nothing.”

The healer immediately prepared himself to leave Surati. Surati quickly turned her back, facing the other way from Rake’s exit. She had no heart to see Rake’s departure, and then her tears secretly streamed down her cheeks.



Surati went back to her routines, waiting for Banterang’s return. In between, she worshiped and prayed to The One Almighty God. She put the dagger gifted by Rake by her bed. Her cough also seemed to show signs of recovery.

One morning, Banterang unexpectedly stood in front of Surati’s tent. Banterang intentionally did not tell anything, as he wanted to give a surprise to his wife. Nonetheless, as he stood in front of her tent, Banterang was the one finding himself in shock for a dagger was lying beside Surati, but it was not the dagger of Blambangan Kingdom. Banterang recognized all the heirlooms and daggers of Blambangan Kingdom. Banterang also knew that it was a Balinese dagger which was not in the palace previously. It meant the dagger had just made its way into the palace, when Banterang

was not in the palace. He began to understand the meaning behind Ki Empu Dharma's request for his presence.

Suspicion burst into Banterang's mind.

"Surati, my wife," he called.

Surati was startled. She knew that voice. She was taking a nap that she did know what was happening outside her tent; while Banterang was also capable of entering the palace without making a sound.

"Your Majesty," Surati shrieked.

"Surati, what did you do when I was not in the palace?"

If she was shocked before, now Surati's heart beat fast. If Surati was not a strong woman, she might have fainted. It was unusual for Banterang to call her simply by the name Surati. She knew Banterang was suspicious and angry; something that had never happened before.

"I'm waiting for you in this tent. I had no desire to go into the palace prior to your return."

"Where did you get that dagger from?"

"Ah, so you know, Surati, that dagger is the problem."

All took its course beyond Surati's expectation. Had she known Banterang's return, she would have had the time to explain the presence of that dagger. Things wouldn't have gone this way. But now everything had spiraled out of her control.

"It was given by a healer as an offering and amulet to treat my illness, your Majesty," told Surati, desperately trying to explain.

"I do not believe it. You have been involved in conspiracy to kill me. You have been planning this even since from the beginning. You planned this long time ago, since you were still in Klungkung."

Surati burst into tears. There is no pain more excruciating than the disbelief felt by someone she was deeply in love with.

"That is not true, my dear husband Banterang. Not true at all. As I have told you, the dagger was only an offering from a healer. It is the truth, your Majesty.

"Ah, what a codswallop! Don't you ever think that I have no idea that the healer is indeed Rake, your brother. You have been planning this right from the start." Banterang remained speaking in high-pitched voice, as he was also shocked and wondering why Surati had the heart to betray him. Nothing is more painful to one's heart when the person they truly loved was caught to have betrayed them.

“You don’t love me. You are just pretending,” Banterang said this in strident and shrill voice.

Surati’s crying was sounded to be even more heartbreaking. It never crossed her mind that she would be accused of not being in love with Banterang and was just pretending; whereas her love, heart, and life were completely dedicated for Banterang.

“My dear husband Banterang, I have never done anything wrong.”

Banterang’s curiosity was blocking off his common sense from listening the answers told by Surati. Banterang moved closer towards Surati, but not with intention to do anything bad to Surati; rather, he was about to take the dagger. This, however, was mistaken by Surati. She thought Banterang wanted to punish her. Within a few seconds, Surati must make a decision: to run away or surrender herself to Banterang’s punishment, though she was sure that she was not guilty.

Reflexively, Surati took a stance. How on earth she gained the strength that made her had the courage to do this, remained a mystery.

Within few seconds, Surati pulled the dagger out, leading to Banterang’s misunderstanding. Within a few seconds, Banterang thought that Surati was about to either kill herself or himself.

Only three steps away from each other, they came to a halt.

“Oooo, my beloved Blambangan King, my dearly husband, I do not know what to do. If the dagger is a problem, then let this dagger prove whether or not I am guilty. I shall stab myself with this dagger. If later my blood flows with pungent fishy odor, it means that your Majesty’s allegations are true.”

“My dear wife, Surati, do not do it!” Banterang screamed.

“On the contrary, if my flowing blood has a sweet fragrance, your Majesty must believe that your allegations are wrong.”

In a quick movement, Surati stabbed herself. There was no intention at all to commit suicide. In a panic and anguish from accusation of not loving Banterang and treason, her heartache made her take drastic and convincing action.

The dagger was held in her right hand, making her to automatically stab her left side chest. Banterang promptly caught and held Surati in his arms.

“My dear wife, Surati, what are you doing?” cried Banterang.

Blood came out of Surati’s body, flowing rapidly into the lake next to the palace, Lake Luh Kanti. This is the blood of the woman who prayed and meditated day by day, creating miracle from her body: the endlessly-flowing blood.

Banterang became frozen and bewildered. His grief was inconsolable. Why did she go panic like that? He wept for his badly wounded wife on his lap.

“My dear wife, I was wrong. Forgive me, I love you so much. I was going to take the dagger and throw it away to the lake to get the problem sorted out.

“My dear, beloved husband. Forgive me, I was scared and anxious. I was not ready to accept what you said. Forgive me, believe me, I love you and there is not even a single trace of betrayal within me, but this is the destiny written by the Great Gods. We have to accept it.”

Surati’s body was getting weaker and weaker. Banterang became even more bewildered. He hugged and carried Surati’s body. And before he even knew it, he walked towards the lake, to where Surati’s blood was flowing to.

Despite being in the state of bewilderment, Banterang could smell the fragrant scent drawn off by the breeze.

Banterang unwittingly muttered that few people who witnessed the incident heard it.

“My dear wife, it smells pleasant (*wangi*). It smells pleasant (*wangi*). *Banyuwangi, Banyuwangi*, my dear Surati.

Banyu (water). *Wangi* (pleasant-smelling). *Banyuwangi* = pleasant-smelling water.

Banterang held Surati's body in his arms and then went circling Lake Luh Kanti for a few times, and kept on saying: "*Banyu wangi. Banyu wangi. Banyu wangi.* Nowadays, the region is named 'Banyuwangi'. It is located at the eastern edge of East Java.