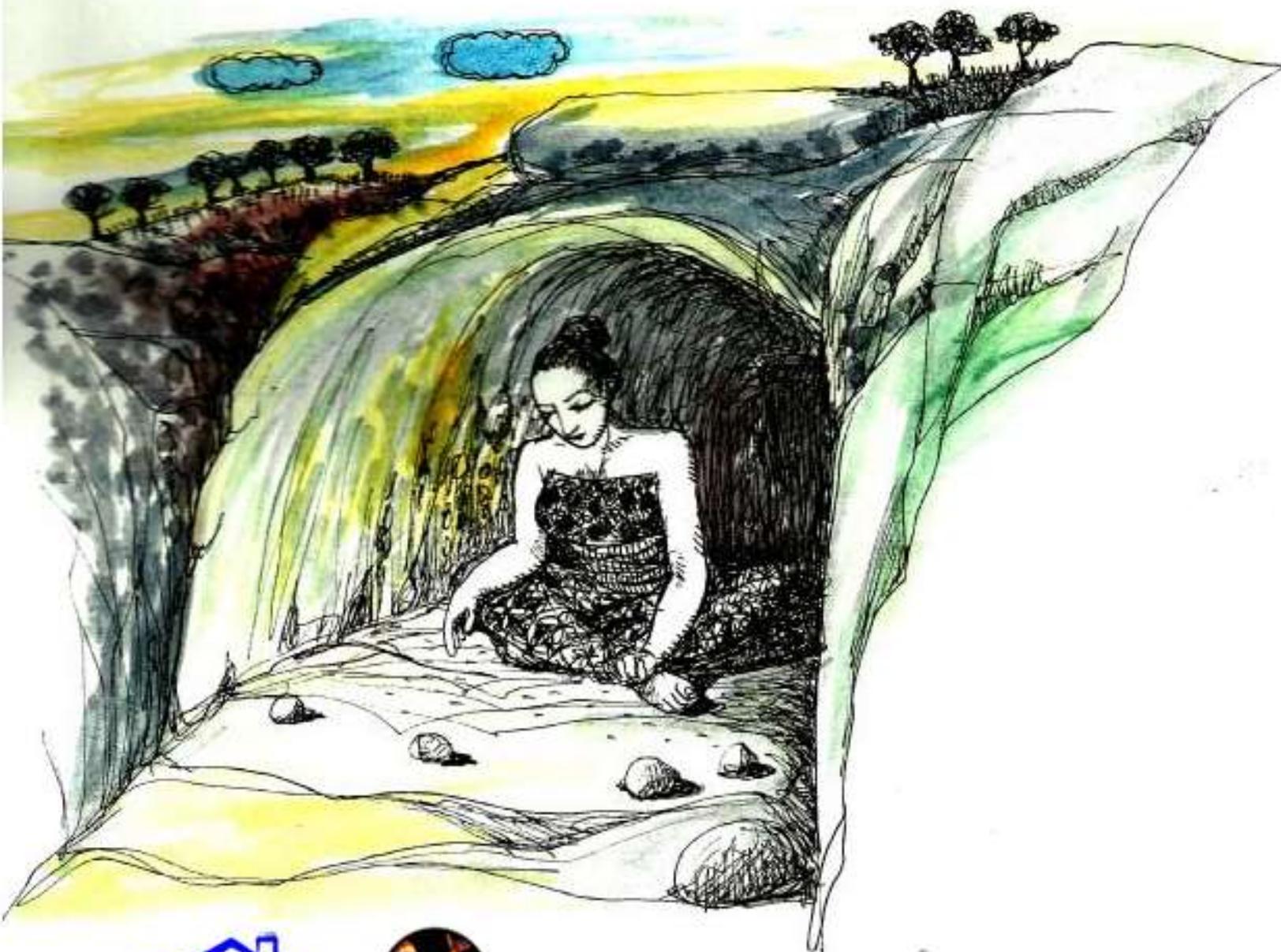


Rusdi

THE MIRACLE OF LOVE IN TEARS



BUMAH LITERASI SUMENEP



LONTAR MADURA

THE MIRACLE OF LOVE IN TEARS

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Prince Saccadiningrat was crowned the King of Sumenep. His good-looking, fine, and charismatic countenance sparked sympathy in abundance. The people respected and obeyed their king. King Saccadiningrat and his queen endeavored to be just and respected leaders who could lead their people to the most prosperous life. Wealthy, safe, and peaceful people were the King Saccadiningrat's ideal.

"My dear queen, is there any of my people still living in poverty?" one evening, when the sky was in its reddish orange color, the king asked his queen when they were bantering back and forth.

"If something is not right, there must be a report, Sire," the queen responded.

"I am nevertheless not so sure. I want to visit every place myself," the king looked unsure.

"In that case, I will go with you, Sire!"

"*I'm sure you will, ...*" the king responded while staring at the queen with an affectionate gaze. The queen just gave a sweet smile.

Time went by. Sumenep people's prosperity was at its highest level. There was no one went hungry. There were not any people who lived poor. Everyone lived peacefully as desired. It was the kind of life everyone would want. It was such a fine period.

As a consummation of the joy, a beautiful baby girl was born. It was a matchless happiness. To express his gratitude, King Saccadiningrat hosted a party for seven days and seven nights. The princess who was named Raden Ajeng Pottre Koneng had given a particular delight into the king's heart. Love and affection were showered upon the only child. All hopes were pinned on her.

The princess, Pottre Koneng, grew up into a beautiful young lady. Her beauty was well known the entire King Saccadiningrat's territory, in fact, in neighboring kingdoms as well. Pottre Koneng's face resembled the moonlight over a lake at night.

"My daughter, Pottre Koneng. I pin so much hope on you, my dear," one day the king spoke to his daughter.

"His Majesty, my dear father, may God grant me favor so that I can be a religious and dutiful daughter," Pottre Koneng humbly responded.

"Be a devoted child, my dear daughter!"

"If God wills, Father!"

The princess' was outstandingly beautiful. With curled eyelashes, her eyes shone like the full moon. Her eyebrows were so fine like dancing neem leaves. Her gorgeous lips were like a blossoming rose in the morning. She let her wavy black hair down. Her slender figure resembled a curved rainbow on the horizon. Everyone who came across her would look at her in amazement. Her face gleamed like the moonlight in the dark night sky. Her beautiful voice was akin to bird songs during the sunrise. Indeed, Pottre Koneng's exceptional beauty had made Sumenep famous throughout the universe.

The princess of Sumenep grew up into a young woman. She behaved modestly despite her royalty. She was devoid of arrogance. She would

befriend everyone indiscriminately. Because of her courteousness, she was admired by the people of Sumenep.

One day, King Saccadiningrat had a conversation with her daughter. “My dear daughter, when will you get married and give me grandchildren?” the king spoke in a slightly discontented expression.

“Father, I am not interested in getting married indeed. My only desire is to devote myself to God and love my people,” the princess answered.

“Are you really unwilling to grow a family, child?” “Yes indeed, father.” Pottre Koneng answered firmly.

King Saccadiningrat could only moan. He could not understand why his daughter refused to have her own family regardless of so many princes who had come to win her heart. Pottre Koneng’s decision was fixed. She did not have any desire to take in marriage and she could not explain the reason.

“Father, allow me to live as an ascetic on in the Cave of Payudan,” one day, Pottre Koneng asked her father permission to have an ascetic life.

“Pardon? To live as an ascetic?” The king was thunderstruck. He could not believe what he just heard.

“Yes, father. I want to draw closer to God,” the princess explained her reason.

“No. I will not let you go there alone!” The king stressed.

“But, father. I really want to meditate,” the princess pleaded.

“I cannot let you go alone. I love you, child! Indeed, you are my only hope!” Yet, The king did not allow his daughter to live as an ascetic. His decision certainly did not come from lack of love toward his daughter. On the

contrary, the king loved her daughter so much that he was worried something bad could happen to her.

Pottre Koneng did not cease making effort. Her enthusiasm in asceticism akin to Prophet Muhammad in the Cave of Hira had went deep in her mind. She continued to persuade her father. She kept convincing her father that her decision was the right one, that getting closer to God was the best decision.

Her effort turned out well. King Saccadiningrat eventually let the princess go on condition that she would go with someone for company. There had to be someone to protect her. Pottre Koneng was beyond happy upon obtaining his father permission.

“Thank you, father. Please, pray for me that I will be enlightened there,” tears fell down her face the minute she said goodbye before leaving the palace. She also asked for the queen’s blessing. Her tears ran down once she hugged her mother.

The Cave of Payudan was a place that was barely touched by humans. There were thick bushes around the place. It was not easy and needed some effort to reach the cave entrance. Pottre Koneng’s first trial was so many plants with thorns along a steep path leading to the cave. Her smooth skin was covered by cuts and scratches, but she did not have any regret about her decision whatsoever. Her strong will to be an eremite had motivated her to keep her effort. Finally, accompanied by three guards, Pottre Koneng arrived at the Cave of Payudan.

Pottre Koneng did her austere life by abstaining from food, staying awake, and meditating. In the complete silence, she attempted to draw herself nearer to God since only by being close to God she could find peace. She left material things to achieve enlightenment as the provision of the hereafter.

Days became weeks and weeks became months. She did not realized that she had lived as an ascetic for two or three years. Suddenly, she felt so sleepy and called the guards.

“Guard, please be more alert. I feel so sleepy. I am going to take a short sleep!” Pottre Koneng gave command to her three guards.

“Yes, your Highness!” A guard answered.

Before long, Pottre Koneng was sound asleep. She smiled in her sleep. It was a truly peaceful and happy smile. She suddenly woke because she was startled by an unusual dream. She dreamed of a very handsome man who came to her. The man, Prince Adipoday, had made her scared. In her dream, they had a consummation like husband and wife. Pottre Koneng was concerned that something would happen to her.

After the terrifying dream, Pottre Koneng went home with her guards. She foreboded that a misfortune would happen. An undesirable circumstance would happen to her but she was already spiritually strong. Trained by countless meditation, she was physically and mentally prepared to welcome any ordeal.

Arriving at the palace of Sumenep, Pottre Koneng was welcome by the king with great happiness. King Saccadiningrat expressed his gratitude for her return home. He hugged his only daughter. Crying tears of joy soon filled the air of the Sumenep palace’s veranda.

“Thank God, my child! You come back safe and unhurt!” The king spoke while sobbing.

“Thank you father, mother,” Pottre Koneng could not hold her tears either. The three gave each other a long hug.

Days went by. Pottre Koneng was still shocked by the dream she had in the Cave of Payudan. She felt something different was happening to her.

She felt that her body became different. Her belly got bigger. There were strange vibration in her. Pottre Koneng could not make any sense. How could a dream make her pregnant?

An uproar ensued. Yes, an uproar had emerged in the palace of Sumenep. King Saccadiningrat was furious to find her daughter condition. He would not tolerate her daughter's adultery. He was extremely angry. Who dared do such reckless act to her daughter?

"Who has tarnished you, Pottre Koneng?" The king's face turned red. He was burning with anger. Pottre Koneng could only look down. She had no idea what to say nor what to do. All she could do was jut squeezing her own fingers and trying to pluck up the courage.

"No body, father. Honestly, I never did what you have accused me of!"

"Liar! You tell me now who dared do this reckless thing, child!"

"I speak the truth, father. I am not lying. There was no one dared touch me!" "Scoundrel!" The king furiously slapped Pottre Koneng. Blood came out of her lips.

Tears ran down her face. She however tried to look at her father's eyes.

"I swear to God, father. This wound and blood do not hurt as much as your heartless accusation to your own daughter. You believe your own emotion more than the dream I have had." Pottre Koneng unintentionally talked about the handsome man who came in her dream, but the inexplicable story failed to calm her father down.

"Guard! Send her to prison!" Still in anger, King Saccadiningrat ordered his guards to put his daughter behind bars.

The news of Pottre Koneng's pregnancy immediately spread out. It sparked controversy. Some people thought that it was impossible for Pottre Koneng to get pregnant without fornication, but others had

different views. Was not she protected by three guards in her hermitage? It was hard to believe that such a well-mannered person like Pottre Koneng would do such misconduct.

King Saccadiningrat was about to give her death penalty. After listening to the queen and the three guards who told about Pottre Koneng in her hermitage, the king finally decided to banish her. King Saccadiningrat did not want to see her face anymore.

The brokenhearted princess accepted her father's punishment. She spoke to herself, "I know who I am. I am not Mary who gave birth to Prophet Jesus. I am just a king's daughter who has gotten a misfortune and must bear it. But I am sure that I am not a loose woman." She pressed her own chest that still felt hurt when the words "loose" came out her beautiful lips.

A simple hut, away from the palace, was made for Pottre Koneng. In that place, with her loyal lady in waiting, she spent her days looking forward to the birth of a son. It was a truly beautiful dream. She wanted to see the handsome, strong-looking, and miraculous man again. The figure of Prince Adipoday kept going in her mind. However, there was nothing she could do. It was just a dream, an illusion that would never become reality.

In the ninth month, Pottre Koneng was ready to deliver her baby. Without pain, bleeding, even a navel string, a cute handsome baby came out and cried aloud. She kissed her baby gently. With tears falling down her face, Pottre Koneng talked to her baby.

"My child, I love you so much. You are my sweetheart in this lonely place. Please, forgive me, my!"

She really wanted to keep hugging her son but her son was in danger. She was concerned that her father would send someone to kill the innocent baby. With a heavy heart, Pottre Koneng said to her main.

“Ma’am, bring this child to the woods. Leave him in a safe place. Be careful! Do not let anyone know!”

The maid obeyed Pottre Koneng’s order. She did what Pottre Koneng had told. Sneakily, the maid carried the newborn baby to a safe place, deep in the forest. Under a shady tree, she put the baby who slept peacefully. She made a shelter out of tree branches to protect the baby from dangerous things. After ensuring the baby’s safety, the maid went back to meet Pottre Koneng.

“How was it, ma’am?” Pottre Koneng impatiently asked the maid.

“I have done it, your highness. He was safe in far away place,” the maid answered the question while trying to hide her concern.

“Thank you, ma’am!”

A few days later, Pottre Koneng wanted to visit the Cave of Payudan. She wanted to go back to her hermitage and meditate again. She then asked her maid to go to the cave with her. The Cave of Payudan was the best place to draw closer to God.

Pottre Koneng enthusiastically departed to the Cave of Payudan. The met all kinds of obstacles and difficulties. Thick bushes, solid rocks, and steep path were particularly challenging. Pottre Koneng and her maid kept walking, heading to the cave. With their remaining energy, Pottre Koneng and her maid finally reached their destination. Afterward, she began her meditation.

After a long meditation, suddenly Pottre Koneng felt so sleepy. She immediately fell asleep. In her sleep, the handsome prince who once visited

had come again. It was a coincidence of faith. Pottre Koneng tried to control her desire, but her mind and soul could not do anything. Longing and love filled her heart. She really yearned for Prince Adipoday.

“Come here, darling. I really miss you!”

“I miss you too, my love,” Pottre Koneng responded and was unable to control her desire.

“Stay with me please!” the prince pleaded, but Pottre Koneng did not give any response. She just gave him a smile with her beautiful rosy lips. It was such a beautiful moment.

Potre Koneng suddenly woke up from her sleep and dream. She was confused. Her eyes examined all over but found no one except her loyal maid who was sleeping next to her. Where did the prince go? No body knew. Who was the handsome prince actually? No body knew. In the darkness of the cave, Pottre Koneng sat with an unhappy feeling. She kept thinking the dream that came again. She was worried that something would happen to her again.

“Ma’am, wake up, please!” Pottre Koneng woke her maid up.

“Yes, yes!” The maid stutteringly got up. “What is going on, your highness?” The maid answered while still half-awake.

“I just had the dream again, Ma’am. The same dream.” Pottre Koneng told her maid who was her only company.

“Oh, the dream!” The maid calmly responded. “Do not think about it. It was just a dream, your highness.”

“No, ma’am. This is something that will happen just like the last year’s incident. I am nervous, ma’am.”

“Do not worry, your highness. Everthing has been controlled by faith.”

The princess' concern was true. Hearing that her daughter was pregnant again, King Saccadiningrat was infuriated. He ordered his minister to bring her daughter back. Before the queen and the royal household, the king expressed his anger.

“Come here, you dirty woman!” The king's angry voice roared like a thunder. With face looking downward, Pottre Koneng approached her father. She could not say anything. She remained silent in her misery. Pottre Koneng never meant to do wrongdoing. She never thought of having an affair. This was just her faith.

Anger lurked inside the king's heart. He was controlled by his rage. He then took a big whip. Furiously, he lashed her daughter's back. Once, twice, thrice, many times. Pottre Koneng kept herself motionless in her miserable silence. She felt the hurt inside her sad soul.

“Father, your whip is nothing compared to you accusation that I am a sinner.” In tears, Pottre Koneng begged before her father and mother. Tears ran down her face while she was heartbreakingly cried. King Saccadiningrat suddenly realized that he had done something wrong. Pottre Koneng was his soul, his sweetheart, and his heart beat. He should not have done that to his own flesh. King Saccadiningrat stopped whipping and then hugged her daughter.

“I am sorry, my child, I am sorry.” The king cried while hugging his daughter. He was sorry that he had done too far. He should not do such merciless act. Everthing had been set by faith. It was impossible that his daughter whom he raised would do such misbehavior. This was God's will.

Pottre Koneng felt peace in her father's arms. Her mother also joined the emotional and tearful moment. They had been united in circumstance that they had to embrace. No matter what, Pottre Koneng was their own blood.

Finally, Pottre Koneng went home to the palace of Sumenep. She lived peacefully with the love of her father, mother, and maids. She would have a beautiful life, the life that would become her usual days.

Far away from the palace, in the island of Poday (now Sepudi), Prince Adipoday was preparing himself to propose to Pottre Koneng. Then, the love story of Pottre Koneng and Prince Adipoday was complete. They lived harmoniously in the palace of Sumenep. Adipoday became the twelfth king of Sumenep. After Adipoday's passing, his first son, Jokotole, ascended the throne and became the 13th king of Sumenep.



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