

Example text: Cultural folktales

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Many years ago in West Java there was a beautiful and prosperous kingdom, where the people were ruled by a wise king known as His Majesty Prabu. Everyone was happy – except for the King’s wife, who was despondent due to her inability to provide His Majesty with an heir.

With his wife refusing to consider adoption, His Majesty Prabu decided that there was only one course of action left. By the light of the midnight moon, he ventured alone deep into the jungle. Finding a secluded spot, he sat down and prayed.

Every night for a month he returned to the same spot, begging God for a child. At the end of the month his prayers were answered. The Queen delivered the joyous news that she was expecting a child.

Early the following year, the Queen gave birth to a beautiful, baby girl. The King and his wife were overwhelmed with happiness.

As their daughter grew up, she was spoiled beyond belief. So much so, that if she didn’t get what she wanted, she would become very angry.

For the Princess’s 18th birthday, the King and Queen were going to hold a festival in her honour. As the guests began to arrive, they brought with them many beautiful presents: gifts of gold, silk cloth and jewels.

The King and Queen decided that they too should give their daughter a special gift. They took some of the gold and precious gems to a goldsmith.

The King said to the goldsmith, “Make my daughter a sparkling necklace, one that compares to her own unblemished beauty.”

“It would be my pleasure Your Majesty!” the goldsmith replied. So he set to work night and day, creating the most stunning necklace the world had ever seen.

The work was intricate and delicate. When it was complete, the jewels in the necklace seemed to capture and hold the rays of sunlight within them.

On the day of the Princess’s birthday, people from near and far gathered at the palace. They cheered when the King and Queen appeared with their daughter. His Majesty Prabu carefully handed the Princess a small, silken pillow. On it was draped the wonderful, jewelled necklace.

As he placed it gently around her graceful neck, the King said, “My beloved daughter, on this your 18th birthday, I present this gift to you from your parents and your people.”

When the Princess looked down at the necklace, her eyes narrowed and her smile became thin and sharp.

“This is a piece of junk! It’s ugly! I won’t accept it!” she shouted so that all could hear.

She tore the necklace from her neck and threw it to the ground. The beautiful necklace lay broken at her feet, the precious gems scattered across the floor.

The people of the kingdom stood in stunned silence. Never did they believe that their Princess would act in such a cruel and heartless way. The only sounds that could be heard were the muffled sobs of the Queen crying tears of heartbreak and humiliation. Then the people too began to cry. Then the Earth began to cry.

Suddenly the Earth’s tears bubbled to the surface, making a pool of water. The pool became larger and larger, eventually engulfing the entire palace