



Is it Cooked Yet?
Witaru Emi
Hasas Citra Adiningsih



Tomorrow is a special day. My grandpa will be appointed as a customary leader. Everyone is busy. Including me!



"Hasna, I want to use that wok to cook rendang," Mother says.



Wow, I love rendang! Especially with buffalo meat. It's a very special dish.

"When is the rendang done?" I ask.



“Rendang needs to be cooked for eight hours,
” Mother answers.

Hmm, is eight hours long or short? I count on
my fingers. The rendang will be ready at five
in the afternoon.

What should I do while waiting? I know! “
Mother, give me the stirring spoon please,” I
say.



Stir! Stir! The coconut milk is swirling around.



Why isn't it boiling yet? It's taking so long.



Maybe if you stir it faster, it boils faster.



"That's too fast, Hasna! The coconut milk will spill," says Mother.

Why doesn't the coconut milk boil quickly? Maybe the fire is not big enough. I should increase the firewood.

"Hasna, the food will burn," Mother says.

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She drags me away from the outdoor kitchen towards the traditional house.



Mother asks me to decorate the tray. I choose colorful fabrics. I arrange them like banners. This tray is called dulang. It is for delivering food. Usually the women carry the dulang on their heads. They walk in a line to the traditional house.



I can also carry a dulang. I put the dulang on my head and walk slowly.

"The dulang will be brought tomorrow, Hasna. The rendang isn't even ready yet. Be patient, Hasna," says Mother.

Oh right, the rendang! I have to go to the kitchen now.



The coconut milk is now boiling. Gurgle, gurgles!

"Let's put the meat in. Now!" I exclaim. I really can't wait to eat buffalo rendang.

"Have patience, Hasna. The rendang will be cooked. Go play outside in the meantime," Mother says.



Outside is more colorful. The banners are twirling. Wow, my brother Amir will play a percussion instrument called gandang tambuo.



I love the sound they make. Especially when they are beaten together.



I immediately hit the gandang tambuo. Dung, dung, dung!

"Be patient, Hasna. We'll hit the tambuo together later. Now I have to put up the umbrella," says Amir.



I help Amir to speed things along. Where is the umbrella going to be set up?



"We need to put it up in front of the traditional house," says Amir.

"Just put it here, now!" I say as I pull the umbrella.

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Thud! The umbrella falls down.



Ah, my stomach is rumbling. I remember rendang again. Is the rendang already done? I wonder what time it is ...



... when I hear the afternoon call to prayer,
Zuhr.



I know what time it is now!



Look, the meat has been added. "Stir faster!" I exclaim. "No, don't! The meat will fall apart. Go eat first," Mother tells me.



The dish is not rendang yet. It still has too much liquid. We can already eat it, but I prefer to wait. I'd better drink a lot. Glug, glug, glug.

Wait, where is Amir going?



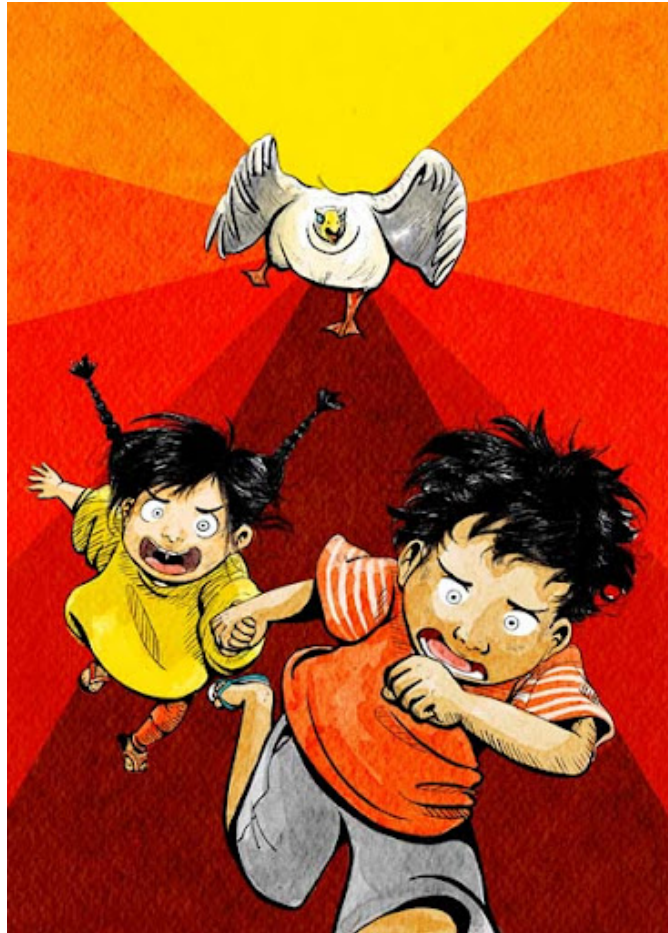
"I'm getting the talempong," he explains. I like the talempong instrument too. "I'm coming too! Push me now!"



I can imagine the sound of talempong accompanied by gandang tambuo. It must be so lively. I want to hear it now. Gong! Gong! Quack! Wait, why does it sound weird?



Hey, that's the grumpy goose. It looked straight at me. Uh oh, that's not good!



"Run!" My brother screams. "Hide quickly!"



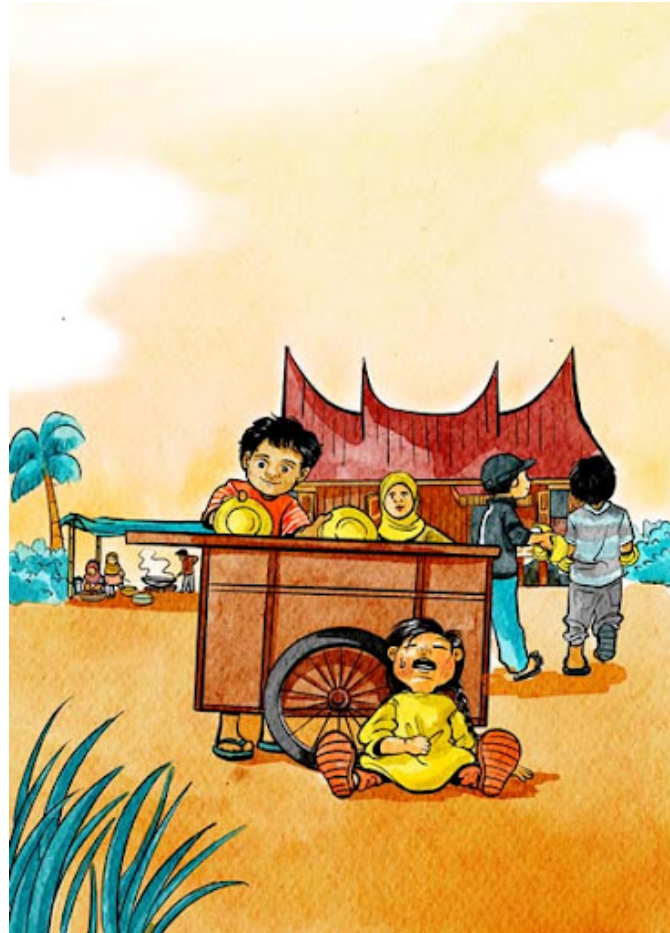
Rumble, rumble! Ouch, my stomach is rumbling. What if the goose hears me? "Brother, let's run now," I whisper. "Later. We should wait now," Amir stops me.



I was about to stand up, but Amir pulls my hand.

"Wait!" he says.

I peek out from behind the bush. The goose is walking away. I follow Amir sneakily towards the wagon.



We are safe, but my stomach is rumbling more and more. Is the rendang cooked? I hear the call to prayer. It is time for the late afternoon prayer. That means it will take another hour and a half before the rendang is cooked. Ugh, it's still a long time.

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"I was looking everywhere for you. You haven't eaten, Hasna," Mother says. "I want to eat rendang, but it's not cooked," I reply.



Mother says that the rendang is actually ready now. She has deliberately cooked the rendang until it is drier. That is why it needed eight hours.



Mother smiles as she see me eating well. This rendang is delicious. Everyone will love it. " Let's invite everyone to eat together. Now," I say. Mother and Amir look at each other, then exclaim simultaneously, "Tomorrow, Hasna. Not now."

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Finally, the day comes. My grandfather is appointed as a customary leader.



Rendang is a specialty dish from Minangkabau, West Sumatra, that requires six to eight hours of cooking.



It can actually be eaten once the meat is tender. It is called "gulai" if it still has a lot of sauce, and "kalio" if the sauce has shrunk and started to brown.



When cooking rendang, constant stirring is necessary so that the oil and water content in the coconut milk does not separate (it is called "split coconut milk") and the dish does not burn. If the coconut milk "splits", the dish will not be rendang. It will look and taste different.



This book development project focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (abbreviated as STEM) themes in children's daily lives. This project involves almost all female writers, illustrators, editors, and designers. This book was developed through a book development workshop held in collaboration with Litara Foundation and The Asia Foundation through the Let's Read program with the support of Estee

Lauder Companies Charity Foundation (ELCCF). Let's Read is a digital library platform with a collection of thousands of children's storybooks that can be accessed easily and for free. Mentoring along with story, text, illustration, and design editing are carried out by the Litara Foundation. The Litara Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting literacy through children's books.

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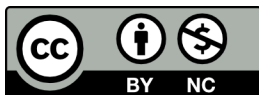
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Original Story

Is it Cooked Yet?. Author: Witaru Emi. Illustrator: Hasas Citra Adiningsih. Editor: Benny Rhamdani . Contributor: Fanny Santoso, Litara Foundation.

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