



**The Sarindi series
by Janine M. Fraser**

TEACHING NOTES WRITTEN BY CHRIS SARANDIS

ISBNs:

***Sarindi and the Lucky Bird* - 9780207199141;**

***Sarindi and the Lucky Buddha* - 9780732287757;**

***Sarindi's Dragon Kite* - 9780732287764**

The books

Sarindi and the Lucky Bird

Sarindi thinks that luck is like a mischievous monkey, playing hide-and-seek. And luck seems to be hiding itself from Sarindi and his family. When Sarindi's father has an accident and loses his job as a becak driver, he decides they must go to the bird market and buy a Lucky Bird. Then perhaps their luck will change.

Sarindi's mother doesn't believe in luck like that, and she has an idea of her own. Does the magical song of the Lucky Bird change their luck, as Sarindi's father hopes? Does it change Sarindi's luck at marbles? Or do they make their own luck in the end?

Sarindi and the Lucky Buddha

Sarindi is certain he will never be unlucky again when he wins the lucky marble from Jaya. But luck is more mischievous than a monkey. When Sarindi's mother becomes sick, Sarindi thinks that all the bad luck in the world has come to visit. He thinks there must be something he can do to help her get better.

This time, the song of the Lucky Bird won't work, so he visits all the sacred places he knows. At each, Sarindi prays for the good health of his mother, but which prayer will succeed?

Sarindi's Dragon Kite

It's Sarindi's birthday, and what he wants more than anything else is the multi-coloured Dragon Kite he sees in the market. He thinks he's the luckiest boy when he wakes up and sees the kite, and he can't wait to go to the beach fly it with his father.

But later that day Sarindi wonders if his luck has deserted him. A huge earthquake has flattened the nearby town of Bantul, where Sarindi's cousins live, and Sarindi and his father must travel there immediately to help. There is no time to fly kites.

Will Sarindi's cousins survive? And will he ever feel lucky enough to fly his beautiful kite?

About the author

Janine Fraser's books have been shortlisted and won various awards. Her books include *Sarindi and the Lucky Bird*, which was shortlisted in the NSW Premier's Awards and the CBCA Awards Young Readers category in 2002, and *Abdullah's Butterfly*, which has been translated into several languages. Janine lives in Riddell's Creek, Melbourne.

About the illustrator

Kim Gamble (*Sarindi and the Lucky Bird*) was born in Sydney. He began at the age of 36 to illustrate stories for children. His first assignment was for the *School Magazine* and it was there he met Anna Fienberg, with whom he has since produced more than twenty books. Kim illustrated the first book in the Sarindi series, *Sarindi and the Lucky Bird*.

About the illustrator

Elise Hurst (*Sarindi and the Lucky Buddha* and *Sarindi's Dragon Kite*) is a full-time artist and writer who lives in Melbourne, Victoria. She has over fifty books to her credit, including *The Night Garden* which was shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards in 2008. Elise illustrated two of the three books in the Sarindi series.

Themes

Luck

- What is luck and how do we measure it?
- Why do some people seem particularly lucky while others don't?
- Is there always a positive and negative side to everything that happens? Discuss.
- Why might one person think something is lucky while another has a negative view of the same thing?

- Describe a situation in which you felt lucky or unlucky?
- Name some ways in which Sarindi is luckier than some in his home town.
- What do you think is the difference between a want and a need? Give examples.
- What are some different ways to solve problems? Give examples. Which ways work best for you and why?
- In Sarindi's situation, was it luck or something else that improved his family's circumstances?
- Discuss the following quote: *'Luck is like a mischievous monkey playing hide-and-seek, and who can tell where it will hide.'*

Family

- Describe Sarindi's family circumstances.
- How well off are Sarindi's family compared to many of the people in their home town?
- In Sarindi's family, how do they improve their life after Sarindi's father loses his job and his mother is faced with an illness?
- How important is a comfortable house, food and work for Sarindi and his family - and for all people?
- In what ways did Sarindi feel that he and his family were lucky or unlucky throughout the three stories? Choose one or two incidents to describe the different reaction he had to each? Give reasons for your answer.

Faith

- In an attempt to help his mother get better, Sarindi and his father are prepared to do anything it takes. To this end, which religions does Sarindi engage in his efforts to ensure his mother's improvement and overall what did he hope each religion would offer him?
- Hindu, Christianity, Buddhist, and the Muslim faiths are all accessed by Sarindi in an attempt to help his mother – create a project on one of these religions outlining the beliefs and celebrations unique to it or create a comparative chart to show the similarities and difference between two or more of them.

Grief and loss/Trauma

- In *Sarindi and the Lucky Buddha*, Sarindi experienced a great deal of worry as a result of his mother's ill health. How did he deal with this worry and what situations or interactions with others increased his sense of hope for her improvement?
- In *Sarindi's Dragon Kite*, Sarindi expressed grief at the loss of his cousins as a result of the earthquake. What was the pattern of his grief and which things helped him to improve his outlook for the future?

- How were Sarindi's feeling for Agi's personal loss expressed in his behaviour towards his cousin, and more generally in the last part of the story?
- Talk about experiences of grief or empathy for the pain experienced by others such as the loss or death of a pet to engage the children in discussions about their own feelings and those of their peers or family.

Natural disasters

- Find about earthquakes and how and where they mostly occur. Also research how countries prepare for them and what measures are put in place to prevent major damage.

<http://www.historyforkids.org/scienceforkids/geology/earthquakes/>

<http://www.fema.gov/kids/quake.htm>

Location/setting

Yogyakarta and Bantul, Java Indonesia

- Who's been to Indonesia?
- What is it like?
- Learn and share some Indonesian words. See activity sheet at the end of these notes. <http://www.expat.or.id/info/bahasa.html>
- Find the island of Java and the cities mentioned in the books on a map and create a project on one aspect of the island such as daily life, culture, architecture including religious monuments, transport, education, food etc. See: <http://indonesia.elga.net.id/> and <http://www.katw.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=57> and <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/asia/indonesia/flag/>

Activities

- Project topics: Indonesia, Batik, cycle rickshaws and other transport, Indonesian food, Luck (see ideas below), Religions and different interpretations of faith (Buddhism, Hindu, Christianity, Muslim).
- Make some batik cloth and then use it to make a pencil case or purse.
- Do a class mural of the bird market. See the following link for images: http://www.google.com.au/images?hl=en&safe=off&rlz=1G1GGLQ_ENAU373&q=indonesia%20bird%20market&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&biw=1139&bih=1266
- Paint a picture or mural of an Indonesian village.
- Becak (cycle rickshaw) – build one out of craft materials or do a watercolour painting or collage of a decorative becak.
- Kutut (Lucky Bird) – paint a picture of the Lucky Bird on Sarindi's veranda in its cage.

- Paint or sketch your impressions of the Buddhist temple that Sarindi visits. Try and include some sense of the scale of the monument in comparison to Sarindi's and other people's size.
- Luck – Discuss and research sayings, images or superstitious beliefs which are thought to bring good or bad luck.
- Indonesian cooking <http://allrecipes.com.au/recipes/indonesian-recipes.aspx?page=1> and Nasi Goreng recipe: <http://www.taste.com.au/recipes/12620/nasi+goreng>

Discussion Questions

The following questions can be used for comprehension purposes, or to initiate discussion that can move on to more complex theme and character questions.

Sarindi and the Lucky Bird

1. Through small group discussions, analyse the following sayings/beliefs and give an opinion on their truth and/or meaning: *'Luck is like a mischievous monkey, always playing hide-and-seek.'* *'Luck rides on the song of the Lucky Bird.'* *'There is as much luck in the sound of the wind blowing through the leaves of the great big tree as there is in song of the Lucky Bird.'* *'Luck is like a mischievous monkey. One moment it is sitting on your right shoulder chattering softly and nibbling on your hair, and the next moment it is jumping over on your left shoulder and biting you on the ear.'*
2. Initially, what caused Sarindi to feel lucky?
3. During a game with Jaya, what sorts of things did Sarindi do to try and increase his luck?
4. In an attempt to win Jaya's lucky marble with the gold streak, which of his father's sayings did Sarindi recall?
5. Despite feeling very lucky in some ways, why might Sarindi feel he needed Jaya's special marble to make him happy?
6. Why did Sarindi's father want a Kutut or Lucky Bird?
7. Why was Sarindi's mother against the idea of the Lucky Bird and what was her alternative suggestion?
8. How differently did Sarindi's parents' view his father's accident and the loss of his father's delivery work?
9. Why do you think Sarindi's mother doesn't believe in the concept of luck?
10. What caused Sarindi's father to worry and what did he believe might improve their circumstances?
11. Why was Sarindi's father so determined to get a Lucky Bird, despite being pestered to get an owl, a canary, monkey or chickens instead?

12. How was the Kutut finally chosen and what special treasure was revealed to Sarindi as he ran his fingers through some bird seed?
13. Despite having the Lucky Bird, why did Sarindi's family continue to worry?
14. How did Sarindi's family solve their problems and what was involved in the process?
15. How did the family come to the decision to improve the appearance of their becak and what happened once they began working on it?
16. How were the family's problems eventually resolved?

Sarindi and the Lucky Buddha

1. To what did Sarindi's mother attribute the family's comfortable circumstances?
2. How did Sarindi's mother and father differ in their opinions about their circumstances? What did Sarindi's father want from the Lucky Bird when his wife became sick?
3. Prior to his mother's illness, who did Sarindi believe was responsible for the family's good luck?
4. Which things did Sarindi and Jaya hope would lead to Sarindi's mother's improved health?
5. While visiting the Hindu temple of the goddess of many arms, how did Sarindi hope to improve his mother's chances of recovery?
6. Why did Sarindi go to the Church of the Holy Mother?
7. Why did Sarindi think his mother did not deserve to get sick?
8. At the mosque, what response did Sarindi receive when he asked: *'Why is it that God will only open his ears to hear the prayers of the people in a building, and at certain times of day?'*
9. List all the things that Sarindi believed would assist in his mother's recovery and discuss which you believe could be helpful and why?
10. Why did Sarindi's mother refuse to go the hospital?
11. On which condition did Sarindi's father agree to accompany Sarindi to the Buddhist temple?
12. How did Sarindi feel on his way to the Buddhist temple and what do you think contributed towards these feelings? What feelings did he experience when he reached the top dome of the temple?
13. Once he had touched the Lucky Buddha, how did Sarindi feel that his luck was already being realised?
14. How did the doctor respond when Sarindi asked his opinion on what had really helped to cure his mother?
15. Why do you think Sarindi planned to return the lucky marble to Jaya?

Sarindi's Dragon Kite

1. On his birthday, which secret did Sarindi keep from his father and what was his reason for doing so?
2. Following the earthquake, what bad news did Sarindi's father share with his family?
3. During the search for their cousins, what did Sarindi find amongst the rubble and how was it of future importance?
4. What kind of tune did Sarindi want the Lucky Bird to sing?
5. In hindsight, what did Sarindi realise had indicated that the earthquake was imminent?
6. How did Sarindi and his father learn of the loss of their cousins and why had Agi survived when her family had perished?
7. How did Sarindi feel immediately after arriving home from Bantul and then in the days and weeks that followed?
8. Why do you think Sarindi's mother thought it would be good for Agi to visit the place where her family were buried?
9. Describe Sarindi's mixed feelings about going to the beach.
10. Through his prayer, which promise did Sarindi make at his aunt's graveside?
11. Analyse Sarindi's thoughts and feelings as they rode away from the graveside towards the beach?
12. How did flying the dragon kite affect Sarindi?
13. Why was it so important for Sarindi to be able to pedal the becak and what was the significance?

Other books by the author

- *Fair Go!*
- *Abdullah's Butterfly*

Book Reviews written by children

http://www.yara-online.org/junior_reviews/sarindi_and_the_lucky_bird.htm

Books and links about Indonesia, folklore etc

<http://www.amazon.com/Indonesian-Folktales-Folklore-Margaret-MacDonald/dp/1563089092>

<http://www.expat.or.id/orgs/awakids.html>

http://www.asiabookroom.com/AsiaBookRoom/Children_Teenagers_Indonesia_Fiction.html

<http://www.katw.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=43&pname=Home&purl=index.cfm>

- *Indonesian Children's Favourite Stories* by Joan Suyenaga
- *The Adventures of Mouse Deer: Tales of Indonesia* by Aaron Shepard
- *Balinese Children's Favourite Stories* by Victor Mason

- *Go to Sleep, Gecko!: A Balinese Folktale* by Margaret Read McDonald

Becak

<http://www.expat.or.id/info/traditionaltransport.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport_in_Indonesia

Batik

<http://www.expat.or.id/info/batik.html>

<http://www.crafttown.com/batik.htm>

<http://www.squidoo.com/diy-batik-painting>

Worksheets

COMPARATIVE SHEET FOR SARINDI AND THE LUCKY BIRD

Give an opinion as to whether each situation named is lucky or unlucky and give reasons for your answer. Complete Numbers 2 to 4 and then find three more situations from the book to add to the column, giving answers for each.

	Situation or Action	Outcome	Lucky or unlucky – why or why not
1	Sarindi found a red and blue streaked marble in the seed pan at the bird market	Jaya won every game until his pockets bulged with Sarindi's marbles	Sarindi felt lucky at first but then unlucky because he lost all his marbles to Jaya.
2	Jaya used his gold-streaked marble to win many of Sarindi's marbles		
3	Sarindi lives in a house on a square with a large spreading tree		
4	Sarindi has a becak to ride in for free		
5			
6			
7			

ENGLISH/ INDONESIAN WORD MATCH

Say the words and then match the pairs by drawing a line from one side to the other

Answers & pronunciation:

<http://www.expat.or.id/info/bahasa.html>

ENGLISH	INDONESIAN
Good morning	Permisi
Goodbye	Selamat Pagi
Thank you	Apa kabar?
How are you?	Selamat tinggal
Excuse me	Terima kasih