

# LESSON 1

## NARRATIVE POETRY: TELLING STORIES THROUGH RHYMES

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## Path to Understanding

Have you ever heard a story told in the form of a song or poem? That's called narrative poetry! Narrative poetry is a special kind of poem that tells a story, but written in beautiful, rhythmic verses. It features characters, a setting, and a plot, similar to movies and fairy tales. This ancient form of storytelling originated from oral traditions, with people sharing poems about heroes, adventures, and life lessons. In the Philippines, epics like *Biag ni Lam-ang* and *Hudhud ni Aliguyon* are examples of narrative poetry, reflecting the values and beliefs of pre-colonial Filipinos.

Did You Know? Long ago, people didn't have books or the internet to share stories. Instead, they performed them aloud using poems! In the Philippines, we're lucky to have many famous examples of narrative poetry. One of these is "Ibong Adarna," a story about three brothers who go on an exciting adventure to find a magical bird that can heal their father, the king. Let's take a glimpse at the summary of "Ibong Adarna."

" **Once upon a time**, in the grand Kingdom of Berbania, there lived a noble<sup>1</sup> king named Fernando and his three sons: Don Pedro, Don Diego, and Don Juan. The kingdom<sup>2</sup> was known for its prosperity and peace, but dark clouds loomed over it when King Fernando fell gravely<sup>3</sup> ill. No physician could cure him, and despair spread throughout the land. It was then that an old wise man revealed the only remedy<sup>4</sup> to heal the king—a magical bird called the Ibong Adarna. This wondrous creature, with feathers that shimmered<sup>5</sup> like gold, silver, and precious gems, possessed a song so enchanting it could lull anyone into deep slumber. However, capturing this elusive bird was no simple task; it resided atop Mount Tabor, guarded by perilous trials.

The king summoned his sons one by one, entrusting them with the mission to bring back the Ibong Adarna. Each son vowed to fulfill their father's wish, beginning with the eldest, Don Pedro. Armed with courage and determination, he set off on his journey toward Mount Tabor. Along the way, he encountered various challenges but eventually reached the fabled tree where the bird perched<sup>6</sup>. As night fell, the Ibong Adarna sang its mesmerizing<sup>7</sup> melody, causing Don Pedro to fall asleep. When he awoke, he found himself transformed into stone—punished for failing to capture the bird.

**Distraught**<sup>8</sup> at his brother's fate, Don Diego, the second son, resolved to succeed where Don Pedro had failed. He embarked on the same treacherous<sup>9</sup> path, facing similar obstacles along the way. Upon reaching the sacred tree, he too succumbed to the bird's hypnotic song and suffered the same cruel punishment as his elder brother. News of both failures reached the youngest prince, Don Juan, who wept bitterly for his siblings' plight. Despite his youth, he felt compelled to try, driven by love for his father and brothers.

Don Juan began his quest, guided by humility and kindness. On his journey, he met a hermit who offered him wisdom and advice. "Be steadfast and pure of heart," the hermit<sup>10</sup> counseled. "Do not let greed or pride cloud your purpose." With these words echoing in his mind, Don Juan pressed onward until he finally arrived at Mount Tabor. There, beneath the towering<sup>11</sup> tree, he prepared himself for the arrival of the Ibong Adarna.

As twilight descended, the mystical bird appeared, glowing brilliantly<sup>12</sup> against the dark sky. Its voice rang out, sweet and haunting, weaving spells through the air. Remembering the hermit's warning, Don Juan fought against the drowsiness<sup>13</sup> overtaking him. Using sharp wit, he devised a plan: he cut his arm slightly and let the pain keep him awake. Thus, while the bird sang, Don Juan remained vigilant, observing every detail of its movements.

When the Ibong Adarna finished its performance, it settled down to rest. Seizing the moment, Don Juan carefully approached and threw a net over the bird, capturing it without harm. Overjoyed yet cautious<sup>14</sup>, he carried the bird back to the palace. Along the way, he discovered his petrified<sup>15</sup> brothers and, using the bird's miraculous powers, restored them to life. Together, they returned home, united once more.

Upon presenting the Ibong Adarna to King Fernando, Don Juan recounted his adventures and sacrifices. The bird sang its divine song, filling the court with joy and healing energy. Miraculously, the king regained<sup>16</sup> his strength and health, and the kingdom rejoiced. Grateful for his youngest son's bravery and selflessness<sup>17</sup>, King Fernando declared Don Juan his rightful heir.

However, the tale does not end here. Betrayal lurked within the royal family. Envious of Don Juan's success, Don Pedro and Don Diego conspired<sup>18</sup> against him. They stole the Ibong Adarna and abandoned Don Juan in the forest, hoping to claim the throne for themselves. Alone and betrayed, Don Juan wandered aimlessly until he stumbled upon a humble cottage inhabited<sup>19</sup> by Maria, a kind-hearted maiden. She nursed him back to health and became his ally in reclaiming what was rightfully his.

Through perseverance and the help of loyal friends, Don Juan exposed his brothers' treachery and retrieved the Ibong Adarna. In the end, justice prevailed, and Don Juan ascended<sup>20</sup> the throne, ruling wisely and justly alongside Maria, whom he married. Their reign ushered in an era of harmony and prosperity, ensuring that the legacy of the Ibong Adarna would be remembered forever.



## Word Wizard – Power Up Your Vocabulary

<sup>1</sup>**Noble** – Honorable and high in character or rank.

<sup>2</sup>**Kingdom** – A land ruled by a king or queen.

<sup>3</sup>**Gravely** – Seriously or solemnly.

<sup>4</sup>**Remedy** – A cure or solution.

<sup>5</sup>**Shimmered** – Gleamed or sparkled softly.

<sup>6</sup>**Perched** – Sat or rested on a high place.

<sup>7</sup>**Mesmerizing** – Captivating or fascinating.

<sup>8</sup>**Distraught** – Deeply upset or worried.

<sup>9</sup>**Treacherous** – Dangerous or disloyal.

<sup>10</sup>**Hermit** – A person living in isolation.

<sup>11</sup>**Towering** – Very tall or impressive.

<sup>12</sup>**Brilliantly** – Brightly or impressively.

<sup>13</sup>**Drowsiness** – A state of sleepiness.

<sup>14</sup>**Cautious** – Careful to avoid danger.

<sup>15</sup>**Petrified** – Terrified or turned to stone.

<sup>16</sup>**Regained** – Got back what was lost.

<sup>17</sup>**Selflessness** – Putting others first.

<sup>18</sup>**Conspired** – Secretly planned something.

<sup>19</sup>**Inhabited** – Lived in or occupied.

<sup>20</sup>**Ascended** – Moved upward or rose.





## Extend Your Learning!

### Quest for Wisdom: Unraveling the Tale of Ibong Adarna

Instructions: Answer the following questions based on your understanding of the tale. Read each question carefully and respond in complete sentences.

#### Questions:

- Who were the three sons of King Fernando, and what task did they have to accomplish? (2 points)
- Where did the Ibong Adarna reside, and what made it special? (2 points)
- What qualities did Don Juan show that helped him succeed where his brothers failed? (3 points)
- If you were Don Juan, would you have forgiven your brothers after they betrayed you? Why or why not? (3 points)
- What lesson can we learn from the story of Ibong Adarna that can be applied in real life? (3 points)
- Below are six stanzas from the Ibong Adarna, presented in both Filipino and English. This will help you appreciate the original poetic beauty while understanding its meaning in English.

Narrative poems like "Ibong Adarna" teach us important lessons about kindness, bravery, and determination. They also connect us to Filipino culture in a meaningful way.



## Trivia Time– A Timeless Filipino

"Ibong Adarna" is a beloved Filipino epic poem written as a "corrido," a traditional narrative poem in octosyllabic couplets. This classic tale, likely shaped by generations of oral storytelling, follows the adventures of three princes on a quest to find the mythical Adarna bird. The Adarna's enchanting songs possess the power to heal, and the princes embark on their perilous journey to cure their ailing father, the king. While the exact origins of the poem remain unclear, it stands as a cornerstone of Filipino literature, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and storytelling traditions of the archipelago.

### Key Concepts Unveiled!

A corrido is a form of narrative poetry. It's a poetic narrative form that originated in Spain and was popularized in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial period. Corridos typically tell stories of heroism, love, adventure, or historical events. They often feature a strong, heroic figure and a dramatic plot.