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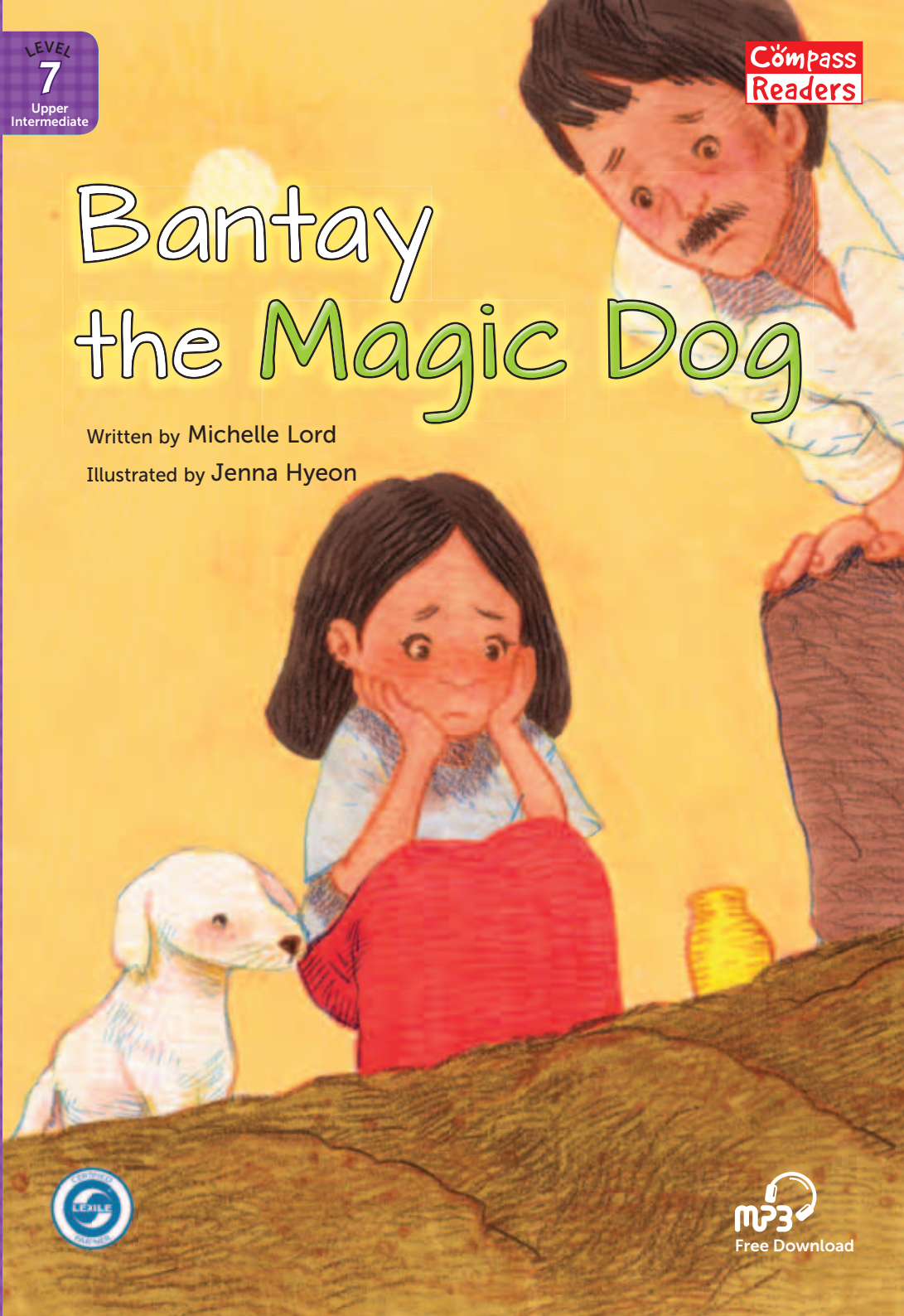
Upper
Intermediate

Compass
Readers

Bantay the Magic Dog

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Island Life

Long ago, a young girl named Malaya lived with her father on an island in the Philippines in an old hut. They did not own any furniture and slept in rough blankets on the floor.

Malaya kept a bamboo flute hidden in the cupboard even though she did not play. She kept the flute because it reminded her of her mother, who had died.

Malaya woke early to collect water from the river. She made a pot of weak tea after her father built a fire. Then her father worked in the fields, and Malaya wove baskets out of the dry grasses that grew nearby.

Malaya wished for something sweet to eat, but she knew her father could not afford to buy fruit. They needed all the money her father made to pay the rent. The money Malaya made selling baskets was used to buy vegetables and wheat to make bread. She often dreamt of sweet fruits such as mangos and bananas.





After her father went to the fields, Malaya worked outside in the cool breeze. She piled grasses next to her feet and began to weave.

CAW! CAW! CAW!

Three large crows flew away with Malaya's baskets. She spent the next two hours collecting more grass. As she set down to weave, Malaya heard the crows again.

CAW! CAW! CAW!

"Go away!" said Malaya. When she chased the black crows, they flapped their big wings and showed their sharp claws. She hid behind a tree in her yard.

"Help! Is there anyone who can help protect my baskets from these birds?" Malaya cried. She and her father would go hungry without any baskets to sell.

“What is the matter, dear girl?” said a low voice behind her. When Malaya turned around, she saw only a dog nearby.

“The crows are trying to ruin my baskets. I need to sell baskets to buy food for my family,” she said.

“What will you do for me if I help?” asked the dog.

Malaya was very surprised to hear a dog talk, but she needed help. “I don’t have much, but I will share everything I have,” she said.

“I don’t need much,” said the dog. “All I ask for is a place to sleep and the love of a family.” The dog smiled. Malaya saw two rows of sharp teeth that looked like little knives.

“Help me, and I promise that you will be my pet for all time. I will call you Bantay, which means **watchdog**,” said Malaya.

As soon as Bantay heard the promise, he chased the birds away.

YIP! YAP!

