

= Kawan Bergeloet =

Kawan Bergeloet ( Perfected Spelling : Kawan Bergelut ; Indonesian for " Playmate " ) is a collection of short stories written by Soeman Hs and first published by Balai Pustaka in 1941 . It contains twelve stories , seven of which were previously published in the magazine Pandji Poestaka , as well as an introduction by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana . These stories are generally humorous in nature , and presented with a diction that shows strong east Sumatran influences .

Released in response to the commercial success of Mohammad Kasim 's collection Teman Doedoek , Kawan Bergeloet has been reprinted several times and received positive critical appraisal . Soeman , together with Kasim , has since been considered a pioneer of the Indonesian short story . The Dutch scholar of Indonesian literature A. Teeuw writes that the collection is Soeman 's most interesting contribution to Indonesian literature .

= = Background = =

Short stories and sketches in Malay have been recorded in Indonesia since the 1870s , and a short story collection ? H. Kommer 's Warna Sari ? was published in 1912 . These early stories used vernacular Malay and were often humourous or derived from fairy tales or detective fiction . Short story @-@ writing developed further in the 1920s and 1930s , when short stories and sketches in a more formal register of Malay were widely published in such magazines as Pandji Poestaka and Poedjangga Baroe . The first collection of short stories in the Indonesian literary canon , Mohammad Kasim 's Teman Doedoek , was published by Balai Pustaka in 1937 . This collection was a commercial success , selling 4 @,@ 000 copies by 1941 .

Teman Doedoek was read by Soeman Hs , a Bengkalis @-@ born teacher who had already gained popularity as a writer of detective fiction . Soeman , once a student of Kasim 's , had also experimented with more humorous story @-@ telling approaches , including in his novel Pertjobaan Setia as well as in the numerous short stories he had published through Pandji Pustaka . After the commercial success of Teman Doedoek , Balai Pustaka sought to release a new short story collection ; thus , Soeman was contacted .

= = Contents = =

Kawan Bergeloet contains twelve short stories or sketches written by Soeman , seven of which had initially been written for and published in Pandji Poestaka . The remaining stories were written especially for the new collection . The first edition included an article on Soeman , written by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana , which had previously been published in the January 1936 issue of Pedoman Pembatja . This has been excluded from some later reissues .

= = = " Tjik Mat " = = =

" Tjik Mat " ( Perfected Spelling : " Cik Mat " ) follows a young man named Mat who goes fishing by the riverside . After three casts he is unable to catch any fish . On the fourth cast , he hooks a fish , but it falls into the waters . The story was first published in 1933 , in issue 13 , volume 11 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Piloe " = = =

" Piloe " ( Perfected Spelling : " Pilu " , meaning " Melancholia " ) , follows a mother who goes to the port with her child , Mak Jam , to meet her husband Hajji Saleh . Upon arriving , Jam is unable to find him . A crewman later tells the mother that Saleh died three days before reaching Sabang . The story was first published in 1933 , in issue 40 , volume 11 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Salah Paham " = = =

" Salah Paham " ( meaning " Misunderstanding " ) follows Kari Boengsoe , a gambir merchant , who travels to Singapore after turning a tidy profit . When his escort leaves , Kari goes to a nearby restaurant for dinner . The waiter asks him , " Kari apa ? " , to which Kari replies that he wants to eat . This exchange is repeated several times until the waiter asks " Kari ayam ? Kari kambing ? " Kari and the waiter begin fighting , and the police are called . When they arrive , they realize the source of the confusion , explain it , and leave . Shortly afterwards , the incident is repeated when Kari and the waiter have a misunderstanding over an ice cube . According to Balai Pustaka , " Salah Paham " was previously published . However , Ernst Kratz , in his bibliography of literature published in Indonesian magazines , does not note any publication .

= = = " Salah Sangka " = = =

" Salah Sangka " ( meaning " Mistaken Expectations " ) follows Malim Boengsoe , a respected man from a small village , who ? having had four daughters ? desperately wants a son . He prays continuously , and his wife becomes pregnant . Nine months later , when she begins labour , Malim is busy praying for a son . An escaped criminal sneaks into the room of Malim 's wife , and she and the other women there scream out " Laki @-@ laki ! Laki @-@ laki ! " Malim praises God and goes to the room as the criminal escapes . When Malim arrives and asks for his son , he is confused , as there is no @-@ one else there . The story was first published in 1933 , in issue 59 , volume 11 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Pandai Djatoeh " = = =

" Pandai Djatoeh " ( Perfected Spelling : " Pandai Jatuh " , meaning " The Clever Falls " ) describes an incident involving three old men at a wedding . When the hosts pass out betel to be chewed , the first man takes out a golden mortar to crush the betel . He boasts that the only shortcoming of such a mortar was that the betel tasted somewhat sour . The second man then takes out his silver mortar and says that , with silver , the betel would only taste sour if left for too long . The third man , the poorest of them all , takes out his wooden mortar and says that , having tried golden and silver mortars , he has concluded that betel crushed under wood tastes the best of all . The story was first published in 1933 , in issue 60 , volume 11 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Karena Hati " = = =

" Karena Hati " ( meaning " Because of the Heart " ) follows a man who becomes an official in a small village . There , he marries Sitti Aminah , a young woman who , though only 20 years of age , has been married and divorced three times . Their marriage does not last long , and the man leaves Aminah three days before the Eid al @-@ Fitr holiday . However , his expensive set of black clothing , which he must wear during the Eid ceremonies , is accidentally left at Aminah 's home . Pretending to be sick , the man goes to Aminah and asks her to cover him with clothing and light a fire to keep him warm . When she starts a fire in the kitchen , the man escapes with his black clothes . The story was first published in 1936 , in issues 100 and 101 , volume 14 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Fatwa Membawa Ketjewa " = = =

" Fatwa Membawa Ketjewa " ( Perfected Spelling : " Fatwa Membawa Kecewa " , meaning " Preaching Brings Disappointment " ) follows a Lebai Saleh , a labourer and student of Islam who is known for being greedy and miserly and was once driven out of a village for offering an insultingly low bride price . When arriving in a new village , he is taken on as an Islamic teacher . In his sermons Saleh , hoping that his students will give him some goods , preaches the importance of charity . He is soon receiving chickens and fish , and has married a local woman . During a meal , Saleh again gives a sermon on charity , but he and his wife fight soon afterwards after she gives

some bowls and plates to other women . Saleh 's nature is revealed , and he is again forced to flee . The story was first published in 1938 , in issues 93 and 94 , volume 16 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Itoelah Asalkoe Tobat " = = =

" Itoelah Asalkoe Tobat " ( Perfected Spelling : " Itulah Asalku Tobat " , meaning " Thus Did I Repent " ) tells of Hajji Malik , a former criminal who became devoted to his prayers in his old age . A fellow villager goes to see Malik and asks why he abandoned his criminal ways and embraced Islam . Malik tells his visitor that , fifteen years previously , he and a friend were travelling through the forests when they saw some people burying a box . That night they dug up the box and tried to take it away , hoping it would be treasure . However , upon opening the box , they found it contained the body of a young child . They returned the box and Malik abandoned the life of a criminal . This story was written for Kawan Bergeloet .

= = = " Selimoet Bertoeah " = = =

" Selimoet Bertoeah " ( Perfected Spelling : " Selimut Bertuah " , meaning " The Magical Blanket " ) follows Tji ' Dang , a man who is terrified of his wife . During Ramadhan , he is sent to buy a blanket but , on the way home , a wayward cigar burns a hole in the blanket . Afraid of what his wife will say , Dang buys another blanket . The first blanket is given to Dang 's stepson , Boejoeng . Later that week , Dang tries to break the fast early by stealing some biscuits . Rather than be found out by his stepson , Dang convinces Boejoeng to cover his head with his blanket . That evening Boejoeng , having seen Dang take the biscuits through the hole in the blanket , demands that his stepfather double his allowance or else he will reveal Dang 's secret . This story was written for Kawan Bergeloet .

= = = " Salah Mengerti " = = =

" Salah Mengerti " ( meaning " Misunderstanding " ) follows two young boys : an Indian boy from Madras and a Malay boy nicknamed Pengkar . While out selling their wares , Tambi and Pengkar begin fighting owing to their inability to understand each other . This begins with fighting over their sales cry . This is followed by an argument regarding holy basil and poison ivy which ends with the Indian boy rubbing the poison ivy against his buttocks out of contempt . According to Balai Pustaka , this story was written for Kawan Bergeloet . However , Kratz records it as first being published in 1933 , in issue 51 , volume 11 , of Pandji Poestaka .

= = = " Papan Reklame " = = =

" Papan Reklame " ( meaning " Billboards " ) follows two shopkeeper , a man and a woman , who compete to offer the lowest prices . Both open their shops within days of each other , and they continually undercut each other 's prices to attract customers . This conflict reaches the point that one shopkeeper , Wan Saleh , decides to buy out his competitor at cost . She agrees , and Saleh sells these wares , advertising a 5 % markup . When he hears that his competitor will go to Singapore to buy new wares , Saleh follows her . When they are on the ship , it is revealed that the shopkeepers are actually husband and wife , and that he had actually bought her stock out with a 10 % markup ; as such , the customers paid a total markup of 15 % . This story was written for Kawan Bergeloet .

= = = " Kelakar Si Bogor " = = =

" Kelakar Si Bogor " ( meaning " The Antics of Bogor " ) follows the betting of a dockworker named Bogor . To introduce himself to some Arab sailors , he convinces them to bet on splitting purple mangosteens . After winning \$ 4 @. @ 50 , Bogor reveals his secret : he has been reusing

mangosteen skins to add to his count . Bogor returns the money , and the sailors leave . On another occasion , Bogor bets a young sailor that all of the thirty eggs his chicken has laid will hatch . When the sailor returns and finds thirty chicks , he is shocked , and gives Bogor \$ 10 . Bogor later reveals to his friend , the narrator , that only twenty eggs had hatched , and that he had purchased the other ten . This story was written for Kawan Bergeloet .

= = Style = =

The Indonesian literary scholar Aji Rosidi writes that the vast majority of the stories in Kawan Bergeloet are meant as comedy . He considers only one story ? " Piloe " ? to have been intended as more serious or sad . Several of the stories use tropes previously seen in Kasim 's *Teman Doedoek* , such as conflict arising from a misunderstanding , and the contents of some other stories are similar .

For Kawan Bergeloet , Soeman wrote in Indonesian , a language based on formal Malay . His diction and phrasing was strongly influenced by his east Sumatran background , with little influence from the language as spoken in Java . Rosidi considers his language to flow more easily than Kasim 's . John Wolff , the author of *Indonesian Readings* , sees Soeman as using " flourishes which echo folk @-@ tale stories " .

= = Publication and reception = =

Kawan Bergeloet was published by Balai Pustaka in 1941 , with the series number 1426 . The collection 's title , Kawan Bergeloet , has variously been translated as *Playmates* , *Comrades Wrestling* , and *Argumentative Companions* ; the word *bergeloet* , in Indonesian , can mean either " to wrestle " or " to laugh " . Rosidi , identifying *bergeloet* as meaning " to laugh " , writes that the title was meant to indicate that the book was intended for entertainment purposes , to be read in one 's spare time .

Soeman gained recognition as a pioneer of the Indonesian short story for Kawan Bergeloet , and over subsequent decades was commonly mentioned with Kasim in histories of the literary form . The collection has been reissued several times . The third printing , in 1950 , introduced an updated spelling as well as nine illustrations by " Nasjah " . The most recent edition was published in 1997 . The story " Papan Reklame " was reprinted in *Indonesian Readings* , a student reader for Indonesian as a foreign language , in 1978 .

Rosidi writes that Soeman 's greatest strength in Kawan Bergeloet is in his description . He considers the writer to have avoided clichéd descriptions , instead using " new and original " descriptions , metaphors , and turns of phrase . Rosidi considers some of the stories ' comic incidents to be overly complicated , but attributes this to Soeman 's previous activity in the detective genre . The Dutch scholar of Indonesian literature A. Teeuw finds the sketches in Kawan Bergeloet to be " well @-@ observed and realistically described " and Soeman 's most interesting contribution to Indonesian literature .

= = Explanatory notes = =