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Short story – 3000 words.

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Tukang Cukur



Budi Darma is an Indonesian novelist, essayist, and short-story writer. He is often cited as an absurdist writer. His novel *Olenka* (Balai Pustaka, 1980) won the 1980 Jakarta Art Council Prize. Other novels are *Rafilus* (Balai Pustaka, 1988) and *Ny. Talis: Kisah mengenai Madras* (PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1996). *Harmonium* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1995) is his book of literary criticism. "*Mata yang*

Indah (Beautiful Eyes)" was included in his short story collection, *Kritikus Adinan* (Bentang Budaya, 2002). Currently, Budi Darma is a professor of English literature at the Surabaya National University in Indonesia.

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Tukang Cukur

Gito, anak Getas Pejaten, kawasan pinggiran kota Kudus, setiap hari, kecuali Minggu dan hari libur, berjalan kaki pergi pulang hampir empat belas kilo, ke sekolahnya, sekolah dasar di Jalan Daendels. Karena banyak jalan menuju ke sekolahnya, Gito bisa memilih jalan mana yang paling disukainya. Kalau perlu, dia juga lewat jalan-jalan kecil yang lebih jauh, untuk menyenangkan hatinya.

Seperti anak-anak lain, Gito sehari hanya makan satu kali, setelah pulang sekolah. Juga seperti anak-anak lain, Gito tidak mempunyai sandal, apa lagi sepatu. Guru-guru pun bertelanjang kaki. Kalau ada guru memakai sepatu, atau sandal, pasti sepatu atau sandalnya sudah reyot.

Pakaian Gito, demikian juga pakaian teman-temannya, serba compang-camping, penuh tambalan, demikian pula pakaian para guru. Semua pakaian sudah luntur warnanya, dan kalau diwenter warnanya bisa tampak agak cerah, tapi dalam waktu singkat luntur lagi.

Gito tahu cara menangkal kelaparan. Kalau mau, dia bisa menangkap ikan di sungai tidak jauh dari rumahnya. Pada waktu pulang dari sekolah, kadang-kadang Gito lewat Pasar Johar, tidak jauh dari setasiun jurusan Pati, Juana, Rembang, dan jurusan Pecangakan, Jepara. Di

The Barber



Novita Dewi started writing poetry and short stories during her elementary and middle school days. She published in *Si Kuncung* and *Bobo*, children magazines, as well as wrote for the children's columns featured in *Kompas* and *Sinar Harapan* (now *Suara Pembaruan*). She now nurtures her interest in literature by writing articles about literature and translation for scientific journals. Novita is widely published. The short stories translated and published by Dalang Publishing are her first attempts of literary translation.

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The Barber

Every day, except Sundays and holidays, Gito, a child from Getas Pejaten, a suburb of Kudus, walked almost nine miles to an elementary school on Daendels Street. There were many footpaths leading to the school, so Gito could choose the route he liked most. If he felt like it, he could even choose alleys that were farther away.

Like every other child, Gito only ate one meal a day, after school. Also, like other children, Gito did not have any sandals, let alone shoes. Even the teachers were barefooted. If any of them wore shoes or sandals, their footwear was worn.

Gito's clothes, as well as those of his friends, were shabby and covered with patches. The same was true for the teachers' clothes. The colors were faded. Even the dyed colors — though slightly bright at first — faded away in a short time.

Gito knew how to ward off hunger. He could go fishing in the river near his house. And sometimes, when walking home from school, Gito passed the Johar market, which was not far from the train stations going to Pati, Juana, Rembang, Pecangakan, and Jepara. In that market, he could scavenge bits of brown sugar, the kind of sugar useful to fight his hunger.

pasar itu dia bisa memunguti remah-remah gula jawa, gula yang bermanfaat untuk melawan rasa lapar.

Tidak jauh dari rumahnya ada pabrik bungkil kacang tanah, untuk pakan ternak. Kadang-kadang Gito juga memunguti remah-remah bungkil kacang tanah, meskipun dia tahu bungkil kacang tanah bisa menyebabkan sakit perut dan gondongan, leher bisa membengkak sampai besar.

Di rumah, kalau beras padi habis, ayah, ibu, dan Gito, satu-satunya anak ayah dan ibunya, makan beras jagung, dan kalau beras jagung habis, mereka makan ketela pohung.

Pada suatu hari, ketika pulang dan melewati kedai gulai kambing kakek Leman, seorang laki-laki tua yang selalu memakai udeng Jawa di kepalanya, Gito dipanggil oleh kakek Leman. Gito diberi makan, lalu, seperti biasa, disuruh membersihkan rumput di pekarangan belakang kedai.

Kakek Leman bertanya: "t tukang cukur di bawah pohon cemara?"

Kakek Leman membuka udengnya, lalu memutar tubuhnya, kemudian berkata: "Lihat ini," sambil meminggirkan rambutnya.

Tampak bekas luka, bukan luka biasa, tapi agak dalam.

Kakek Leman bercerita, tanpa diketahui dari mana asal-usulnya, tiba-tiba pada suatu hari ada tukang cukur di bawah pohon cemara dekat simpang tiga jalan yang menghubungkan jalan Setasiun dengan jalan Bitingan. Beberapa langganan kakek Leman, kata kakek Leman, juga heran mengapa tiba-tiba ada tukang cukur di situ.

Di antara lima pelanggan kakek Leman yang pernah dicukur di situ, tiga orang telah dilukai kepalanya. Tukang cukur selalu meminta maaf, katanya tanpa sengaja, tapi semua korban yakin, tukang cukur itu memang sengaja melukai mereka.

Tukang cukur berkata, kata langganan kakek Leman, tukang cukur adalah pekerjaan yang paling mulia. Hanya tukang cukurlah yang berhak memegang-megang kepala orang lain. Kalau bukan tukang cukur, pasti orang yang dipegang kepalanya merasa dihina, dan marah.

Keesokan harinya ada sesuatu yang baru, yaitu kedatangan seorang guru baru bernama Dasuki, kabarnya datang dari sebuah kota besar, entah mana. Sekolah Gito mempunyai enam klas, mulai dari klas satu sampai dengan klas enam. Jumlah guru ada delapan, terdiri atas enam guru klas, satu wakil kepala sekolah, dan satu kepala sekolah. Kalau ada guru berhalangan, mereka menggantikan guru yang berhalangan datang. Karena semua guru datang, Dasuki masuk ke semua klas, dan guru klas yang dimasuki klasnya harus ikut pelajaran Dasuki.

Dasuki terus menekankan, negara yang paling hebat di dunia adalah Rusia. Semua kota dan desa di Rusia serba bersih, semua penduduknya bahagia, makan enak-enak sampai kenyang.

"Lihat dokar itu," kata Dasuki sambil mengacungkan tangannya ke arah jalan Daendels. "Lha, itu dia, kudanya kencing dan berak sambil lari. Kotor. Di Rusia, semuanya sudah diatur dengan cermat. Tidak mungkin ada kuda kencing dan berak seperti di sini."

Lalu, Dasuki menyambung ceritanya dengan kehebatan-kehebatan lain Rusia.

Banyak murid yang terkagum-kagum, mulutnya agak menganga. Ada juga guru yang kagum, ada juga guru yang tersenyum-senyum tidak enak.

Hanya beberapa minggu saja Dasuki mengajar, sesudah itu dia pergi dan tidak pernah kembali.

Pada suatu hari, dalam perjalanan pulang, Gito sengaja melewati jalan yang banyak pohon cemaranya. Dari kejauhan tampak tukang cukur itu sedang berbicara sendiri, nadanya memaki-maki. Begitu melihat Gito, tukang cukur memanggil Gito.

"Sini kamu," kata tukang cukur. "Saya cukur."

Tukang cukur berjalan mendekati, Gito berhenti seperti patung, tapi begitu tukang cukur sudah dekat, Gito lari kencang dengan kekuatan penuh.

Tukang cukur mula-mula ingin mengejar, tapi kemudian berhenti, sambil memaki-maki.

Not far from his house was a peanut meal factory that produced animal feed. Sometimes Gito picked up the peanut meal crumbs, even though he'd been told that peanut meal could cause stomachaches and the mumps, which caused big swellings in the neck.

At home, after they finished the rice, Father, Mother, and Gito, who was an only child, ate corn rice, and when they ran out of the corn rice, they ate cassava.

One day, on his way home, Gito passed Grandpa Leman's goat curry stall. The old man, who always wore a Javanese *udeng*, headdress, called out to him. He gave Gito some food, then, as usual, told him to cut the grass in the plot behind the stall.

Grandpa Leman asked, "Gito, did you see a barber under a pine tree?"

Turning around, Grandpa Leman took off his *udeng* and, parting his hair, said, "Look at this!"

There were deep scars on his scalp.

According to Grandpa Leman's story, one day, out of the blue, a barber appeared under one of the pine trees near the three-way intersection that connected Station Road with Bitingan Road. No one knew where he came from. Some of his customers, Grandpa Leman said, also wondered why there was suddenly a barber there.

Five of Grandpa Leman's customers had their hair cut there; three of them came away with head injuries. The barber always apologized, saying it was an accident, but all the harmed patrons were convinced that the barber had deliberately injured them.

According to Grandpa Leman, the barber claimed that his profession was the noblest job. Only a barber had the right to touch the head of another person. Anyone whose head was touched by someone other than a barber would surely feel insulted and angry.

The next day at Gito's school, something new happened: A new teacher named Dasuki arrived. He reportedly came from a big city. Gito's school was comprised of six grades. There were eight teachers total: six classroom teachers, one vice principal, and one principal. The principal substituted when a teacher was unable to come to work. But on that day, because all the teachers were present, Dasuki visited each classroom, and the teacher had to allow Dasuki to teach his lesson.

Dasuki emphasized that Russia was the most powerful country in the world. All cities and villages in Russia were clean, and all the inhabitants were happy and ate until they had their fill.

"Look at that buggy," said Dasuki, pointing toward the Daendels Road. "Look! The horse is urinating and defecating while moving along. How dirty. In Russia, everything is carefully managed. There won't be any horses urinating and defecating like you see here."

Then, Dasuki continued talking about the other greatnesses of Russia.

Many students dropped their jaws in amazement. Some teachers were perplexed, others smiled uneasily.

Dasuki only taught for a week. He left thereafter and never returned.

One day, on his way home, Gito purposefully passed the road lined with pine trees. From a distance, he heard the barber loudly talking to himself. As soon as the barber saw Gito, he called to him.

"Come here," said the barber. "I'll give you a shave."

As the barber approached him, Gito froze, but as soon as the barber got near, Gito sprinted away in full force.

The barber chased Gito, but then halted, cursing.

By the end of September 1948, it was hot everywhere and the atmosphere felt threatening. Many soldiers, wearing red headbands, appeared out of nowhere. People said they were the PKI — Indonesian Communist Party — army. They wandered around the village and mostly clustered in the *sandulok*, prostitutes' red-light district, at the edge of the eastern part of the city.

Then, shots were heard. The shooting lasted twenty-four hours.

The number of stories about people gone missing, being killed, and other obscure incidents, escalated daily.

Akhir bulan September 1948 datang, dan di mana-mana terasa suasana panas dan serba mengancam. Banyak tentara memakai duk merah berdatangan, entah dari mana. Kata orang, itulah tentara PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia). Mereka berkeliaran, masuk keluar kampung, dan kebanyakan bergerombol di daerah sandulok (=pelacur), di pinggir kota sebelah timur. Kemudian, beberapa kali, selama dua puluh empat jam, terdengar tembakan-tembakan.

Makin hari makin banyak cerita mengenai orang hilang, orang dibunuh, dan macam-macam lagi yang kurang jelas.

Mata uang Republik Indonesia dinyatakan tidak berlaku, diganti dengan mata uang Pemerintah Komunis, mirip kupon. Harga semua barang makin melompat-lompat.

Pada suatu siang, ada pemandangan yang menakutkan: tukang cukur berpakaian tentara, memakai duk merah, menenteng senjata, beserta dengan beberapa tentara lain masuk ke daerah di belakang rumah sakit, didahului oleh beberapa orang yang tangannya diikat.

Diam-diam Gito mengikuti mereka. Ketika sampai lapangan terbuka, mereka berhenti, dan Gito bersembunyi di balik semak-semak. Gito menyaksikan, orang-orang yang diikat tangannya digertak-gertak oleh tukang cukur dan teman-temannya, disuruh berdiri rapi, kemudian diberondong dengan serangkaian tembakan.

Keadaan makin gawat. Listrik tidak pernah menyala lagi. Tembakan-tembakan kadang-kadang terdengar, selama dua puluh empat jam sehari.

Keadaan menjadi lebih gawat, ketika pasukan Siliwangi yang khusus didatangkan dari Jawa Barat, masuk ke kota Kudus, untuk membersihkan pasukan PKI. Dalam berbagai pertempuran kecil-kecilan, beberapa tentara PKI berhasil melarikan diri. Sebagian lain ditangkap, dan beberapa tokohnya diarak ke alun-alun, dibawa ke bawah pohon beringin, kemudian ditembak. Gito datang dan melihat pemandangan yang sukar dipercaya: tukang cukur, berpakaian preman, tidak lagi memakai pakaian tentara PKI, memberi perintah kepada orang-orang yang akan dihukum mati untuk berdiri dengan tegap dan rapi, kemudian melilitkan kain ke wajah-wajah mereka supaya mereka tidak bisa melihat regu penembak.

Beberapa kali hukuman tembak mati oleh pasukan Siliwangi dilakukan di alun-alun, dan semua orang boleh menyaksikan. Gito tahu, tentara PKI membunuh dengan diam-diam dan serba rahasia, tidak seperti pasukan Siliwangi. Dalam beberapa peristiwa hukuman mati itu tukang cukur tampak mondar-mandir dengan sikap gagah.

Kabar tidak jelas beredar, pada suatu hari tukang cukur itu dihajar oleh tentara Siliwangi, dengan tuduhan, dia membuat daftar orang-orang yang dibencinya untuk dihukum mati, tanpa bukti.

Hari demi hari berjalan terus, makin lama suasana makin mencekam, dan akhirnya, bulan Desember 1948 tiba. Pasukan Siliwangi telah meninggalkan Kudus, mengejar tentara-tentara PKI yang terus terdesak ke timur sampai Pati, Juana, Rembang, melebar ke Cepu, dan Blora.

Setelah Kudus ditinggal oleh pasukan Siliwangi, pada suatu hari, ketika fajar hampir tiba, seluruh kota Kudus terasa bergetar-getar, langit dilalui pesawat cocor merah yang terbang sangat rendah, datang dan pergi, datang dan pergi lagi. Pesawat cocor merah, itulah pesawat kebanggaan Belanda. Begitu matahari terbit, pesawat-pesawat cocor merah mulai menyapu kota Kudus dengan tembakan-tembakan dahsyat. Peluru-peluru berat mendesing di sana sini. Jenasah bergelimpangan di sana sini pula. Beberapa bagian Getas Pejaten juga dihujani peluru, tapi hanya tempat-tempat tertentu. Kemudian, rumah Gito juga terhantam beberapa peluru.

Ayah Gito segera mengajak Gito dan ibunya lari dari pintu belakang, menyeberang jalan, masuk ke sebuah gang yang berliku-liku, mengungsi ke rumah pak Ruslan, sahabat ayah Gito.

Keluarga Ruslan menyambut mereka dengan baik, memberi mereka karet tebal untuk digigit kalau ada bom meledak, dan juga penutup kuping.

Mereka bertahan di tempat perlindungan bawah tanah hampir dua hari, tanpa makan. Ruslan membagikan pil untuk membuat perut kenyang.

Akhirnya, sekitar jam tiga siang, tank-tank Belanda, diikuti banyak panser, dan tentara-berlari-lari kecil, memasuki kota Kudus dari arah kota Demak. Kota Kudus dan seluruh daerah di pinggirannya resmi diduduki pasukan Belanda.

The currency of the Republic of Indonesia was declared worthless. It was replaced with a currency, issued by the Communist Government, that looked like a coupon. The prices of all goods were fluctuating.

One afternoon, there was a mystifying sight. Dressed in an army uniform and wearing his red headband, the barber, along with several other armed soldiers, entered the area behind the hospital. They were herding several people whose hands were tied like prisoners.

Gito secretly followed them. When they arrived at the open field, they stopped, and Gito hid behind the bushes. He watched, as the people whose hands were tied were tormented by the barber and his friends. The people were told to line up, then were gunned down.

The situation worsened. Electricity had gone out. Sometimes, shots were heard for twenty-four hours a day.

Tensions became even more serious when the Siliwangi troops, who were specially brought in from West Java, entered Kudus to clear PKI forces.

Several PKI soldiers managed to flee during the skirmishes.

Others were arrested. Some PKI leaders were paraded to the town square and shot under the banyan tree.

When Gito arrived at the town square, he could not believe his eyes. The barber no longer wore a PKI army uniform. Dressed in plain clothes, the barber ordered the PKI leaders to straighten up. Then the barber blindfolded them.

Again and again, the Siliwangi forces carried out the death penalty in the square. Everyone was allowed to watch.

Gito knew that, unlike the Siliwangi forces, the PKI army had done its killing in secret. During several executions, the barber was seen walking arrogantly back and forth.

According to rumors, the barber was beaten by the Siliwangi army, one day. He was accused of having made a list of people he disliked and having those people sentenced to death without proof.

Day after day, the killings continued, the atmosphere becoming more and more tense. Finally, in December 1948, the Siliwangi troops left Kudus to chase after the PKI soldiers, who were continuing to advance eastward to Pati, Juana, and Rembang, before moving on to Cepu, and Blora.

One day, after the Siliwangi forces had left Kudus, the entire city trembled. Just before the dawn, red-nosed P-51D Mustang fighter planes filled the sky. They flew very low, repeatedly flying back and forth. The red-nosed planes were the pride of the Netherlands. As soon as the sun rose, the planes bombed Kudus heavily. The whistle of hand grenades and artillery fire could be heard far and wide. Dead bodies lay scattered here and there. Parts of Getas Pejaten were also bombed. Gito's house was hit by several bullets.

Gito's father immediately told him and his mother to run out the back door. They crossed the road and, running through a winding alley, fled to Ruslan's house. Ruslan was Gito's father's best friend.

Ruslan's family welcomed them. They gave them earplugs and a thick piece of rubber to bite on should a bomb explode nearby.

They stayed in the underground shelter for almost two days without food. Ruslan handed out pills that stilled their hunger.

Finally, around three o'clock in the afternoon on the second day, Dutch tanks, followed by many armored vehicles and foot soldiers, entered Kudus from the direction of Demak. Kudus and the entire surrounding area was now officially occupied by Dutch forces.

For almost a week, Kudus was like a dead city. Ruslan's family left their house; no one knew where they went.

The Dutch soldiers entered the villages and arrested all the young men who they suspected of being members of the Siliwangi army. The soldiers took their prisoners somewhere unknown.

After the situation had calmed down, Gito went back to school. As usual, he walked to school, ate only once a day, and sometimes chose different paths and alleys for his walk home.

One day, when Gito was on his way home, a jeep turned slowly onto Bitingan Road. Gito swiftly jumped into the ditch to hide. The two men

Selama hampir satu minggu Kudus bagaikan kota mati. Keluarga Ruslan meninggalkan rumahnya, entah pergi ke mana. Tentara-tentara Belanda masuk ke kampung-kampung, menangkap semua pemuda yang dicurigai, lalu dibawa entah ke mana.

Setelah keadaan tenang, Gito mulai sekolah, dan seperti biasa, dia berjalan kaki, makan hanya sekali sehari, dan kadang-kadang, waktu pulang, memilih jalan dan gang-gang yang berbeda-beda.

Pada suatu hari, ketika Gito pulang, ada sebuah jeep berjalan perlahan-lahan di jalan Bitingan, lalu dengan sigap Gito meloncat ke selokan, bersembunyi. Di dalam jeep ada dua orang berpakaian tentara Belanda, yaitu tukang cukur bertindak sebagai sopir, dan Ruslan duduk di sebelahnya.

Hampir setiap malam ada tembak-menembak: gerilyawan pejuang Indonesia masuk kota.

Hari demi hari berjalan terus, sampai akhirnya, Gito masuk ke SMP tidak jauh dari alun-alun.

Pada bulan Desember 1949, semua tentara Belanda ditarik, dan masuklah tentara Indonesia dari sekian banyak markas daruratnya, kebanyakan di daerah Gunung Muria. Gito mendengar, penarikan tentara Belanda adalah hasil Konferensi Meja Bundar di Belanda, antara wakil Indonesia dan wakil Belanda. Pasukan Belanda harus meninggalkan Indonesia, kecuali Irian Barat (sekarang Papua).

Tukang cukur dan Ruslan hilang tanpa jejak.

Ketika Gito sudah naik ke klas dua, suasana Kudus tegang lagi. Sekian banyak tentara yang tidak dikenal, semua mengenakan duk hijau dan membawa senapan, berkeliaran di seluruh bagian kota. Seperti dulu, banyak di antara mereka menggerombol di kawasan sandulok.

Suasana makin hari makin muram, sampai akhirnya, sekitar jam satu malam, Gito terbangun mendengar tembakan tanpa henti tidak jauh dari rumah. Sekitar jam enam pagi suasana menjadi betul-betul senyap.

Tersebarlah berita, pertempuran hebat di bekas pabrik rokok Nitisemito, tidak jauh dari rumah Gito, telah berakhir. Sebagian tentara liar terjebak di bekas pabrik, dan sebagian melarikan diri, kemungkinan menuju ke arah gunung Merapi dan Merbabu. Gito baru tahu, tentara liar itu dikenal sebagai tentara NII (Negara Islam Indonesia), dan akan menjatuhkan pemerintah Indonesia, menjadikan Indonesia sebagai Negara Islam.

Ketika Gito tiba di bekas pabrik rokok, sudah banyak orang berkerumun di sana. Semua mayat tentara yang terjebak di pabrik sudah diangkat keluar, dibaringkan di pinggir jalan. Salah satu mayat itu tidak lain dan tidak bukan adalah tukang cukur.

in the jeep, dressed in Dutch army uniforms, were the barber, who drove, and Ruslan.

Skirmishes began occurring almost every night when the Indonesian guerrilla fighters entered the city. These conflicts continued day after day until Gito entered middle school, not far from the town square.

In December 1949, all Dutch troops withdrew, and Indonesian soldiers emerged from their many emergency headquarters, which were mostly in the Muria Mountain area.

Gito heard that the withdrawal of the Dutch army was the result of the Round Table Conference, held between Indonesian and Dutch representatives, in the Netherlands. Except for West Irian — now Papua — Dutch troops had to leave Indonesia.

The barber and Ruslan disappeared without a trace.

When Gito graduated to the second year of middle school, the atmosphere in Kudus tensed again. Many unidentifiable soldiers, all wearing a green headband and carrying guns, roamed through the city. Like before, many of them congregated in the red-light district.

The atmosphere grew increasingly gloomy. Then, very early one morning, around one o'clock, continuous artillery fire awakened Gito. Around six o'clock that morning, a deep silence fell over the city.

News spread that the heavy fighting in the former Nitisemito cigarette factory, not far from Gito's house, was over. Some of the militia were trapped in the former factory, and some fled, possibly heading towards Mount Merapi and Merbabu. Gito found out that the militia was known as the NII (Indonesian Islamic State) army. They intended to overthrow the Indonesian government and turn Indonesia into an Islamic State.

When Gito arrived at the former cigarette factory, many people were already gathered there. The bodies of the soldiers trapped in the factory had been carried out of the building and laid on the side of the road. One of the bodies was none other than that of the barber.
