



Weird Tales

ALL STORIES NEW — NO REPRINTS

JANUARY, 1949

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*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use
of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.*

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The Bonan of Balandewa

BY MARY ELIZABETH COUNSELMAN

A GREAT many fine and decent American soldiers were stationed in Java during the Late Unpleasantness with Japan—but Major Caleb A. Knox was not one of them.

If there is anything worse than a stuffed shirt, it is a stuffed uniform; and in this category Major Knox of the 133rd Anti-Aircraft probably led the field. He was a small prissy middle-aged man of the spit-

There are matters even beyond the ken of our most self-assured military governors!



Heading by BORIS DOLGOV

and-polish school—so touchy about his lack of impressive height that he continually tried to offset it with a nasty and unreasonable temper. His subordinates despised him, but they jumped when he gave an order because they knew to what lengths he would go to avenge some petty grievance. Too many of them knew: good intelligent—and usually tall—young soldiers with unfaded patches on their uniform sleeves where hard-won chevrons had been arbitrarily ripped off.

I have this story from just such a soldier, a corporal in the Major's outfit, so perhaps we should take it with a grain of salt.

But I saw that *bonan*—it is in a museum now, in Washington, on display in the music room. I saw Caleb Knox, too—in a private sanitarium, screaming and hanging onto his narrow bed as though it were a bucking horse. "War neurosis" is what the doctors called it. Last war it was "shell shock", though often enough the victim has never been near the battle zone, as in the case of the Major.

Furthermore, in his wilder raving, he mentions nothing whatever about bombs or shellfire. It is a *volcano*, of all things, that his neurotic obsession goads him to believe is about to erupt and bury him under tons of red-hot lava—although the nearest volcano is a dead one, and in Mexico, hundreds of miles away. A curious case, the psychiatrists agree; and the only treatments they can offer him consist of hydrotherapy, insulin shock, and confinement to a padded cell for the rest of his life.

Certainly they would hoot at the idea that the smashing of a certain beautifully-carved Javanese *bonan*, in a museum four states away, might release Caleb Knox from the thing he thinks he hears, day and night. Day and night . . . though the war has been over for four years, and Pava is on the other side of the world; though old Baladewa is probably dead, and young Peter Garrity is back home in the Bronx, married now, and busy polishing up his *Javanese Symphony* which you may have heard broadcast last month from Carnegie Hall . . .

But in 1943 Major Knox was stationed in a little village near Surabaya, throwing his rank at every unfortunate young G.I. who happened to cross his path.

ONE of these was Pfc. Peter Garrity, a red-headed freckle-faced young six-footer who did more for the morale of his fellow-servicemen thereabouts than probably anyone besides the *ronggengs*, curvaceous native dancers who could be hired to perform at parties organized to relieve the local military monotony. Pfc. Garrity could play anything: the guitar, Hawaiian or western-style; the violin, concert or square-dance; the clarinet and saxophone; the trumpet—he was official bugler until he got himself busted for naughtily "swinging" reveille one morning after a hard night's bivouac in the rain. He had music in the marrow of his bones and rhythm sticking out of his rather prominent ears. It was contagious; you found yourself whistling or drumming on something whenever he was around, as though silent music were being broadcast from his mind to yours. . . . And I have reason, after hearing this story, to believe that such a phenomenon is quite possible. Have you ever held the underground aerial of a radio in your hand, to make the sound-waves come in more clearly? Have you ever thought that *telepathy* may only be some yet-to-be-understood phase of radio? Or that *clairvoyance* may be no more than a television broadcast from one mind to another?

Peter Garrity, however, knew nothing about extra-sensory perception and cared less; he only knew and cared about music.

Major Knox, on the other hand, frowned on music as an integral part of being a soldier—possibly because he was tone-deaf. Someone had laughed at him as a boy, no doubt, for not being able to carry a tune; and now he was hitting back, by proxy at the men in his division. Whenever he heard a group of soldiers harmonizing together in the strains of *White Christmas* or *Lili Marlene*, or having a hurried jam-session before drill call, he always managed to break it up for a very sound reason, militarily speaking. It was too late, or too early, or too something; quiet was imperative, or such-and-such a duty must be performed on the double. Music, he was wont to repeat, softened a fighting-man.

Usually these musical groups that he chose to squelch centered around Pete Garrity—Pete and his jiving guitar, Pete

and his lowdown clarinet, Pete and his dancing fiddle, or ukulele, or somebody's borrowed concertina. He was the biggest soldier in that particular camp, built like a football player and six-feet-five in height, with big awkward-looking hands that seemed incapable even of holding a frail musical instrument without crushing it. The fact that those hands could take apart and reassemble an anti-aircraft gun in nothing flat only annoyed the Major more violently. He would like to have been able to prove that Garrity neglected his M.S.&T. for his musical hobby, but the young man was one of the best men in his outfit and everybody knew it, including the Colonel.

More infuriating than ever to the small officer was the fact that Garrity never seemed to resent being kept a private first-class when he had earned a boost in rank months ago. Always grinning rather shyly, he performed the menial tasks heaped upon him because of his size, and he snapped out a salute, whenever the little Major passed, with a speed and precision in which he could find no flaw. He never went A.W.O.L.; his quarters were spotless; he was never "out of uniform" when strolling about the village *kampong*, shopping for souvenirs to send the home-folks.

Yet, miraculously—almost as if there were two of him—Pfc. Garrity seemed eternally to be lounging around with an idle group of men in camp, playing one or another of the numerous musical instruments to be found scattered around any army post. The ease with which those big brutal-looking hands coaxed beautiful sound from strings or wood constantly delighted his buddies and disgusted Major Knox. There was some insufferably sissy, he felt, about a man's being musically inclined, and in a big hulking creature like Garrity, it was incongruous. Nature, Knox thought bitterly, should have endowed him with that tall splendid body, if all Pete Garrity wanted to be was a . . . a hepcat, revolting Americanism! How the *ronggengs* ogled the young private at parties! How the women chased after him, even the Colonel's daughter! But all Garrity ever did with his manly charms and his spare time was waste them on a . . . a gutbucket, if that was what they called those musical clambakes between

C.Q. and taps! There were times when the Major told himself gratingly that war was hell and he simply could not bear it.

There were rumors, though, that convinced him that he could. Rumors that the Colonel was about to be transferred, leaving him in full command of the small camp and also in full possession of the abandoned coffee plantation that had been quarters for the Colonel's family. With the house and garden, Knox would inherit two excellent native servants—Baladewa, a wizened old Javanese with a *kris*-scar across one blinded eye, and Parmu, his exquisite young granddaughter who looked like something out of a Kipling poem.

For months, whenever the Colonel's wife was not in evidence, looking down her nose at all forms of "fraternizing with the natives", Major Knox had been secretly making a play for Parmu. He dreamed about her, and woke up in a cold sweat of desire.

Maddeningly she was always around when he reported to his superior—swaying in from the veranda with a jug of palm-wine or a platter of sweet cakes, bare feet and bare shoulders the color of wild honey, dressed only in a thin batik sarong, with a red hibiscus in her blue-black hair, worn over the right ear to show that her heart had not as yet been given to any man.

When he waylaid her one day, skulking behind a dwarf quince so the Colonel's wife could not see, she stood before him without a trace of fear and none of coquetry, lowering her slant-eyes only because it is very bad luck to let a stranger peer into the windows of one's soul. She spoke a few words of English, or rather of American slang, and gave these as answers that were often startlingly inappropriate.

"Sst! Come here!" the Major hissed at her one evening, peeking over his shoulder to make sure the Colonel had gone back into the house. "You . . . velly pretty. Savee?" he floundered, his fingers twitching to caress her plump arm. "Facee like flower. You savee?"

"Oyay, sowat, you leel sonnuvagun," the girl parroted politely, and offered him a betel nut—so obviously unaware of the meaning of the words some practical-joking soldiers had taught her that anyone but

Caleb Knox would have laughed uproariously.

But dark blood welled into his face. He drew himself up to his full height, which still topped the girl's five feet by only two inches. His hand jerked up, an almost involuntary gesture of fury, and slapped little Parmu hard in the face. She gasped and recoiled but did not cry out, more startled than intimidated. She gave the officer one look of utter scorn, then whirled and melted rather than fled among the low coffee trees.

AT THAT moment someone coughed politely behind the Major. He spun about, angry red face turning white with fear that it was the Colonel. But standing there, towering over him apologetically, was only Pfc. Peter Garrity and Baladewa, the old Javanese houseman.

Major Knox blinked at them, sputtering, and decided to bluster it out.

"Well?" he snarled. "What do you want, Garrity? What are you doing off the post, and . . . and in the company of a native? Fraternizing is against regulations; you know that! Damned insolent natives! Give 'em an inch, they'll take a mile! That that girl just now, she was . . . making improper advances to me! Had to put her in her place . . ."

"Yessir," the young G.I. said without inflection. But a gadfly lit on his cheek just then, and his mouth twitched.

Major Knox glared. "Wipe that smile off your face?" he exploded. "Well, what do you want? Speak up!"

"Major, sir, we . . . that is, I came to see the Colonel. But he's already left for Surabaya, so I thought if you gave permission, sir . . ." Garrity floundered, then ploughed on doggedly: "A bunch of the guys . . . er . . . men up at camp. . . . That is, well, sir, this old fellow used to play the *bonan* in the *royal gamelan*. At court, sir. For the Sultan of Mataram. . . ." He hesitated, glancing at the ancient Javanese, who salaamed several times with a toothless grin.

"Yes? Yes? What's that got to do with me?" Knox snapped.

"Sir, we'd like to organize a . . . a *gamelan* of our own, out at camp," Garrity plunged. "Just for the fun of it. Some of the guys . . . er . . . men have run across

native instruments in shops around Surabaya. Spinelli has a bamboo xylophone. Carson has a drum made of water buffalo hide. Daley bought a zither some place, and a couple others have cymbals and gongs. And

I made a two-string viol, myself, sir—out of ebony and ivory. This old fellow, name's Baladewa, sir, he has a *bonan* and promises to teach us some real Javanese music. You see, sir," Garrity's face brightened shyly, "when we're mustered out, a bunch of us plan to open a Javanese nightclub, somewhere back home in the States . . ." His voice had warmed with enthusiasm, but it broke off at the Major's hostile expression.

"A nightclub, eh? Indeed!" Knox sneered, hands locked behind his back, rising and rocking pompously on the balls of his feet—a mannerism his men often mimicked in secret. "After you're mustered out, Private? It appears to me," he snapped, "that you're making civilian plans right now, while we're still involved in the . . . the serious business of war! Royal gamelan!" His pale eyes flicked over the old musician and dismissed him. "American soldiers, allowing themselves to be tutored by . . . by an ignorant Javanese peasant! Where's your dignity, man? Are you going native? By god, if this is what too little activity is doing to my men at camp," he smiled acidly, "I'll remedy that right away! Starting tomorrow—I think we'll renew basic training. You men are getting soft!"

"Yessir," Garrity said without inflection. But this time the gadfly lit on his nose, and he made an involuntary grimace that struck his superior officer as a covert sneer.

"Report to the guardhouse!" Knox roared. "Garrity, I'm well aware of your . . . your insubordination behind my back. You've done nothing but stir up discontent among the men. Break down their fighting spirit, their . . . their pride of outfit that I've worked very hard to build up. You and your . . . musical teas! This is war, man! What did you enlist for, to be a . . . a fiddle-player? That won't kill any Japs!"

"Yessir! . . . Nossir!" Garrity, who was red-headed and born in Tennessee, began to breathe faster, lips compressed, brown eyes glinting. "But, sir . . ." The words seemed wrung from him as though he could no

more have suppressed them than he could stifle the music in his heart. "Sir, maybe if . . . if we'd understood the Oriental mind, there needn't have been any war. It isn't too late to start now—and their music is as good a place to begin as any, sir! Japanese music isn't much different from Javanese. But, gosh, sir, it's sure different from ours! Ever hear any? At first, all it sounds like is a lot of crazy noise. No beat, no tune, and it's likely to break off anywhere! But . . . but after you kinda get the hang of it . . ." The young soldier's voice had warmed again with enthusiasm, which chilled abruptly at sight of a sly glint in the Major's pale-blue eyes.

"Well-ll!" Knox drawled. "A Jap sympathizer, we have here!" His snide tone of triumph hardened. "Report at once to the guardhouse, Garrity! I've given that order once. Obey it! And when I drop the word around among the men," his smile thinned, "that you feel the nice musical Japanese are more to be admired than . . . than chastised for what they did to Pearl Harbor, I rather think your popularity and . . . and subversive influence will be a thing of the past!"

"Why, I . . . I didn't say that, sir!" the young man gasped. "I only said . . ."

"Same thing, same thing!" Major Knox gave a gesture of dismissal and stalked away from the miserable G.I., who had just had his first bitter taste of how the wrong people can twist the right words completely out of shape.

He languished in the guardhouse for ten days—"Insubordination" was the vague charge. It did strike him as queer that none of his buddies sneaked up to his barred window at night to thrust candy bars and cigarettes through to him. But he thought little of it until he was released—and the five men who had dreamed up the gamelan-idea with him unaccountably turned their backs and drifted away at his approach.

IT TOOK Garrity some time to realize what the Major's hints had done to him among fellow-soldiers he had counted as his friends, for, during the bewildering time of war, blind hate is a simpler thing to live by than tolerance and understanding. Overnight, in the eyes of every G.I. at the

small camp—many of whom had come to Java with the horrors of Saipan and Tarawa fresh in their minds—Pfc. Garrity had become a traitor, a Jap-lover; at best a long-haired radical. Quite suddenly the most popular young soldier in Major Knox's outfit found himself alone, cut off from his comrades by a barrier too subtle to fight against and yet too strong to break down.

His one staunch friend was old Baladewa. The aged Javanese seemed to shadow him everywhere, popping up at odd times and places, grinning his toothless one-eyed grin, with a present of ripe mangoes, a pipe of palm-wine, or a bright *baju* made by his granddaughter who worked with the other women in the batik shed—a *baju* and *jarit*, dyed with saffron, though yellow was a color forbidden to anyone not of royal lineage. Several times, even, the old man had offered him Parmu herself—puzzled but not offended when Pete, blushing furiously, whipped out a snapshot of his girl back home in New York.

"Sings with a band, the one I used to lead," he tried to explain. "A slick chick, Grandpop—but she loves me! She wouldn't pull anything raw like that with me, so I couldn't with her. Not that your granddaughter isn't . . . isn't . . . er . . ." He grinned at the shy native girl, peeking out at him always whenever the old man found him. "Boy! Is she—!" He gave up and summarized his opinion in a long two-note whistle.

Parmu giggled, nodded, and transferred her red hibiscus to the left ear—though Pete never learned what the gesture meant.

Out of sheer loneliness, though, he strolled with her in the village often. At night, when the men drew away from him at the recreation hall, he came to dropping in at old Baladewa's hut. He would squat for hours on the dirt floor of the bamboo house outside the lime-washed walls of the *kampong*, listening to the old musician play on his *bonan*—an old one of iron and bamboo which he had had as a boy and which neither want nor wealth had ever induced him to sell. Now and then Garrity would bring his two-string viol and accompany the old man, drinking too much palm-wine, then staggering doggedly back to the camp to another day of bewildering ostracism.

Old Baladewa's music and the quiet company of little Parmu kept him from going crazy with loneliness—but not for long.

A month later the Colonel was transferred, and Major Knox took over his command, his quarters, old Baladewa's services as houseman . . . and Parmu.

The aged Javanese had little time thereafter for trailing his young American friend around the *kampong*. Knox was a fanatic about neatness, and he worked the old man unmercifully—cursing him when the floors of the plantation house were not freshly scrubbed or his boots and Sam Brown were not polished just so. And from the first day he began his conquest of little Parmu—sometimes coaxing her, sometimes threatening, occasionally bringing her a cheap trinket from Surabaya, a nose-jewel or a silver anklet.

When he discovered that she could dance beautifully, that, like her mother who had been a court dancer, she was capable of executing the difficult *Serimpi* and the sacred *Bedoyo*, the goddess-dance performed only before royalty, he made her dance for him almost every night. Old Baladewa was drafted to play for her, beating out the weird music on his ancient *bonan* with the long cloth-padded reed hammers. The Major ordered him away after the first few exhibitions, though, preferring the records on his portable gramaphone to the off-beat minor tunes of Java that seemed to have no beginning and no end. But it puffed up his ego that these two artistes should be performing, for him alone, entertainment that only sultans could command heretofore. Well—he was a kind of sultan now, wasn't he? Certainly he, as resident officer of a conquering army, had the power of life or death over everyone in this out-of-the-world post where—Knox ran his tongue over thin wet lips—where a man could enjoy all the delights of the flesh with very little output, by being only a bit discreet.

No; the Major was not a good man, nor a good soldier. Too many whole nations are judged by the measure of such a man, taken by foreigners to be a composite of all their countrymen. Everyone in the village, as well as the men in his division, began to hate and fear him; for he found a number of ways to make money off others' mis-

fortune or bad judgment. Petty fines, black-marketing, bribery, these were among his lesser talents. He staffed his plantation-quarters with natives who were afraid not to work for him for whatever he chose to pay—but that was not enough to feed his monstrous conceit. He had to have a white man, a tall white man, preferably a soldier, to order about and bully. This unenviable position fell to Pfc. Pete Garrity, whom the men had already excluded from any ordinary place in their ranks.

When Garrity apparently requested to move out to the plantation as "Little Stinker's" batman, he lost whatever chance he may have had to make a come-back among his buddies. They finally decided that he was not to be blamed for his crazy views; that he was, quite obviously, a crackpot who ought to be psychoed back home with a medical discharge. They began to treat him less like an enemy than a harmless lunatic—rubbing the salt of contempt into the open wound of their distrust. They ceased to avoid him but now merely ignored him; and they would not have believed anything he swore on a stack of Bibles.

SO, WHEN Garrity tried excitedly one morning to tell a certain young corporal in his outfit that incredible story about old Baladewa's *bonan*, his erstwhile friend simply spat very close to Garrity's foot and walked away, chuckling.

The tall young G.I. followed him, plucking at his sleeve.

"On the level, Jerry!" he insisted. "Every night the old guy barricades himself inside his hut. Won't let me in, or even his granddaughter. He sits in there all alone—I've peeked in at him with a flashlight. In the pitchdark, he sits. Playing on that *bonan*. But it's not the one he had before! This one is all carved and gilded and set with gems. They look real! It's like a kind of fancy couch without springs or mattress. Across the bed of it, on two stretched cords, are hung these ten little pots. Only these aren't iron. They're silver; no kidding! Kind of like a Swiss bell-ringer's outfit I saw in a vaudeville act once. They're graduated in size, see, and he beats on 'em with these two little padded hammers' . . ."

"You fascinate me Scheherazade!" the

corporal yawned, and struck Garrity's hand from his sleeve, brushing off imaginary dirt. "Look, Pete," he spoke with the patient good-humor of one addressing a troublesome child, "Scram! Get lost, will ya? I got a heavy date to shoot some nine-ball. . . ."

Garrity flushed at the tone, but tried once more. "Jerry, I tell you, there's something . . . spooky about this! Old Baladewa keeps playing that thing, and then . . . then all at once you begin to hear *other instruments*. Zithers, and wooden-bar and metal-bar xylophones. And there's a . . . a two-string viol like the one I made; you can hear it whining out the air, and you can hear drums, too. But . . . but under the music, there's a . . . a kind of funny vibration. You feel it in your teeth and your fingertips first, and then it begins to shake you all over, like that earthquake tremor we had last year. . . ."

"Ah, you're fulla hop!" the corporal jeered, edging away again. "Go sleep it off, kid. Geez," he advised kindly, "you oughtn't to hang around those natives and drink so much wine. There's plenty beer in the PX. . . ."

"Yeah—if I drink alone!" Garrity's smile twisted wryly, his naive brown eyes troubled. "Now," he added almost as if to himself, "even old Baladewa doesn't want me around. He's up to something funny! Last night I passed by while he was playing, and Parmu was beating on the door, sobbing and crying: 'Pantang! Not the volcano-song! Pantang!' That Javanese word means *forbidden*. . . . The old man hates the Major for what he's doing to Parmu!" his mouth hardened, fists knotting. "That little essbee! He's a sadist! I . . . I hear her lots of times, whimpering and screaming in his room at night! He ought to get what's coming to him, sure. But . . . but maybe not what old Baladewa is cooking up. . . .!"

The corporal paused briefly with a flicker of curiosity about the rest of Garrity's wild tale. There just might be an inkling of truth behind it; something that would make a tidbit of barracks gossip, at least.

"What's he cooking up?" he prodded, grinning. "Trying to poison the Major? Or planning to declare an *amok*, the way these

natives do, and kill everybody in his path? Nah! He's too old for that. . . . So the Major's been making laterals at his granddaughter, eh? The cute one with the flower over her ear? I thought she was *your girl*, Petey! Looks like Little Stinker has pulled rank on you again!"

"Well, he'll never get *Parmu*!" Pfc. Garrity gave him a queer wild look and shook his head, fists clenched. "No! She'll never be his to . . . to . . . Just wait!" he muttered. "Just wait and see!"

The corporal laughed and thought no more about the incident—until three days later. Then he remembered, and reported the conversation to his lieutenant as nearly as he could recall it, out of a sense of duty.

For, on that night, a half-drunk soldier, wandering into camp late after a party in the village, had stumbled over the body of a native girl in a field outside the walls of the *kampong*, halfway between the post and the Major's quarters. She was not immediately recognizable as little *Parmu*, for her pretty slant-eyes were blacked and swollen, her nose-ornament torn from her pierced nostril, and her mouth cut and bleeding as from the blows of a fist. Around her throat was twisted a sisal cord which someone finally recognized as the frame-string from a Javanese *bonan*.

WHEN TWO MPs went to search for the girl's grandfather, he had disappeared. But inside his bamboo hut, Pfc. Peter Garrity was discovered, reeking of palm-wine but unconscious from a blow on the head. His knuckles were slightly bruised, and there were fingernail scratches on his cheek and blood on his khaki shirt. And old Baladewa's *bonan*—the plain one with the iron pots, not the ornate one of Garrity's wild story—lay smashed in pieces all around him, almost beyond repair, with one of the sisal cords missing.

In the opinion of the court-martial, it was an open-and-shut case. Consider the evidence, added to the testimony of the young corporal about Garrity's "threat"—that a certain imaginary rival of high rank would "never get" his paramour. Just as obvious, though, was the fact that Garrity was psychopathic on the subject of Oriental music—as witness the smashed *bonan*. So, in-

stead of to prison, he was sent to the nearest veterans' hospital. And there the young man remained for the duration of the war—a model patient, however, who often cheered up his fellow-inmates by playing requests on whatever musical instrument was given him. Later he was transferred to a hospital in the States. But he was not discharged until another mental case was brought to the same overseas hospital from the same little Javanese village. That other patient was Major Caleb Knox; symptoms: a ringing in the ears, violent palsy, paranoia, fixed delusions.

It seems that the Major had continued to rule his village-dynasty with a grasping hand, long after the tragedy about the native girl. The aged Javanese, Baladewa, never came back; and it was thought by many that Pfc. Garrity had murdered him also in his mad frenzy, and disposed of the body. True; some native discovered a row of bare footprints leading up the steep side of the local volcano that loomed like a brooding giant over the little village. It was a dead volcano—but on the night of little Parmu's murder, and again on the day of Peter Garrity's trial and conviction for that murder, the ground around that locality shook with violent tremors and a red glow hung in the sky above the crater of the sleeping giant. Old Baladewa did not show his face again, suffice it to say—and Pete was branded as a psychopathic killer.

That is, he was branded as such until shortly after the night Major Knox ran screaming from his plantation-quarters, begging the sergeant-of-the-guard to "get that damned *bonan* out of my room and make it stop playing." Numbers of his men had noticed the Major's peculiar change of late—growing more marked every day. He was nervous as a mouse-deer, he had indigestion, and he slept almost not at all. He had developed a habit of sticking his forefinger in his ear and shaking it, as though to stop some imaginary sound therein. He shouted at everyone on a shrill hysterical note. Later he began to walk unsteadily and hold onto his chair, with visible symptoms of vertigo, screeching that "the damned volcano" was "at it again"—though no tremors had been recorded on the seismograph in Surabay's weather bureau for months.

ON THE night he ran shrieking from his bed, the sergeant found no trace of a *bonan* in his room, and little else of note besides four empty whiskey bottles which he chose to accept as an explanation. But when the Major repeated his performance six nights in a row, to the extent of stopping up his ears and beating his head against a tree trunk in the plantation yard, the non-com discreetly reported it to the camp doctor. He, in turn, reported it to headquarters. Shortly thereafter Major Knox was relieved of his command and hospitalized for "nervous treatment"—to stop that bell-like ringing in his ears, of which he complained, and that wracking delusion of earthquake tremors:

At the hospital, though, he got worse instead of better. Over and over he pled with someone—some imaginary creature of his delusion whom he addressed as "Baladewa", begging him to "stop calling the volcano, stop calling it with that hellish *bonan*, I didn't mean to kill her, I didn't, I didn't, it was the music, that damned monotonous music and the way she was dancing to it for him! The *tandak* dance of gratitude, for knocking me down when I was dragging her. Damned insolent private! Striking his superior officer to protect a brown-skinned. . . . I'll show her! I'll teach her respect, and him too! And you, old one-eyed scarecrow, you'll never play this thing again! Run! Run, you old fool! You won't dare come back and tell anybody what I . . . I . . . *The volcano! He's calling it again! Telling it to . . . to . . . find me! I hear it! I . . . I feel . . .*"

This last is recorded as the Major's repeated babbling under the influence of sodium pentothal, the "truth" drug. Further details were wired to the hospital in the States to which Pete Garrity was transferred. His name was cleared, of course—though he stubbornly sticks to his account of what he saw through the crack of old Baladewa's hut that night: an ornate jeweled *bonan* the old man played, in company with the unseen ghosts of other members of the royal gamelan, all dead save only himself. I choose to believe it was his same *bonan*, glorified only by the old man's genius.

That *bonan*, smashed by Knox after the murder, was later gathered up by the young

corporal who told me this story. He repaired it, shipped it home, and sold it to a museum in Washington—for a tidy sum which set him up in a small plumbing business in his home-town. He is a nice practical young man, though of little imagination. He merely recounts this story; he does not for a moment believe it. The part about the spirit-gamelan, I mean, and the ghost of Baladewa driving the Major mad with his weird volcano-song. . . . True, he says, the skeleton of an elderly man was found in the crater of a certain extinct volcano near Surabaya. But native Javanese are always throwing themselves down volcanoes—a favorite form of suicide on that exotic island. It may or may not have been the desperate old musician, trading his life for a last bit of black magic to avenge his granddaughter and free his young American friend.

It is the corporal who called my attention to the broadcast of Peter Garrity's *Javanese Symphony* from Carnegie last month. I listened, but only out of curiosity

—for Javanese music sets my teeth on edge. It is without any definite beat, and its tuneless whine and *tinka-tinka-tok* has a deadly monotony.

It gets into my head and goes round and round—as it must have done to Major Knox, brooding over his terrible secret of crime and injustice. Yes; it could drive an Occidental mad, the memory of it—especially if he imagined he heard it again, played on a smashed *bonan* by some one from Beyond. . . . Give me one of the Dorsey brothers or Bing Crosby any time!

But maybe it is only that I do not understand "the long music"; do not try to understand it. Not the way young Peter Garrity tried, in his simple desire to span the great chasm between East and West with the strongest bridge of them all: man's emotional response to sounds. It is a powerful thing—music, Garrity always knew that.

But perhaps only old Baladewa, with his ancient Oriental wisdom, knew just how very powerful it can be.