



D.B.Kuruppu



Reading this book by the young Melbourne writer, I travelled back in time 85 years to the sleeping mats, we slept on while our grandmother was sleeping on the only bed available in the room. My elder brothers and I listened to her folk stories, which told us about ancient giants and heroes. They were meant to entertain us, as well as to educate the

Meena and Manaka's mother Manel Fernando, and some more parents of the children from the main players in the drama.

Set in the salubrious climate of the Horton Plains and the World's End the action takes place in the house on Ashvin's parent's tea estate.

They were keen on a plan to explore the myth about the Deamon, or the Yakush, for the discovery of which the Local Geographic Society had an offer of one million Rupees. Their search begins with a visit to Bakers

that she was abducted off Udawaththa Kele, while walking back from school. Three men wearing masks had taken her through the forest.

Taken to a room somewhere, blind folded, she remained there for a long time. Later, she was taken out with her wrists tightly tied together, climbing until they brought her to the cave that was nearby.

"Did they hurt you?" was the question that Menaka put to her at once.

"No, they treated me well, giving me the best food, fried, rice, kottu roti and chocolate ice cream"

"How did you get away?" Was what everyone wanted to find out.

Before they could get the answer from the

who had to take the abducted girl to the Police Station.

The second attempt was better - planned. With their second attempt, came the running away of Menaka, to be discovered later with more revelations.

That discovery was the existence of a look-a-like twin sister of Menaka by the name of Neluka.

Thus this tale of abductions, disappearances, and the final discovery leading to happy re-union are the raw material that Jude Perera uses in his creative work had used for giving us the result called "The Beast"

With no more comments or explanations, let me, on behalf of Sri Lankan writers in

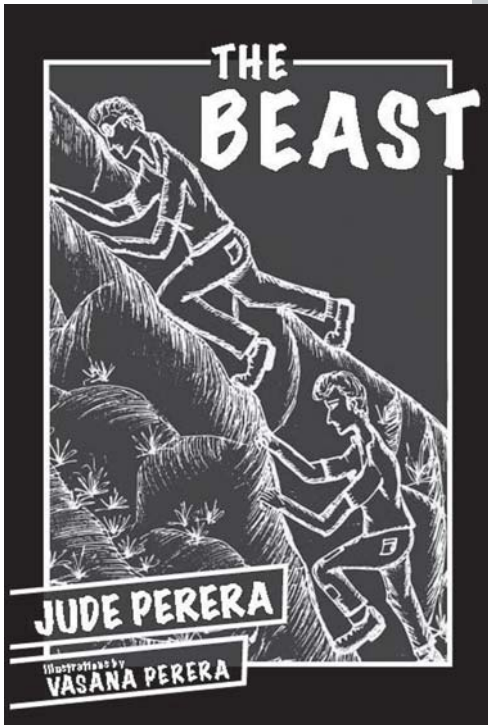
The Beast

By Jude Perera

little grandsons of hers. Two stories I do remember are that of Muwantissa Kumaraya, the young prince who suffers at the hand of his own siblings and fails to jump across the river as he used to.

The other was the tale of the Deamon, who was noted for his 3 "hooos" - the signature shots he used to make at three points in his journey to the victims house. One at a distance of 3 "gawwa"s, the second half-way on the run, and the third as he jumped into the house of the victim. He lands on an unexpected carpet which was a layer of dried arecanuts nicely laid out for the Deamon to slip and fall over at the door itself.

The rest of the job is easily taken care of by the old woman of the house.



In my Sinhala version of the legends of the Australian Aboriginal people, I did raise the question as to why we did not have any such legends or folklore, while claiming to be the one of the oldest living races on earth. On this point I do not have any reasonable explanation to offer.

All these thoughts and questions were running round my mind as I was going through the book by the young writer Jude Perera. The book written by him is a novel of excellent quality I would say for a beginner and to come up with a work of fiction, mixed with intrigue, conspiracy and adventure is itself creditable.

Yakush is the name he uses for the Deamon which appears in his novel, in which the main characters are, Dylon, Menaka, Ash, Ashvin, his parents, and a few workers in the tea estate owned d by the family. The estate is situated near the highest mountain range, Pidurutalagala.

Rose a young Tamil girl, her mother

Falls, where some sightings of the Yakush had been reported, and a few attacks on the local villagers as well. It was the idea of Dylan to which others agreed without any hesitation.

Rose the little girl was the guide of the party followed by others. Only Menaka was of two minds at the beginning. Next Friday, Full moon day, was the ideal day for the adventure, starting with the climb to World's End. They enlisted the support of Sindu to guide them for it to be safer. He lived in a poor estate line house.

Sindu was pointing out a paw print of a leopard that was standing a few meters away as the guide was looking around. Menaka was the first to take note of the warning, crying her heart out.

Running away from the leopard for safety, in pouring rain and darkness, the party encounters another victim of an abduction. A girl called Usha, who tells them



poor girl, they were alerted by another sound, that of the search party, which had set out looking for the missing children.

"Hay, over there" a voice called out to the rest "Look, they are here, Sir"

Rex, Ranjan and Lionel, the three fathers had come in search of the children, and the first attempt by them ended with the rescue by their elders,

Australia - the older generation - welcome the new addition to the second generation of Sri Lankan youths who have either made or are making their entry into the literacy scene in this country. Jude Perera has the distinction of being a young author to get a local publisher to bring out his book.

That again is another achievement.

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