

A vibrant jungle scene with a pink butterfly, purple flowers, a blue bird, and a large elephant. The background is a lush green forest with various plants and trees. The title is written in a large, blue, stylized font.

THE ENTHUSIASTIC ELEPHANT

Chanuli Nelumika

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PREFACE

The primary goal of the current educational system is to mould a productive citizen and a caring family member who is equipped with knowledge and skills. The main responsibility of the school is to identify and recognize children's talents, as well as to sharpen their skills to meet the needs of the nation and the world. Our Alma Mater is constantly guiding and assisting children who are creative. This project has been an ongoing process at our school for many years, particularly in terms of writing books. Many skilled and enthusiastic young writers participated in this exercise for years, producing novice writers in the field of literature. We regard this as a great victory and a national need at this hour. To continue this effort, we have adopted digital technologies and an e-book project this year. I am confident that this unique event provided youngsters with valuable experience and challenges that will benefit them in the future. The Ministry of Education has hailed the project as an important step toward motivating young authors in schools. As principal of Mahamaya Girls' College, I am grateful to all the students throughout the country who contributed to this endeavor. I commend and applaud all the young authors of these books for their perseverance and devotion in this difficult task. I would like to thank our school management committee, employees, parents, for my students, administrators, and teachers from other schools who encouraged students to take part in this worthwhile effort.

Ms. Shashikala Senadheera
Principal Mahamaya Girls College - Kandy
2023. 11. 10

HALF TERM

“I’m so excited!” said Lorna Lerry, swinging her satchel about.

“I can’t believe it is half term,” said the other girl, Sasha.

Sasha was even more excited than Lorna. She jumped up and down excitedly, making her curly pigtails shake vigorously.

School has broken up for half term, meaning three weeks off school.

“I think this is going to be the best half-term holiday! I’ve never thought it would be so much fun, and it’s all thanks to you, Lorna,” said Milly, walking next to Lorna.

“I adore animals!” Lorna smiled happily. She felt rather proud of her home, not because her house was big and beautiful but because her home was in a particular place, on the corner of a beautiful, lush, green-colored wood. When Lorna was small, her mother and her neighbors were told to move their houses due to construction in the c. From then on, Lorna’s mother decided to build their house near the woods. Lorna’s school was still only a street away, and Lorna could easily walk in the morning and come back home.

Today, Lorna and her friends Sasha and Milly had a guide club after school, and Lorna’s mother told her it would be getting dark soon, so she came to pick Lorna up from school. Lorna’s mother, Frankie, and Milly’s and Sasha’s mother followed them, chatting. Lorna’s cottage came into view. Along with the cottage, a small stream trickled by, and right next to the cottage was the woods. It was like a giant green carpet far away. Lorna felt as if she was going to burst with pride. She could not dream of

an even better place to live than alongside animals. Like her mother, a nature scientist, Lorna loved and cared for animals. Lorna reached the cottage with her friends, whom she had invited to spend two weeks at her place.



At that moment, a soft, growling brown fox cub jumped onto Lorna’s arms for a cuddle.

“Fenny!” cried Lorna, grinning at the tiny fox cub. “Have you eaten all your mini pies?” she asked, seeing all its paws and mouth covered in crumbs.

Milly and Sasha gasped and chuckled behind her. “Fenny is always waiting for you after school, Lorna,” said Frankie. Fenny was a gorgeous fox cub, and Lorna and her mother had rescued her. One day, Fenny was scraping Lorna’s cottage door when her mother discovered it might be lost or abandoned, and Lorna had hopefully asked her mother to keep the fox

cub and look after it. Fenny had lived with Lorna and Frankie ever since. Fenny always waits for Lorna to come back from school to play.

They all entered the cottage. It was cozy and warm, and this made Lorna feel comfy. Milly, Sasha, and Lorna dashed upstairs to Lorna's bedroom. Their luggage was already waiting in the room. Her bedroom looked cozier than anything. On the side of the bed was a stool with a drawer set underneath, packed with books, and on the stool was a night lamp, a clock, a bottle of water, and a box that held all of Lorna's accessories. The girls quickly changed into jeans and t-shirts and took turns taking items out of the box. Milly took a giraffe necklace because it was her favorite animal. Sasha took two pink ribbons for her pigtails, and Lorna wore a starfish clip and tied her hair with a blue ribbon. Lorna showed them a red button hidden in the box. She pressed it, and a red velvet bottom popped out.

"Wow! What's in it?" asked Sasha astonished. Lorna grinned to herself and carefully pulled out a beautiful silver chained necklace with a peach-colored elephant pendant that shimmered in the sunlight. "Wow, Lorna, it looks lovely." Gaspd Milly, her mouth open. Lorna carefully wore the necklace. She glowed happily. "This is my favorite necklace. It was a present from my aunt who works in an animal conservatory. She works in Africa and..."

Before she could continue, Fenny stubbornly growled while patting Lorna's arm, trying to get her attention. The two sisters got distracted by a loud bird call right outside the window. Lorna knelt to ask Fenny "What's the matter, Fenny?". Fenny growled again.

"Oh, Fenny, it is late for your meal, isn't it?" She knew Fenny could get impatient when she was not given food on time. "I'm getting hungry

too...Why not we all go down and have lunch, and then we'll head out for a walk in the woods, okay?" Fenny purred in agreement, turning around in circles.

Lorna had another reason why she loved her new home. It was here she had discovered that animals could understand humans and talk back to them, and the strange thing is, she had a feeling that she understood what they were saying, but Lorna never spoke about this to anybody. Some would find it to be ridiculous. Just then, Fenny purred again. "Oops, sorry," Lorna called Milly and Sasha for lunch. When they rushed downstairs, their mothers were laying out the table with warm food. Fenny had a bottle of milk and meat placed on the table. Fenny's place was next to Lorna's seat. Everyone enjoyed the tasty meal.

"I'm stuffed," Lorna said. "The meal was delicious," agreed the girls.

After tidying the table and washing the dishes, the girls headed straight to the woods. Squarks and animal sounds filled the air. Even Greta, a goose who lived in the woods, chirped a greeting. Lorna smiled. Fenny purred, too. Greta the Goose once had a problem finding her voice, and Lorna helped regain it. The woods were beautiful. Flowers popped from everywhere where grass and shrubs were growing wild.

"It all seems very magical," whispered Sasha under her breath. Sasha is right, thought Lorna. It is very magical...



MYSTERY SOUND

“Stop it,” murmured Lorna in her sleep. It is the second night after school break. Milly and Sasha cuddled up next to Lorna’s bed.

“Fenny, what’s wrong? Why are you excited?” Lorna gave a huge yawn and sat up. Lorna felt a chill running down her spine. “Fenny...” Lorna mumbled, rubbing her eyes. Fenny was jumping on the duvet, growling eagerly. “Phant...there is and a phant some.... come... quickly...” Fenny was so excited that she rushed out her words breathlessly.

Right then, a small deafening sound ran through the woods. “There. there...” Fenny growled, trying to be as quiet as possible not to wake the guests, yet it was too excited. Another low grumbling noise ran through the woods. Lorna’s eyes sprang open. What a peculiar sound. Lorna looked around.

She was now wide awake. The moonlight streamed through the window. Lorna heard Sasha groan as she twisted and turned. Milly was sound asleep, too.

“Quick, Fenny, it sounds like someone needs help. Who is a phant ...?” Fenny was already rushing down the stairs through her pet flap in the bedroom door.



Lorna glanced at her panda clock on the bedside table as she wriggled out of the bed.

“Fenny, it is past midnight! Oh, all right, okay, I’m coming...” Lorna couldn’t resist when Fenny wanted to do something exciting. She put on a woolly hat and a woolen sweater and hurried downstairs, shutting the room door behind her. She put on her coat. Both Fenny and Lorna went outside through the front door.

“Phew...” Lorna said, breathing hard. “Let’s find what the mystery sound is.” “Keep quiet now, Fenny, Oh! You nearly made me fall.”

Lorna and Fenny were now walking past a hut. Lorna stopped to look at it. She smiled to herself and continued walking. The poor animals in the woods used the hut as a shed. Lorna’s mother found many animals who needed treatment in many different ways, so she made this cozy hut. Lorna and her mother would then care for them and give them medicine.

Suddenly, another low rumbling sound interrupted Lorna’s thoughts. Fenny growled, too. Just then, the source of the sound came into view. It was something that looked like a boulder. Maybe something was huddled up together in the darkness. Lorna quickly felt around in her coat pocket. Fenny was quite restless. The moonlight was not enough to see what it was. Lorna pulled out her torch. Lorna flashed her torch around. “Oh no!” she gasped in panic when she realized she had gone too deep into the woods. Lorna spun around and flashed her torch in the other direction. Her mouth dropped open for what she saw.

“So now I understand what you told Fenny. Not ‘phant’, it is an elephant!”



ANOTHER ADVENTURE



Lorna couldn't believe it! An elephant! An adorable baby elephant! She was excited and happy about her discovery, but she was panicking at the same time.

Fenny got so restless that she jumped and rolled all over the mud. Lorna giggled. "Fenny, please go to the stream for a splash; you look ridiculous with a heap of mud on you." Fenny dashed off. There were a couple of water pools in the woods.

What is Lorna going to do now? She is now in the woods and stuck with a baby elephant right in front of her. Fenny came back dripping wet. Fenny didn't seem scared at all. She purred softly to Lorna. "This baby elephant is in trouble. That's why it was trumpeting. I must help." Lorna thought. She took a deep breath and started talking to the scared baby elephant staring at her.

"Hello! little elephant, are you well? I'm Lorna, and this is Fenny. We live here close to this woodland. So, do you have a name?"

The elephant was taken back at their arrival but bravely gave a small trumpet.

“Ellie? What a nice name. Where is your family? Did you not belong to a herd?” Lorna asked. Ellie nodded and gave her a small, sad trumpet. Lorna looked sadly at the elephant. Ellie seems friendly.

“I’m sorry you got separated from your herd and..” she paused and looked at the baby elephant. “...since it has been many days, I’m sorry we won’t be able to find your herd. But we are here with my mother and friends Milly and Sasha. We will keep you in good company until we figure what to do.” Ellie seemed to cheer up a little. She gave a little sneeze. Fenny growled. Ellie sneezed a few more times.

Lorna looked worried. “You are catching a cold!” Lorna knew her mother knew what to do, but not now. Lorna then had a sudden idea. She broke some dry palm leaves from a nearby palm tree. She laid them as if to make a nest.

Ellie moved its trunk around and felt the leaves. Ellie made herself comfortable and laid down on the leaves. Ellie’s eyes drooped, and it fell asleep soon. Lorna wished she could stay there all night, but it was starting to freeze, and she should be in bed now. So, they walked back home, went upstairs slowly, and crept up into bed. No sooner, both were sound asleep.



ELLIE THE BABY ELEPHANT

"Mother, Lorna isn't getting up," cried Sasha, running downstairs.

"She says she is feeling a bit funny too," joined her sister Milly coming behind her.

It was a Wednesday morning, the third day since half term started. They all had bowls of porridge ready for breakfast and a bowl of milk for Fenny.

"I think she got the sniffles again," Lorna's mother said. "Why don't you tuck in breakfast, and I go check on Lorna."

As Milly and Sasha sat at the table and helped themselves to cups of tea, Lorna's mother went upstairs. When mother walked in, Lorna had already changed out of her pajamas and pulled on a sweater.

"Good morning, dear, how are you feeling?".

"Oh, I'm all right, mother, I guess. Except my head feels a bit stuffed, and my nose too," replied Lorna.

"I know the perfect medicine for you," said Frankie, walking towards the hallway cabinet. She took out a small brown bottle, poured a spoon, and offered it to Lorna. Lorna gulped down all the sticky medicine. "Now go outside for some fresh air; it will make you feel better. Have a little walk and come back. You'll be hungry as a bear for breakfast," Frankie smiled warmly.

"Thanks, mother." Lorna smiled, hugged mother, and rushed downstairs. She waved to her friends, "I'll be back soon," and went outside.

Fenny trotted behind her. "Come on, Fenny, let's go and visit Ellie. I'm curious if I was dreaming last night," Lorna rubbed Fenny's head and

whispered. Both rushed to the woods and, in no time, reached where they had left Ellie the last night.

"Hi, Ellie!" Lorna called out. The little elephant was happily eating from the trees. It got such a fright when Lorna called out and dropped all the leaves it held from the trunk.

"Sorry, Ellie, you remember us, don't you?" Lorna asked with a laugh. The elephant gave a small trumpet, and Lorna shook her head firmly.

"No, nothing was a dream; it's all real. Oh, I'm so glad to see you." Lorna hugged the baby elephant. Ellie looked healthy. "This is such a nice meeting," thought Lorna to herself. Ellie started asking a lot of questions.

"Well, I adore elephants myself; they are my favourite animals too, except for Fenny, of course," Lorna winked at Fenny. "Do you know your hearing is excellent? Elephants can even hear animals and vibrations miles away", Lorna went on.

Ellie then gave me another small trumpet. "I bet you weigh more than a hundred kilos by now. Newborn elephants weigh about 90 kilos and grow to five or six tons in adulthood!" Lorna answered.

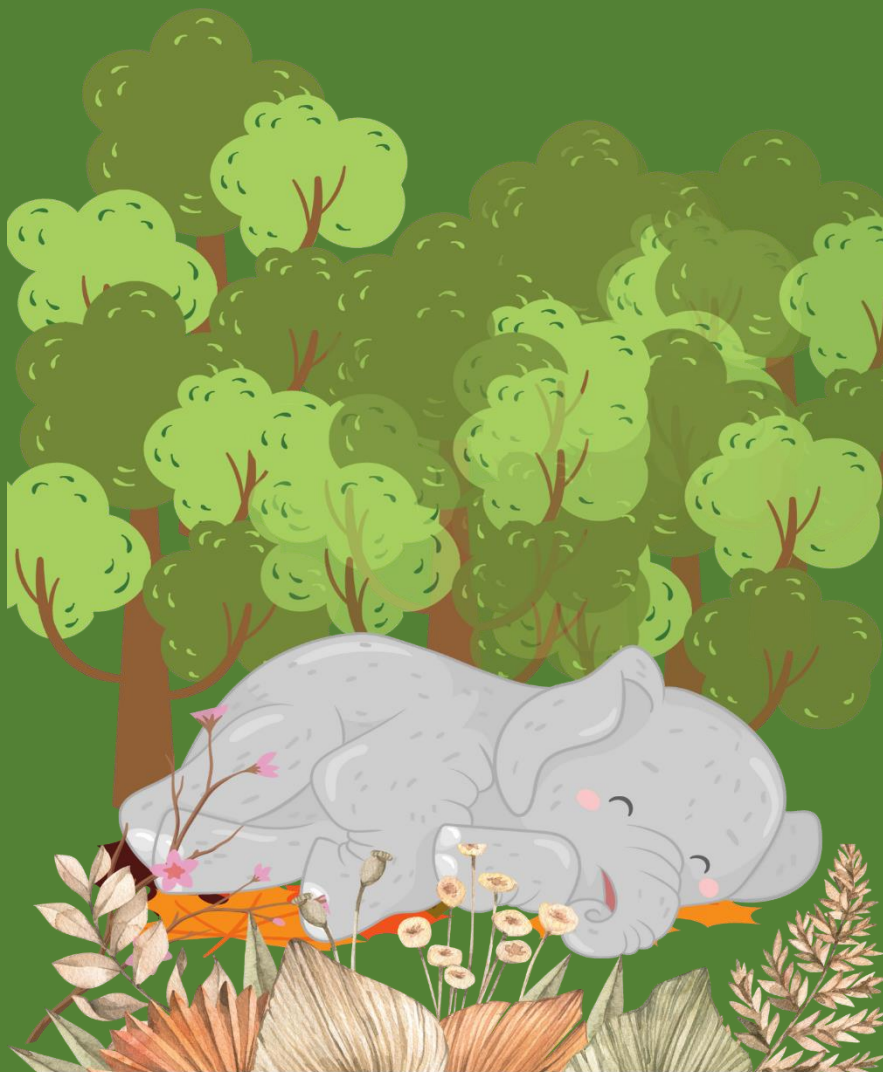
Ellie got more curious, asking more questions. "Yes, elephants have a long lifespan, around sixty to seventy years." Lorna looked worriedly at Ellie. She feels missed out about being left from the herd and is eager to know of its kind, thought Lorna. Soon, Lorna realized it was getting late, and her stomach started to rumble.

"Don't worry, Ellie. I'll break the news to mother, and she'll have you checked."

Lorna gave Ellie a big hug and bid goodbye for the time being. As they left Ellie behind, Lorna wondered how her friends would receive the thrilling news she got for them. Fenny growled, and that made Lorna laugh.

"Yes, Fenny, I think the little elephant is over-enthusiastic to know everything. I hope it doesn't get too exciting though".

They skipped along the path home. "I like the cheeky elephant, and I'm glad it is safe. What about you, Fenny?"



ELLIE GETS A CHECK UP

"Mother, can I tell you something?" as she was having breakfast.

Milly and Sasha were working on the vegetable patch in the back garden with their mother.

"Yes, finish your food first, please. How are you feeling now?" asked mother.

"I'm already feeling better, mother."

Frankie smiled and got up to tidy up the table. Lorna's mother has been very busy looking after some newly born hedgehogs. So, she rushed to the hut in the woods whenever she found a break. Lorna longed to break Ellie's news, so she gulped down her plate in a hurry.

Mother, I've finished," she called out, carrying her dish into the kitchen.

"Good. I'll be going to the hut now. Would you like to join in with your friends? I'm sure they would love to see the prickly babies."

"Oh, that would be a lovely idea, mother. But erm...." stammered Lorna.

"What is it, Lorna? Did you want to tell me something before?"

Is everything okay?"

Frankie looked quite unsure. Lorna's heart was thumping fast.

"Mother, I found an elephant last eve. It is a baby elephant and... and I think it must have got lost from its herd." Lorna spilled out in a rush.

"OH! An elephant? Where is it? Can we see her now?" mother seemed excited to take in the news just as Lorna did.

"Sure, mother! Now?" Lorna thought for a moment. "What about the hedgehogs?"

Mother was already moving towards the door. She picked up her Vet Bag.

"They've had their first meal earlier, and I'm sure they could spare an hour more."

Lorna guided her mother to where she had left Ellie earlier. Ellie saw them approaching and gave them a noisy trumpet. Frankie was shocked. She couldn't believe it, an elephant in the woods! It was their first encounter with an elephant since they came to live near the woods. Ellie seemed to shy away, crouched behind a bush.

"Come out, Ellie! This is my mother. There is nothing to fear".

The baby elephant moved slowly, one step at a time, out into the clearing; Frankie got close to Ellie, patted it, and touched its trunk.

Frankie examined the baby elephant from around. "No big wounds or signs of being hurt. She must be about two months old. Oh, Lorna, where did you find her?"

Lorna winked at Fenny.

"Erm, not far from here. The distressed trumpet call made me, and Fenny came looking for it. It was Fenny who heard the distance call before me".

Frankie looked at the baby elephant thoughtfully.

"It must have got separated from its herd. But I bet the herd must be far away because I've never seen any elephant near these woods before."

Mother opened the vet bag and started performing checkups on Ellie. Lorna waited impatiently. After a while mother other finished with her round.

"We will have to feed it with milk as well, Lorna. Young elephants depend on their mother's milk for two years. And this baby elephant cannot absorb all the nutrients it needs through solid food. So, did you think of a name, Lorna?" Frankie asked, turning towards Lorna.

Lorna smiled and answered, "What about Ellie?"

"Perfect!" replied mother. "Now, let's go home. We must visit the shops and buy many extra supplements for Ellie!"



Missing Ellie!

Lorna gave a huge yawn. “Wow, it was fun at the farm, but I’m tired out”.

“Yes, I loved looking at the bunnies,” added Milly. Lorna and her friends had visited Lorna’s father’s farm and returned home in the evening. They all had a picnic in the meadows before but were feeling hungry now.

“Come, everyone, help yourself to my homemade pasta.” Lorna’s mother served supper for everyone.

Once all the food was over, Milly and Sasha went to bed early. Suddenly, Lorna thought of visiting Ellie. Since they left early for the farm that morning, she couldn’t see the baby elephant as usual.

“Mother, can I go and visit Ellie and come?”.

“Okay, but remember to wrap warm; it’ll be cold outside soon.” Replied mother while tidying up in the kitchen.

Lorna jammed on a hat and a scarf and went outside with Fenny. The wood’s flying fox bats were heading out in the skies, looking for food. It was almost six o’clock, and Lorna loved watching the nightfall.

Fenny and Lorna skipped off to Ellie’s usual sleeping area. When they arrived, Lorna gasped, and Fenny gave her best surprised growl.

“Fenny, I cannot see Ellie.” Lorna ran up and down round the trees in panic. Fenny found a line of elephant footprints and pawed into it.

“Where has Ellie gone?” Lorna sounded worried. “I think we should tell the others. It is not a good idea to go inside the woods now. We might get lost since we do not bring any lights, and there is no sound from Ellie either.” Lorna and Fenny rushed back home.

“Mother! Mother!” Lorna burst in through the door. “Ellie has disappeared!”.

Mother looked up from the book she was reading.

“Ellie? But I checked on her earlier before lunch.”



HUNT FOR ELLIE

Everyone just finished putting up the tent together.

“After we rest a little, let’s get going,” suggested Lorna.

“Yeah, let’s get inside the tent,” agreed Sasha.

A worried and scared trumpeting sound filled the air as they were resting inside the tent. Lorna and Milly rushed out of the tent. Lorna whispered, “Ellie, we will find you, don’t worry.” “Even if you are deep in these woods,” added Milly.

“Come in, you two, finish your snacks and let’s pack up the tent safely and carry on the search,” Sasha called from inside the tent.

Not long after the search team started back on their feet, they heard three loud trumpets blasting nearby. Lorna ran ahead of the others, flickering her torch desperately through the woods. Fenny gave an excited bark. Lorna ran at top speed to her and knelt beside Fenny.

“Ellie! We’ve found Ellie!” shouted Lorna excitedly, patting Fenny at the same time.

Everyone joined her. “Wow!” echoed Sasha and Milly, kneeling beside Lorna, followed by Frankie.

The baby elephant was lying on the grass. Now that she was happy to see them, it trumpeted gracefully. Ellie still seemed upset, and Lorna realized it. The little elephant tried to sniff them all, but she couldn’t stand up properly; Ellie gave a moaning grunt.

“It sounds hurt, but I can’t see where,” said mother.

It was Lorna who caught sight of a greyish thing like cloth but with holes. She shrieked, making others jump.

“Look, mother, a mesh; it is an animal trap!” Mother came around to have a closer look.

“It is a barbed wire; I’m afraid this back leg has tangled in it.”

“Mother, could you take it off without hurting her leg?” Lorna asked worriedly.

“I’ll do my best. Get me the toolbox from the backpack,” instructed Frankie. Anxiously, the others watched as mother got to work.

Luckily, Ellie was brave enough to wait patiently. It took a while to clear off the knots in the trap. After some effort, the last bit of mesh came out of the elephant’s feet. It jumped straight up and shook itself happily.

“Thank you, mother,” Lorna hugged the elephant’s trunk gladly.

Mother applied some medicine to Ellie’s scratched legs. “She’ll be alright,” mother said with a warm smile, patting Ellie.



ELLIE'S CURIOUS TALE

Fenny gave a curious little growl. Lorna nodded in agreement and turned to Ellie and whispered. "Fenny and I would like to know how you ended up here."

Lorna and Fenny then listened to Ellie's tale. She said she was happy enough with Lorna and Fenny to keep her company, but when she had gone away that day to visit the farm. Lorna had not shown up in the morning; she had felt lonely and sad about losing her herd, so she had thought of going into the woods to find them, and that's how she had gotten stuck in the hunter's net.

Lorna stroked the little elephant. "Don't worry," she whispered. "We have lots of animals to keep you company here. But I've told you we don't have any chance of finding your herd. I'm afraid even now they may have left these woods by now. Elephants don't always be in the same place".

Ellie nodded. She was now again the little enthusiastic elephant. She trumpeted excitedly, sniffing everyone.

"Ah, the cheeky thing running away for no reason," chuckled Frankie.

Lorna grinned. She knew well why Ellie ran away.

Then, hugging Fenny, she said, "I'm so lucky to live near animals. I hope we have many more adventures like this."



THE END



AFTERWORD

As modern technology permeates the social and economic arenas, students tend to distance themselves from the creative process, relying more and more on technological tools. To reduce this risk and help aspiring young writers produce their own books, I sought and presented a research proposal to the Ministry of Education in 2014. It was a fantastic opportunity for children to showcase their enthusiasm and knowledge. The students at Mahamaya Girls' College achieved a record for the most books written, paving the way for a new level of innovation. The e-book project will enable the students to reach international readers, and I am confident that they have gained new experiences and challenges that will enable them to face the future with resolve. I wish all the young writers the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Senevirathna Mahalekam

Founder of Books Publishing Project Among School Children

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