
Girl in the Dark Alley.



Senendee Dahamya Liyanage

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Grade 7

St. Andrew's Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Nawalapitiya

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DEDICATION

To all the seekers of light in the darkest of alleys,
May you find courage in every shadow,
and hope in every step forward.

This is for you.

Foreword

Literary development is a yardstick to measure the development of a country. The Kotte and Dambadeniya eras stand out in the history of the world because they were literary enlightening periods. If so, this is the golden period in the history of the Mahamaya as well. This is the reason why our daughters have been enchanting through book writing for many years now. It is a special event that our writers have succeeded in building a culture of writing books in the school and spreading it to the entire school system and this time involving the global student community in it. Beyond this, this time the school community itself has also decided to rebuild the past Yatiwara writing tradition in the country in order to pay tribute to the founder of our school, Karadana Atthadassi Thero. The Pirivena student monks have also taken up book writing “The Herana Gatkaranani “ project was introduced. It is a matter of pride for me as the principal to lead the way in bringing about a qualitative change in the education of schools and Pirivena education through this academic and religious service, and it is also an achievement for the school. This book, which is the result of recognizing one's innate talent at an early stage in life and turning to writing, will undoubtedly be a help for future education and future life.

Shashikala Senadheera,

Principal, Mahamaya Girls’ Collage, Kandy

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Bullying

The sound of the bell ringing echoed through the speaker as the students started to pack their bags without waiting for the teacher to end the class. " Okay class then that's the lesson for today. Complete your homework, or else I'll give you detention." Said Mr. Smith. Everyone started to leave the class with their friends hurriedly, while I calmly packed my bag and left the class alone. The hallways were crowded as it was lunch time. I went to my locker and kept my things inside. Lucy, the mean and popular girl of the school, owned the locker next to mine. She is one of the bullies of the school. I think bullying has become her hobby. Even though she bullies so many students at school, no one would complain against her because her father is a well-known and rich businessman in the country. So, it's no use complaining because her father would pay the principal to ensure his daughter is not punished.

As I was keeping my things inside the locker, Lucy and her friends came and slammed my locker door.



I flinched due to the loud noise." Oh well, look, if it isn't the one with no friends"

she chuckled. "I think it's probably because how ugly she is. I mean, look at her clothes. So plain and old." said one of her friends. 'I agree" said another. All of them laughed. I kept silent because bullying is not new for me. Whether it's Lucy or someone else. "Look, you clay head, complete all me and my friends' homework and bring it tomorrow. Or else....." saying that, Lucy gave me glare and a bag full of books. Then she left with her friends. I sighed, kept the bag in my locker and went to the canteen to have my lunch. I went to an empty table, had my lunch alone, and went to my next class.

The Dark Alley

The last bell rang as everyone started to pack their bags. Everyone rushed out of the class and the school. I also packed my bag and left the school. I was walking to my house from school since it's not that far away. My house is in a small neighborhood with good people unlike my school. I stay alone at my house until my parents come home from work. Both my parents work at a big company that pays them a big salary. My parents are very understanding. Even though they come home late, they always make time to ask me about my day.

Coming back to present, I was walking home when I heard a sobbing sound. I looked around, but there was no one crying or sobbing. I stayed there for a while and tried to find where that sobbing sound was coming from. That's when I noticed this dark alley.



The sobbing sound was coming from that dark alley. I went towards the dark alley as the curiosity built inside of me. As I went inside the alley, the sound of the sobbing grew louder. The alley was really dark and there were trash cans on the sides making it creepy.

As I was going forward, I felt that I was getting closer to the place where the sobbing was coming from. I stopped walking when I saw a girl sitting on the ground, leaning against a wall, crying while hugging her knees. I gasped when I saw her. Tears were running down the girl's cheeks continuously. She was crying and sobbing very hard, so hard that she didn't notice my presence. Now I'm standing there confused, not knowing what I should do. I don't know if I should stay here or go back.

Making friends.

After some time, the girl stopped crying. She saw me "W-who are you? What are doing here?" she asked, stuttering while standing up. "I'm Chloe and you? 'I asked. "I-I'm Olivia. What are you doing here?" she asked. I could tell she was scared by her voice.

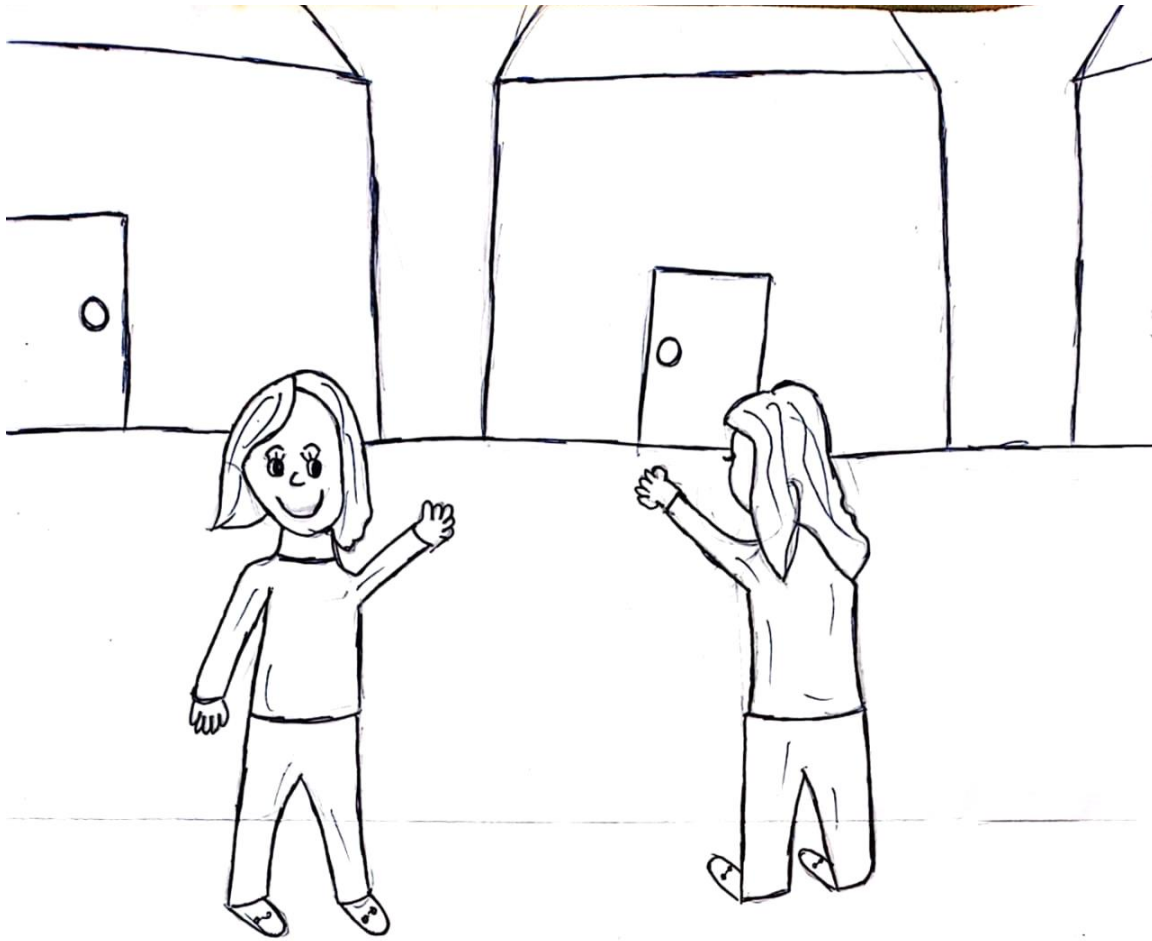
"I heard someone crying from this side, so I came here and saw you. Why you are here and why are you crying?" I asked being curious. "Uhm, it's nothing. You should go from here. This is not a safe place." said the girl. "Okay then, why are you here?" "It doesn't matter", she said sounding a little angry. "It does matter. I'm not leaving until you agree to come with me. "I said. "Why should I listen to you?" the girl asked being annoyed. "Because you said that this place is dangerous" I said." Ugh...fine I'll come" she said as she started walking toward me.

We started walking and came out of the alley. The curiosity inside me didn't leave as I didn't get to know why the girl was crying. So, I asked her why she was crying." Why were you crying?" She looked at me frowning. "You're really curious aren't you?" she asked. I smiled at her "So are you going to answer my question or...?" I asked being impatient. "It's none of your business "she said while looking away. "Oh, I'm sorry." I said not wanting to make her angry but the curiosity didn't leave me. "It's okay" she replied still looking away.

"So, where do you live? What school do you go to? Who are your parents?" I threw a bunch of questions at her, trying to get to know her. "So many questions" she said. "I live in a small house in this neighborhood with my grandmother. Both of my parents died. And I go to Brandlewood Middle school " she told. I felt sorry for her. "Oh no, sorry for reminding you about your parents and making you sad?" I said. "It's okay" she said. "I also go to the same school as you" I told her. "Oh, good" she replied shortly.

"You don't talk much, do you?" I asked her. "Yeah." that was her reply. "Can we be friends?" I asked. Olivia looked at me, confused." You want to be friends with me?" she asked. "Yeah." I replied, smiling. "Sure, why not." she said. My smile grew wider. "You're my only friend". I said. Olivia looked at me, shocked. "Really?" she asked. "Yeah." I replied.

We walked for a few more minutes when Olivia suddenly stopped in front of a house. "This is my house" she said. "Oh, okay" I said. I wanted to ask Olivia something, but I hesitated. She noticed me and asked me. "Do you want to ask me something?" "Uhm...since we're friends now, can we meet tomorrow afterschool and study together?" I asked. She smiled sweetly "Sure, let's meet at the school gate afterschool tomorrow and walk home together. Are you okay with me coming to your house to study?" she asked hesitating. "Sure, let's do that." I said. She waved me goodbye before she went inside the house. I also waved her goodbye and started walking to my house.



It wasn't that far away from Olivia's house to my house. I was really happy about finally having a friend.

Mystery

The next day I couldn't wait for school to end and study with Olivia. I was at the gate after school ended waiting for Olivia. After some time she came. "Hey, how was school?" I asked smiling. "Good." she replied shortly. Our journey to home was silent. "Can I know why you were crying yesterday?" I asked breaking the silence. "It doesn't matter." she told. I nodded my head even though I wanted to know the reason, but I didn't want to force her to say.

After some time, we reached my house and I opened the door. "Come on in." I said to Olivia. She came in and looked around. "Wow! Your house looks beautiful. 'She said. "Thank you" I said smiling. "Have a seat and I'll bring some snacks and then let's start studying" I said. Olivia nodded. I came back with a bunch of snacks and we started to study.



We studied Science. Since I was quite good at Science, I was able to help Olivia out with her questions.

"Oh my god, it's already 6.00p.m." Olivia said while looking at the clock. That's when I noticed that we have studied for 4 hours. "Yeah, 4 hours passed and we didn't even notice." I said. "Well, I better be going. My grandmother must be waiting for me" said Olivia. "Oh...okay I hope you don't have any questions left." I said. "No, I don't have any questions. Thanks to you I got answers to a lot of questions." Olivia said smiling. "It was a pleasure helping you out." I said.

After that Olivia said goodbye and left. We studied together for about two weeks, and Olivia and I are best friends. But one day something unexpected happened. I was going to the cafeteria to eat lunch when I saw Lucy was bullying Olivia. Without thinking twice I went to stop Lucy. As I went closer, I heard something shocking.

"Let me go Lucy. Or else I'll tell everyone about what your dad did" I heard Olivia saying with an angry voice. "Dare to tell anyone and the same thing happened to your parents and brother will happen to your grandmother as well. And then you'll be all alone in this world." Lucy said with an evil smile plastered on her lips. Lucy let Olivia go and left. I went to Olivia and asked " Are you okay?".

"Yeah, I'm fine" she told. Even though I wanted to ask what Lucy's dad did to Olivia's parents, I thought to wait until evening and ask her about that while studying.

Truth

That day after school I was at the gate waiting for Olivia. After she came, we went to my house to study. After some time I thought of asking her about what I heard at school. "Uhm...can I ask you something?" I asked Olivia.

"Yeah, sure." she said.

"So, I heard what Lucy said at school. About your parents and brother. Can I know what happened to them?" I asked her. She stared at me for a while and told "It's a long story. I-I will tell you later." She said while stuttering. And then suddenly she stood up with her bag. "Uhm...I need to go now. I've some work" she said in a shaky voice.

"But-" I tried to stop but she said "bye" and left hurriedly. I got really worried. Without thinking twice I went to find her. When I went to her house her grandmother said that she didn't come home. I got more worried. I walked for about 10 minutes and I heard sobbing sounds from the same alleyway where I found Olivia.

I went in the alleyway and I found Olivia sitting on the ground and crying really hard. I went to her and sat next to her. I patted Olivia's back and that's when she noticed me there. She quickly stopped crying and wiped her tears.

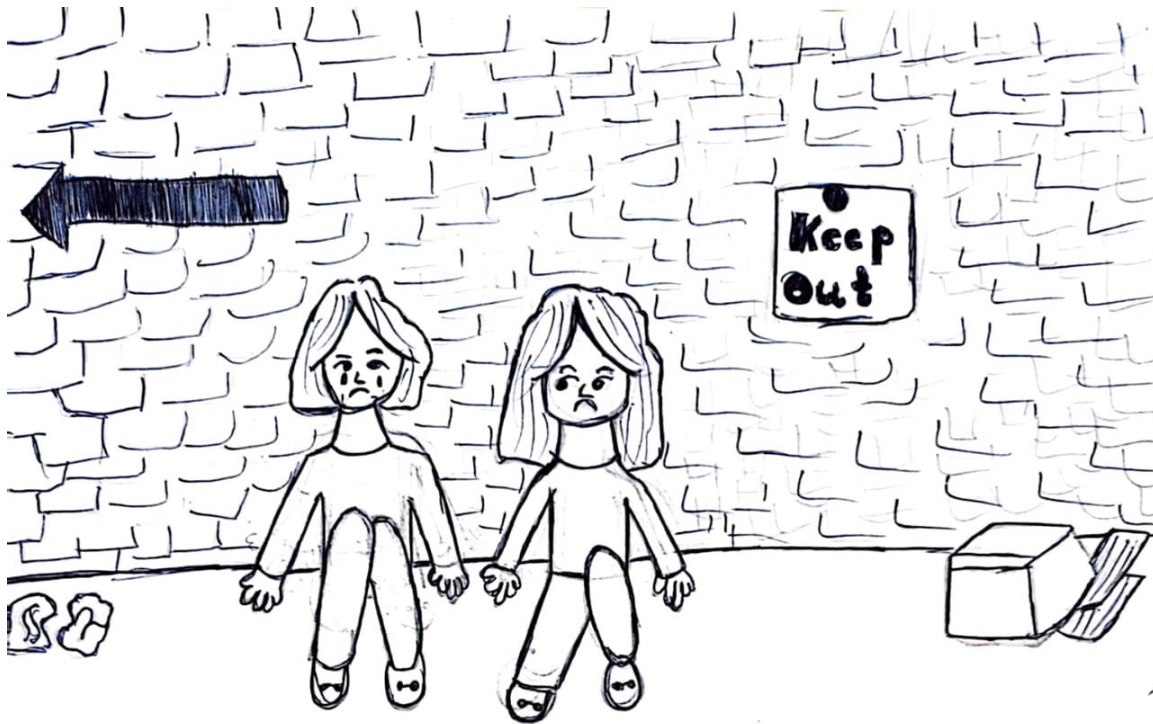
"W-What are you doing here?" she asked in a shaky voice.

"I was looking for you. Why are you here? Why are you crying?" I asked.

"You don't under-" I cut her off before she could finish her sentence.

"I will understand. Will you please tell me what happened?" I told her.

"Fine. My dad worked for a big company, which was owned by Lucy's dad. But Lucy's dad was doing a lot of illegal things with the help of the employees of the company. And one day Lucy's dad asked my dad to get involved in one of his illegal activities. But my dad refused to do that. So that evening Lucy's dad came to our house and brought my dad, my mom and my brother to this exact alley and killed them here in front of my eyes..."she said in a trembling voice.



"But I survived because I was out playing and I saw some people in black dragging my parents and brother here. I silently followed them and hid behind a wall. I didn't know what I should do because I was really young at that time." she said while controlling her tears.

I was shocked hearing that.

"Oh my god. It's okay Olivia. Don't cry." I tried to comfort her.

"But he, Lucy's dad didn't do that only to my family he is doing the same thing to other people who disobey him." Olivia said.

"Didn't anyone tell about this to the police?" I asked.

"We did tell to the police but he used his money to be free and to get out of trouble." Olivia said.

Lucy's dad can't just kill people and be free. It's wrong. That's when I knew I had to do something about this.

A determined plan for the future

That evening I went home and I couldn't stop thinking about what Olivia said. The whole night I kept thinking what to do to stop Lucy's dad. The next day I went to school and was waiting at the gate after school for Olivia. As usual we walked home together and was studying together.

" Uhm...I thought about what you said yesterday." I said.

"Oh, you did?" Olivia asked.

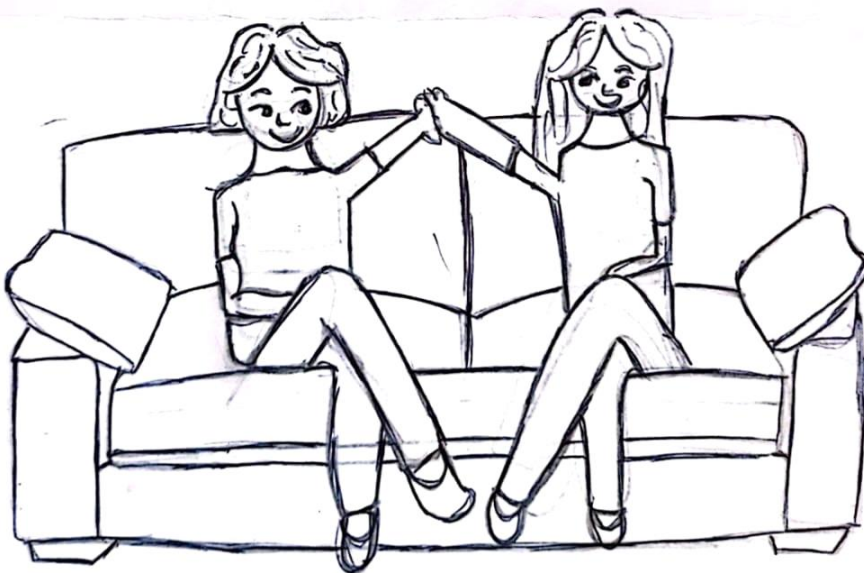
"Yeah, and I'm sure that your parents had a big dream to make you a well-educated person. So, first let's fulfill your parents dream and then let's try to do justice for your family and for others who died because of Lucy's father. And it will be easier to do that when we're older." I said.

" Yeah, I always heard my parents saying that they wanted to make me a big businesswomen. And yes it will be easier to take action to this when we're older." Olivia replied.

I smiled at her " Then let's make our parents proud.

Shall we?" I asked her.

"We shall." Olivia replied while smiling.



Afterward



According to my concept, under the project that has been running since 2014 to direct school children to writing, we have been fortunate to have planted more than sixty thousand writer seedlings in the local literary field. The objectives of this project are to improve the quality of education, to promote literature that will contribute to the future development of the country, to hone the abilities of the future generation, and to build a platform to showcase the creations of children. It is our social responsibility to create the fertile soil for those seeds to sprout and grow. This is the only project in recent history that has been implemented continuously for several years at the school level, provincial, national and international levels for the sake of the productivity of education. This time, it is special that the Pirivena student monks have also been involved in this. The nation should be grateful for the dedication shown by the Principal, daughters, teachers, parents and alumni of Mahamaya Balika Vidyalaya. The printed book is still the main tool of our education. The enjoyment that a child gets from a book cannot be provided by anything else. It is experimentally proven that the use of various electronic devices to store human knowledge and the distancing of children from books has been detrimental to the quality of education and has created various problems in society. This project, which is being implemented as a solution to this, has been adapting the smart younger generation of the digital age to modern technology by writing electronic works for the past two years, together with school children in the country. To take their creations to international readers, Mahamaya girls have built a digital fiction for their own, literary creative abilities. My congratulations to the young writers who have entered it through their creative abilities.

Project Founder and Coordinator,

Senevirathne Maha Lekam

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