

The
Darkness
of the
Midnight

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by
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**Dedicated to my beloved
Grandpa,**

Who always encouraged me to learn, guided me through my studies, and supported me every step of the way. Your love and wisdom helped me pass the scholarship exam and achieve my dreams. I am forever grateful for everything you have done for me!

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 Gatkarani “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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HANNAH

James Zander was a 16-year-old boy who lived with his parents. One Saturday evening his dad called him and said “James, we are going out for an office party and you are home alone, so be careful.”

“Would you take long to return?” asked James. His parents said, “It might be around 04.00 a.m.

“Is it alright to watch a movie at night before bed?” he asked permission and his parents were fine with it. “But you have to promise me that you will go to bed before midnight” replied his mother.

Soon his parents left, and James was home alone. It was almost midnight when James was watching halfway through a horror movie named “SCREAM VI,” while munching a bag of chips.

Suddenly the doorbell rang and James wondered, who it could be.

It’s not my parents as they have a key and it’s too early for them to arrive” he thought to himself. He paused the TV, kept the bag of chips on the bed, and walked slowly towards the living room door.

He felt a bit afraid, but he opened the door. He was shocked to see a young unknown girl standing at the door at a time like this. “Do we know you?” James asked, almost forgetting his manners to greet the girl first.

She said that James’s parent are her mother’s close friends. “Where in the world, does a guest come at this time?” James asked himself.

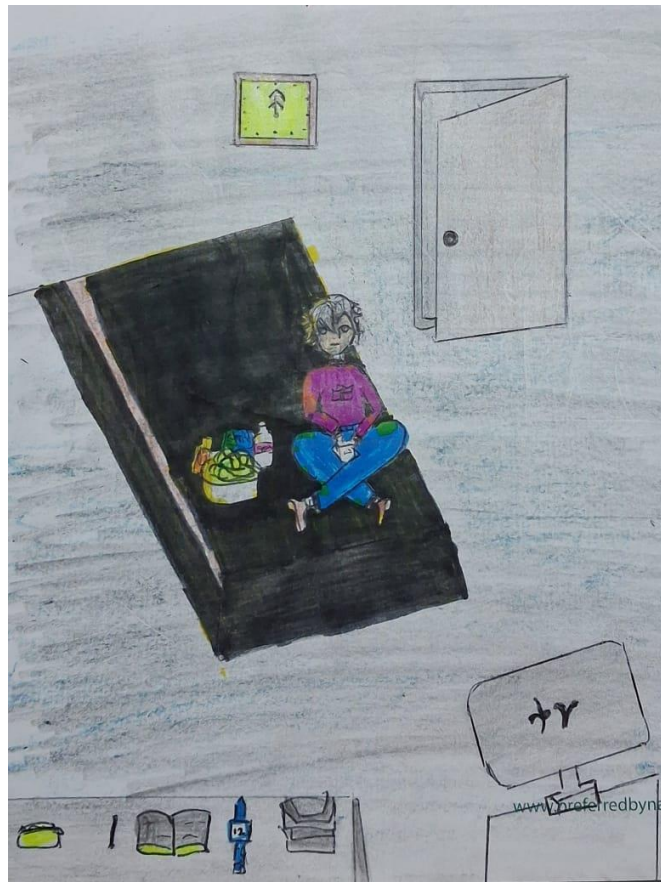
“Sorry to say but my parents aren’t at home, and why are you here at this hour?” asked James and the girl said when she went home her parents weren’t there so she had waited till midnight and felt alone, so she came to her mother’s friend’s house.

James believed her but had a strange doubt about her expression but still let her in. “You might be tired, so let me make you a cup of tea, by the way, what’s your name?” asked James leading the girl to the sofa in the living

room. "Hannah" she replied. He turned on the TV and handed the remote to Hannah.

When James was walking towards the kitchen, he felt someone following him. But as he turned, no one was there. "Things started feeling strange after Hannah had arrived," he thought. James made a cup of tea, and as soon as he stepped out of the kitchen, the lights went off.

He lit a candle and came back to the living room. To his surprise, Hannah wasn't there and the TV was still switched on though there was no electricity, and when he looked back at the sofa James was even more surprised to see her seated on the sofa.



He felt very strange indeed. He kept the candle on the table and asked her where she had been. "I was looking for you in the kitchen." She replied. James was shocked indeed because he was in the kitchen but found no one.

He sat on a chair nearby and asked her who her dad is. "Wilson" she replied. "Didn't Mr. Wilson die in a car accident?" he thought but didn't dare to ask her, as it is not polite to ask a person if their dad had passed away.

By now James felt even stranger, anyway he offered a piece of cake and a cup of tea to the girl. They were chatting until around 03.00 a.m. and ran outside, hearing a car honking, and much to James's relief it was his parents.

His parents stopped in confusion and asked, "James, didn't you promise me that you would go to bed before midnight? And what are you doing outside all alone?" "I came out with Hannah when we heard the car honking," he said as he turned towards Hannah, but she wasn't there. "Hannah is gone," he said in shock. "Hannah? Who is that?" Gaspd his mother.

"I don't know. She said that she is your best friend's daughter". He replied. "WHAT?" she asked in shock. "What does she look like," asked his dad.

He tried to explain about her but could only remember the direction to where she lived. "She said that her dad was Wilson, and that's all I can remember" replied James.

"Wilson's daughter? Oh! That Hannah?" said his parents as they stared at him with shocked faces. "What is going on?" he gasped, as he was also afraid now. His mom started to explain the story.

"Two months ago, a young girl and her family passed away in a car accident on this street, and that family was the Wilson family."

Suddenly James's dad shouted, "Did you eat anything she gave you, did you?" Now James started remembering that Hannah did give him a piece of the cake she had bitten, but he couldn't take a bite because he ran outside on hearing the toot of the car.

"I almost did," he said as he ran to the living room, the lights were still off and the candle was still burning, his parents followed him and when they arrived, they started searching for anything strange and were horrified to see *Blood-stained teeth marks* on the cake she had bitten.

Seeing that James hugged his parents tight and said "Thank you, I wouldn't be alive right now if you hadn't arrived at the nick of time."

THE UNFORGETTABLE TRIP

Jake, a 16-year-old boy, was going on a picnic trip with his parents and his best friends, Richard and Colin in their car. They got ready to go early in the morning and were excited and impatiently could not wait till they set off.

“When are we going?” asked Jake from his mother. His mother replied, “Not now, we will start at 5.00 a.m.” They waited and waited and finally, it was time to leave.

“Any of you want to listen to a horror story?”, asked Colin and the others agreed. When the story came to an end, Richard asked, “Do you believe in ghosts because I do?” “Well, I don’t,” said Colin, and Jake said that he does believe in ghosts a little.

A few minutes later they entered a forest and started to have their picnic lunch. Soon it turned dark as they got ready to get back home. As Jake’s dad turned on the engine, he figured out the engine didn’t work. He said, “the engine doesn’t work, I will have to fix it, and it will take a little time.” After a few minutes of trying to fix it, he said “I am afraid that we will have to spend the night here.”

“Then we will have to find a place tonight,” said Jake’s mother leaning on to help.

“Alright then, we will go look for a place” said Jake turning to Richard and Colin to ask if they would come with him, to which they responded.

Jake’s mother did not like to let the three boys go alone by themselves at first but agreed later because they had no other choice, and she had helped her husband fix the engine. “Alright, but be very careful and take some food with you, so that you can lay the table if you find a place, dad and I will come as soon as we fix the car,” she said before letting them go.

They took some food with them and started walking through the woods. They walked through the forest talking and after two or three hours, they found an old-looking house made of wood. It looked as if it had been abandoned a thousand years ago, “so very old” exclaimed, Jake. Also, they

noticed *Blood red marks* on the walls, all over. “OH MY GOD, isn’t it eerie” asked Colin in dismay. Rather shocked they knocked on the door and a little girl answered.



“Are you guys lost?” asked the little girl as soon as she saw the boys. Jake explained to the girl what happened. “Is it alright if we spend the night here?” Richard asked politely. The little girl agreed and let them in.

“Oh! Colin, look around. This place looks creepy” whispered Richard to Colin pointing to the cobwebs all around the house. “Something is wrong with this house and why are there *blood-red marks* on the walls!” complained Jake in a whisper.

“Where are your parents, are they upstairs?” asked Richard from the girl. The girl remained silent as if she didn’t want to answer the question. “Is she living alone, that can’t be true,” said Colin to himself.

The three boys were indeed shocked to hear that the little girl lived alone. They went to the dining table and saw cobwebs all around. “How does she even take her meals in a place like this and why does she live alone in the middle of a giant forest” asked Jake from Colin.

“How am I supposed to know that,” replied Colin. “But I presume that this is a rather abnormal house.” The girl heard it and gave a creepy grin at them as if to say that she heard it, and turned away, sulkily.

They said they had brought food and asked the girl to join them, thinking that the girl would forgive them for saying something like that about her house. The girl was pleased and offered to help them and she did seem like she had forgotten everything.

They cleaned the table and were waiting for their parents to arrive, then Jake suddenly asked her how she found food for herself. Then the girl grinned, stood up, took a knife, “*BY KILLING PEOPLE!*” she said in a voice that stunned the boys. She walked towards them, her face looking vicious and gruesome.

They fled towards the door, but to their horror, the door was locked. The girl came closer and closer, and almost suddenly came the sound of a honking car, to their surprise the strange girl disappeared and the door opened with a creak, and they ran outside panting loudly.

They were even more surprised and delighted to see their car. They ran towards the car and got in. The engine had been fixed well, so they set off as fast as they could – promising to tell the story while journeying.

“Thank you,” they all said together and Jake hugged his parents.

DARKNESS OF THE MIDNIGHT

Jeremy was a 16-year-old boy who lived with his parents. His parents were not home for a whole week so he got permission from his parents to invite his friends Andrew, James, Lexi, George, and Luna, his classmates to a party at night at his house.

He started arranging snacks for the party. He organized some fun games and also a place to watch a movie. It was 09.00 p.m. and he was settling down on a sofa when the doorbell rang. Jeremy ran downstairs to the door, thinking it might be his friends and he was right.

As soon as he opened the door, they all came in as if they were in a hurry. They started the party with sweets and snacks followed by games before dinner. After an hour or so, they all felt hungry, and Jeremy ordered pizza for dinner.

“Let’s watch a movie until the pizza arrives,” he said as he kept the phone on the nearby table. “That’s a great idea,” said George standing up from the chair he was sitting. They ran upstairs to where Jeremy had arranged the place.

“What movie are we going to watch?” asked Lexi suddenly. “Can we watch a horror movie? Please!” begged James. “Please not a horror movie, I don’t want to get scared tonight,” said Luna, who hates horror movies.

“Come on Luna. Don’t be a big baby” said Andrew who had already settled down to watch the movie. “We are not going to watch a scary one, so just settle down, Luna.” Said Jeremy turning on the TV. Halfway through the movie, they heard the doorbell.

“Who is t-that ringing the bell? Is it a g-g-ghost?” asked Luna shivering in fear. “A ghost? It’s the pizza delivery man, *maybe!*” said Andrew looking at the scared girl, Luna. “What do you mean, MAYBE?” asked George who was silent the whole time.

“You can’t tell when a ghost comes, can you?” replied Andrew. “Ha-ha you think that’s funny, well not,” said Lexi. “Excuse me is anyone going to take the pizza?” interrupted James.

“Oh! I was listening to what you guys were saying and I forgot about the pizza.” Said Jeremy as he stood up. “Would you mind if I come with you, my legs are hurting after sitting here for a long time” asked James.

“Alright then hurry up, or the delivery man will leave,” Jeremy said as he ran to the door, he was followed by James. They quickly arrived back into the room. They began enjoying the pizza while watching. A few minutes later they heard someone ring the bell again.

“Who is that now?” said George. Suddenly the lights went off. It was all dark inside because the only light was the light of the computer screen.



James switched on a torch and they all went downstairs. The moment they went downstairs they figured that the front door was wide open! “Didn’t you close the door, when you came up?” asked George.

“Well, I think I did” replied James. “It might be the wind; I will close it.” He said as he went to the door. “Didn’t you hear that? Someone is walking outside in the garden!” said Lexi. “I heard it too, it’s not a ghost, right?” asked Andrew.

“Ha-ha who’s the big baby now, Andrew?” said Luna. “Blaa-blaa, I said it because I thought you might get scared.” He said starting a fight. “Come on you guys, someone is walking outside in the garden and you are arguing here” interrupted Jeremy.

They went out and looked around but found no one. They went in and the lights came back. They were on the steps going to the room, and Luna suddenly yelled. “Stop pushing me Andrew, I said once, and I wouldn’t say twice.”

“What do you mean, you are the last one to come” said George looking down at Luna. “Don’t blame me for no reason, it’s not my fault that you get scared for everything” complained Andrew.

They heard the doorbell ring again. “Now, are we going to open the door?” Asked Lexi. “I think we should,” said James looking at the door. “Hope, it’s not a ghost, or else our little Luna would get scared,” said Andrew looking at Luna and she gave an angry look at Andrew. They went back to the door and opened it and saw a small girl who looked like a 6-year-old.

The girl was wearing a white dress that had *blood marks* and her hair was led down on her face so they couldn’t see her face. “What are you doing here, you little girl?” said James bending down to take a good look at the girl.

Suddenly the girl grabbed from James’s neck “None of your business” she said as she pushed James back. “*She is a ghost,*” said Luna. “Are you okay, James?” asked Lexi giving a helping hand to James to get up.

“Oh! Sorry you little ghost but this is not Halloween, so you should go back or you will be sorry” said Andrew holding a bat in his hand. “Oh! Really? Let me show you what’s *Halloween*” said the girl pushing him to the ground. His head hit so hard that he fell unconscious.

The girl grabbed the bat and was about to attack him when someone pushed her, it was Jeremy. Luna and James ran to Andrew and tried to wake him up, but he didn't so they threw water at him from a bottle that was nearby, and at last Andrew woke up.

Andrew got up, took the bottle, and threw it at the little girl. She looked at Andrew with a creepy grin, and Luna seeing the *bloody face* of the girl screamed in fear.

The girl was distracted by the screaming of Luna, and Jeremy had the opportunity to knock the girl down. "Luna's fear was useful after all," said Jeremy tapping Luna on the shoulder. "Are you ok?" asked George from Andrew.

"It hurts a bit" replied Andrew stroking his head. "It had to hurt the way you bumped your head on that wall" Said, Jeremy. "What are we going to do now, should we call the police?" asked Lexi. Suddenly Luna screamed and when they turned, they saw the girl waking up, she pulled Luna's leg and she fell. All of them pulled Luna by her hand and they managed to get her closer to them.

The girl suddenly disappeared. "Now, where did she go?" said George looking around. The girl appeared behind Lexi and she got possessed, but no one saw it. Then Andrew saw that Lexi was acting a little weird, so he asked her why. Suddenly Lexi raised her head and once again Luna screamed "Lexi has become a ghost" George said. "Now I know where the ghost is, she is in Lexi's mind". Lexi attacked Andrew because he was the one who was near her.

Andrew started punching her. "Hey! Stop that, she's our friend" said Luna watching from a corner. "No, Lexi is our friend, not this monster," replied James. "Ouch, why are you punching me, Andrew?" said Lexi as she was not possessed anymore. "Oh! My god, I thought you were still a ghost." Andrew said as he stopped punching. "Nice try, but you can't scare me," Lexi replied standing up.

"He is not lying Lexi; you did become a ghost" Explained Jeremy. "Let's escape before it comes again," said Luna and they all went for the door. With

a big bang, the door closed. They tried to turn the door knob but it was locked.

“We are prisoners, now,” said George feeling a bit disappointed. “Don’t be silly” said Jeremy “Let’s try escaping from a window” and he went up the stairs, followed by the others.

They went up searching for an open window but didn’t find any and the closed ones couldn’t be opened. A few minutes later they figured out that James was missing.

“Where in the world has James gone,” said Jeremy. “You don’t think he got caught by the ghost, do you?” asked Luna reminding the bloody face of the girl. So, they all went searching for James and found him lying in a room that was filled with the moonlight. “Is he sleeping?” asked Lexi. “No dummy, he is probably unconscious,” said Jeremy as he went to the door. Suddenly the creepy girl appeared from nowhere. “Nice try but you can’t defeat me,” said the girl and chased after the children, they fled as fast as they could until the ghost disappeared. They went back to where they had found James and he wasn’t there. “Now, where did he vanish” asked Andrew. Suddenly they heard James call their names and went to him and asked him how he had escaped. He said that he had knocked her down with a bat. “Oh! How I wish that our parents were here” said Lexi looking around.

Almost instantly the sound of a vehicle echoed which sounded familiar to Jeremy. “Oh! That’s my parent, what are they doing here,” said Jeremy. He ran to the door and heard the key turning in the keyhole. He hugged his parent explained what had happened, and asked them why they had come so early. They said that the train had trouble halfway through the journey so they had decided to come back. Ruining this happy moment the ghost appeared once more. So, they all teamed up together and defeated the ghost never to return.

“Thank you. You arrived at the perfect moment,” Jeremy said hugging his parents.



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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