

EXTRACT

KERA PUTIH (THE WHITE MONKEY)

Julie Janson

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KERA PUTIH (THE WHITE MONKEY)

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Kera Putih

The White Monkey

by Julie Janson

Scene 1

Lyssa and Ketut's dreams

There is a shrine in a garden with flowers and incense. There are statues of monkeys holding Balinese umbrellas. A large symbolic cage stands in the centre of the stage, inside is a Kera.

Lyssa enters

Lyssa: I have this dream. I'm flying above the kids' heads, at school. They can't touch me. I skim over the gum trees like a galah. It's summer and the cicadas are going off like crazy. The teachers are trying to wave me down and I zoom over their heads. I look down and some of them have got black roots or dandruff. And no-one can get to me. They are yelling their heads off I'm licking a paddle pop and the dribble drops on a teacher's head and she thinks it's bird poo. And mum and her new husband are there. Mum's wearing see through Indian clothes and no shoes. She's giving out pamphlets to save the forests and liberate battery chickens. My sort of dad has a shaved head, with pink bits of hair and earrings in his eyebrows! Everyone else's parents look like models for k-mart and they play tennis. And they remembered to get married. I bet they don't give their children, tofu

sandwiches, with sprouts. Or give them names like Lyssa Bandicoot Earthlight.

Ketut enters

Ketut: Selamat pagi. I like to come to this forest sometimes. I listen to the animals and insects, it's beautiful. My family is very big, there is ni wyan, ni madi, ni nyoman and me, e ketut, then e wyan and the baby who is like a god to my mother. It is noisy at home so I come here to dream that I can be a warrior and have great adventures. I would have a bow and arrow and a kris, that is a very special dagger, with magic power.

Lyssa: Then in my dream, like magic, I'm in Bali ... Well you know how weird dreams are. I don't even get airsick on Garuda.

Ketut: You know Bali? You think it is just some ordinary island?

Lyssa: Bali smells of frangipani and chili cooking and coconuts.

Ketut: In the beginning there was a big nothing, it was empty. Antaboga, a huge serpent, made Bedawang the turtle. The serpent coiled two snakes on the turtle's back. Over their backs is a black stone, like a lid. No sun, no moon, there's no light under this lid it's very dark. That's the underworld. Many magic things are happening here even if at first you cannot see them.

Lyssa: I look up and a blue demon is eating the full moon, the moon goddess. Cool ... Suddenly some how, I am sitting in a forest with a monkey ... A monkey soldier.

Ketut exits

Lyssa: Bali, I couldn't believe it when mum said we were going. The bad part is that we're staying at a tacky hotel with, now get this..my real dad and his girlfriend and her children. They are absolutely the most embarrassing relations. They wear those shiny shell suit trackies and have bad bad haircuts. They look like they have dead possums on their heads. My sort of brother actually wears his pants up under his armpits. If I burp or anything they say "oh dear, that's not nice" and dad's girlfriend makes us kids sit up straight as poles at the table and eat with our lips pressed together and never talk. I mean you nearly chew your cheeks out. But I get away from the family by telling them I'm trying to learn the language. So I go around looking for people to practice my bad Indonesian.

Scene 3***Lyssa meets Ketut***

Lyssa walks around a temple, she holds a guide book and reads a greeting in Bahasa to Ketut.

Lyssa: Selamat pagi.
 Ketut: Selamat pagi.
 Lyssa: Siapa nama mu?
 Ketut: Nama saya Ketut.
 Lyssa: Ketut, there's so many Ketuts.
 Ketut: Apa kabar?

Lyssa: Baik, baik. Apa kabar?
 Ketut: Okay, you speak with a good accent.
 Lyssa: You do speak English.
 Ketut: What's your name?
 Lyssa: Lyssa, hey, how come you speak it so well?
 Ketut: I go to the Australia Centre Language school
 in Denpasar on Saturdays.
 Lyssa: Right, I knew that. Are your parents
 Australian?
 Ketut: No, they are Balinese, my father is an English
 teacher.
 Lyssa: Cool..well I'd better go.
 Ketut: Yeah, someone might be looking for you.
 Lyssa: See you.
 Ketut: Maybe.

Lyssa walks away then changes her mind

Lyssa: Um wait ... Um Ketut.
 Ketut: Yeah, did you want something?
 Lyssa: No. Oh forget it..it's just that..
 Ketut: What?
 Lyssa: You'll think it's stupid.
 Ketut: No I won't.

Lyssa speaks to the audience

Lyssa: This is where I say something dumb, and he
 looks at me like I'm a real loser. But hey,
 this is my big chance to meet a Balinese boy.
 That's sick.

She talks to Ketut

Can I practice my Indonesian with you?
 Ketut: Sure.
 Lyssa: Ahhh, I don't know any more. Oh wait...Dimana
 saya bisa toilet, or sayur campuran terimah
 kasih.

Aside to audience

Oops. I think I just asked if I could go to the toilet in a bowl of rice.

Lyssa laughs loudly. Ketut is embarrassed

Ketut: I think you need some help. Do you have a phrase book?

Aside to audience

It is good that this girl is trying to speak Indonesian. She sounds like an Australian.

Lyssa: Yeah. I will study the book. But it would be better if I could hear the words. Where is your school?

Ketut: In Denpasar.

Lyssa: Do you like it?

Ketut: The school is good but many children are leaving because they can't find the money now. It costs too many American dollars.

Lyssa: The economic thing? It's bad isn't it? I saw the riots last year in Java. It was on TV.

Ketut: Some people are getting poor because the tourists are staying away. Many businesses need tourists.

Lyssa: Yeah, that's hard. We're not rich. We're sort of in the middle. Dad won this trip in a raffle. First prize was a trip to Bali. Second prize was a weekend in the Budget Motel in Queanbeyan, third prize was a frozen chook.

Lyssa mimes a chicken and laughs**Ketut speaks in an aside to audience**

Ketut: She is smart, but laughs too loud.

He admires her ring

That is a beautiful ring.

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