Petteri Hannila, Contemporary, Avant-garde, English

Frontiers

Drama of humanity set in contemporary Central Africa.

Stretching 400 km [250 miles] from north to south, the national park of Virunga lies within the Albertine Rift, a geographical region in equatorial Africa characterized by mountain ranges, several great lakes and stupendous biodiversity. In the north of the park, the snow-capped Rwenzori mountains reach a height of 5,100 metres [16,700 feet]. The central savanna region is home to hippos, elephants and lions. And the south is well-known for its mountain gorillas which live in the rainforests, on the slopes of several dormant volcanoes. There are also two active volcanoes, both of which have sizable lava lakes that sometimes erupt.

The geological volatility of the region mirrors the socio-political landscape. Virunga lies near the nexus of one of Africa's most violent and lawless regions, where DRC meets Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Since 1994, more than six million people have died as a consequence of conflict.

The following operate in vicinity and in the park:

The ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) and NALU (National Army for Liberation of Uganda) operate together in the north. They are an extremist Islamic movement operating to undermine the government of Uganda.

Mai-Mai are Congolese and operate in the centre of the park. In the south is the FDLR (Democratic Forces for Liberation of Rwanda), many of whom were responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

UK-based oil company SOCO has maneuvered to get drilling rights in the area. The preliminary seismic tests have confirmed the presence of oil in the Virunga park area. Currently they have withdrawn from the area, but who knows what the future brings.

The park safety is held through proud and able group of armed rangers who do their best to keep both men and animals safe in the park. A country coming out of a twenty years of civil war is in enormous pressure, and can help Virunga only superficially. Virunga operates through funding it gets from Buffet Foundation and EU. Its budget is around 9 million US dollars.

Grains

- History of civil war brings chaos
- Jungle still holds mysteries
- Courage and cause drive towards greatness

Kayipu Makunza

Kayipu is a biologist in her mid-forties. She was always driven and gifted in school and through luck in life managed to get to study both in her home country as well as abroad.

So it was only natural for her to start working in Virunga. She specialized in great apes, mostly chimpanzees and gorillas. She worked there even during the civil war. Her busy life and passion for her work hasn't allowed her to start a family or even marry.

It was four months ago, when they found the boy. He was estimated to be around seven years old, and was found in the forest living with chimpanzees. Nobody knew how long he had lived that way, but when the park workers rescued him he couldn't speak and acted as one of the animals.

Kayipu has taken him under her wing and promised herself she would nurse him back to his health both physically and mentally. She is fascinated by the connection he seems to have with the apes, but at the same time sad for whatever fate the boy must have met to end up in the rainforest all by himself. She has read all the reports she has found on feral children and knows that it will be a difficult task, if not impossible, to bring the boy back to humanity.

Kayipu has called for aid to get a psychiatrist to join her in her efforts to reach the child. She named him “Benga”, which means refuse. So far, the name has proven to be accurate.

To top it all, her only family still alive, her brother, has lately been acting all strange. He had some pretty traumatic experiences during the wars and she is afraid he has joined, or at least supports some of the radical groups working to undermine the government control in the area.

Traits	
3	**Biologist** Scientist who has studied apes all her adult life.
2	**Curious** She is intellectually curious and ready to go beyond textbooks.
2	**Courageous** She is willing to do what it takes.
1	**Worker in Virunga** The workers in the national park form a tight family that support each other.
1	**Case of Benga** She is dedicated to help the boy.

Burdens	
1	**Stubborn** She doesn't take no for an answer.
1	**Worry for her brother** She is worried and cares for her brother.

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Last update: **2019/02/07 09:40**