

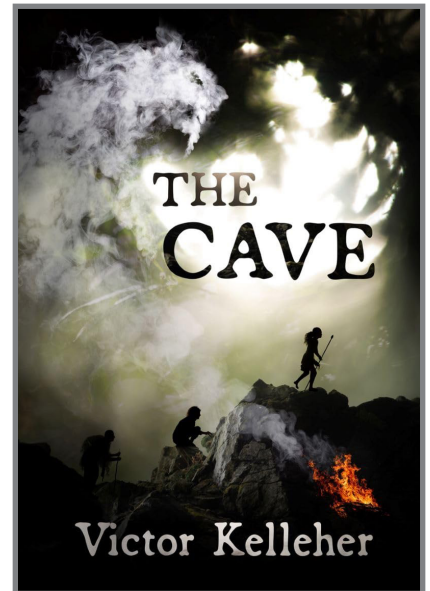
The Cave

AUTHOR

VICTOR KELLEHER

ILLUSTRATOR

LORENA CARRINGTON



SCIS: 5483345

ISBN: 9780645378863

RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Primary

SYNOPSIS

Irian, Ulana and their Clan have made the cave their home ever since they used fire to drive off the Beast—a sabre-toothed tiger that had been preying on them. Protected by an ongoing fire at the cave mouth, they continue to keep the Beast at bay . . . until one fateful night when the fire goes out! What happens next shatters the Clan and leaves Ulana badly injured and Irian too traumatised even to speak.

Alone and adrift in their dangerous prehistoric world, they have little hope of survival. What saves them is a chance meeting with a prickly old woman called Trug. Grudgingly, she takes them on a strange, unexpected journey of discovery, flinging them into the many wonders and hard realities of ancient times.

And that hazardous journey will eventually lead them full circle: back to the challenge of the cave, and the enduring reality of the Beast . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With many novels to his credit, Victor Kelleher has written successfully for both adults and for young people. Formerly an associate professor of English, he has long since devoted himself full-time to fiction. He is a past winner of the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Award, has twice received the CBCA Honour Award, and has either won or been short-listed for many other such prizes, including the Science Fiction Achievement Award and a short-listing for the Carnegie Medal. He currently lives in Tasmania with his artist wife.

Victor's previous novel with Eagle Books, *Wanderer* (2022) was shortlisted for the 2023 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lorena Carrington is an illustrator and writer with a background in fine arts, photography and design. She has worked on story collections, anthologies and picture books, and has also created a number of cover illustrations and designs. Her book, *Satin* (with text by Sophie Masson) was published in 2023 by MidnightSun Publishing. Her first book as an author/illustrator, *Leaf Letters*, will be published by Christmas Press in July 2024.

Lorena is the recipient of the 2020 Australian Fairy Tale Society award, for her 'outstanding contribution to the field of Australian Fairy Tales' and a May Gibbs Creative Time Fellowship in 2023.

STUDY NOTES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Beast is based on the sabre-toothed big cats that roamed the ancient landscapes of Europe and America for millions of years. They presented a formidable challenge to prehistoric people. What can you find out about these animals, and other predators like the prehistoric lynx?
- The ability to make fire was regarded with awe and even fear in some ancient prehistoric societies, and in *The Cave*, Trug's ability to do so is thought by Ulana to be a sign that she is a witch. In one of the Greek myths, the Titan (giant) Prometheus steals fire from the gods and gives it to humans. He is severely punished for this. Find out more about this myth and discuss why the ability, not just to use fire but to make it (rather than wait for lightning strikes), was such an important stage in human development.
- Why were flint quarries so important in prehistoric times?
 - Research ways in which flint was used.
- Why do you think the bow and arrow is more effective against the predators than spears?
- Trading, as opposed to simply giving, is at the centre of some of the events in the book. What are the arguments for each?

ACTIVITIES

- Others of Irian and Ulana's clan escaped the Beast, as we discover late in the novel. Write a short story from the point of view of one of them, before they meet up again with Irian and Ulana. What sort of experiences did they have?
- Here are some things the illustrator, Lorena Carrington, wanted to include in the cover for *The Cave*:
 - The main characters, and something of their personality.
 - The threat of the Beast, without showing exactly what it looked like.
 - Both the cave itself and the wilds beyond.

Design your own book cover for *The Cave*. Think about the following questions when creating your design:

- How would you design the cover?
- What are the overarching themes?
- Who are the characters?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What are the parts of the plot you want to reveal on the cover?
- Can you hint at any spoilers or twists without actually revealing them?
- Think about what colour does to the feel of a cover. Think about how colour can change the genre of the novel. You can use the same image but use colour to make it look like a mystery, a romance, or a horror story.
- What's Trug's backstory? How did she come to live on her own as a wanderer, in such a dangerous time? Write what you think might have happened.
- Lorena Carrington used photographic montage to create the front cover and images in *The Cave*. She said of the process 'I spend a lot of time looking at random objects, wondering what I can turn them into. In this case, the smoky Beast is made from several photos of steam rising off my morning cup of coffee.' Make your own montage illustration. Collect seven things, either inside the classroom, or from outside. They could be anything: pen, leaf, muesli bar wrapper, twig, pencil sharpener, interesting bit of gravel, feather, etc. Put them on a piece of paper in front of you. Move them around. Can you make the following three things with them?
 - A face (front on—or for more of a challenge, in profile)
 - A creature (either a real animal or something mythical)
 - Some kind of shelter (a cave, or a tent, or something wild and elaborate! But make it a safe place for someone to spend the night).