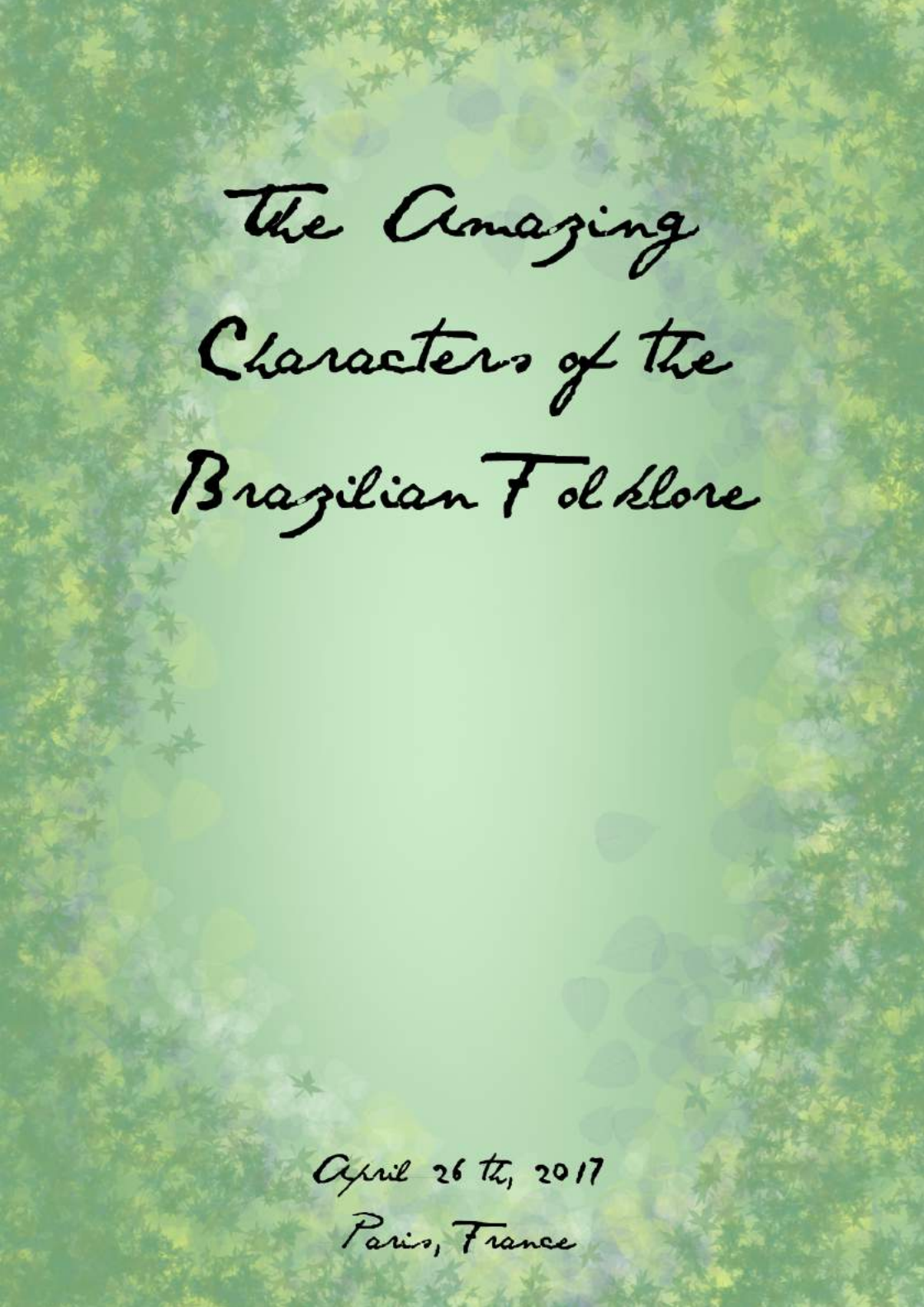


*The Amazing
Characters of the
Brazilian Folklore*





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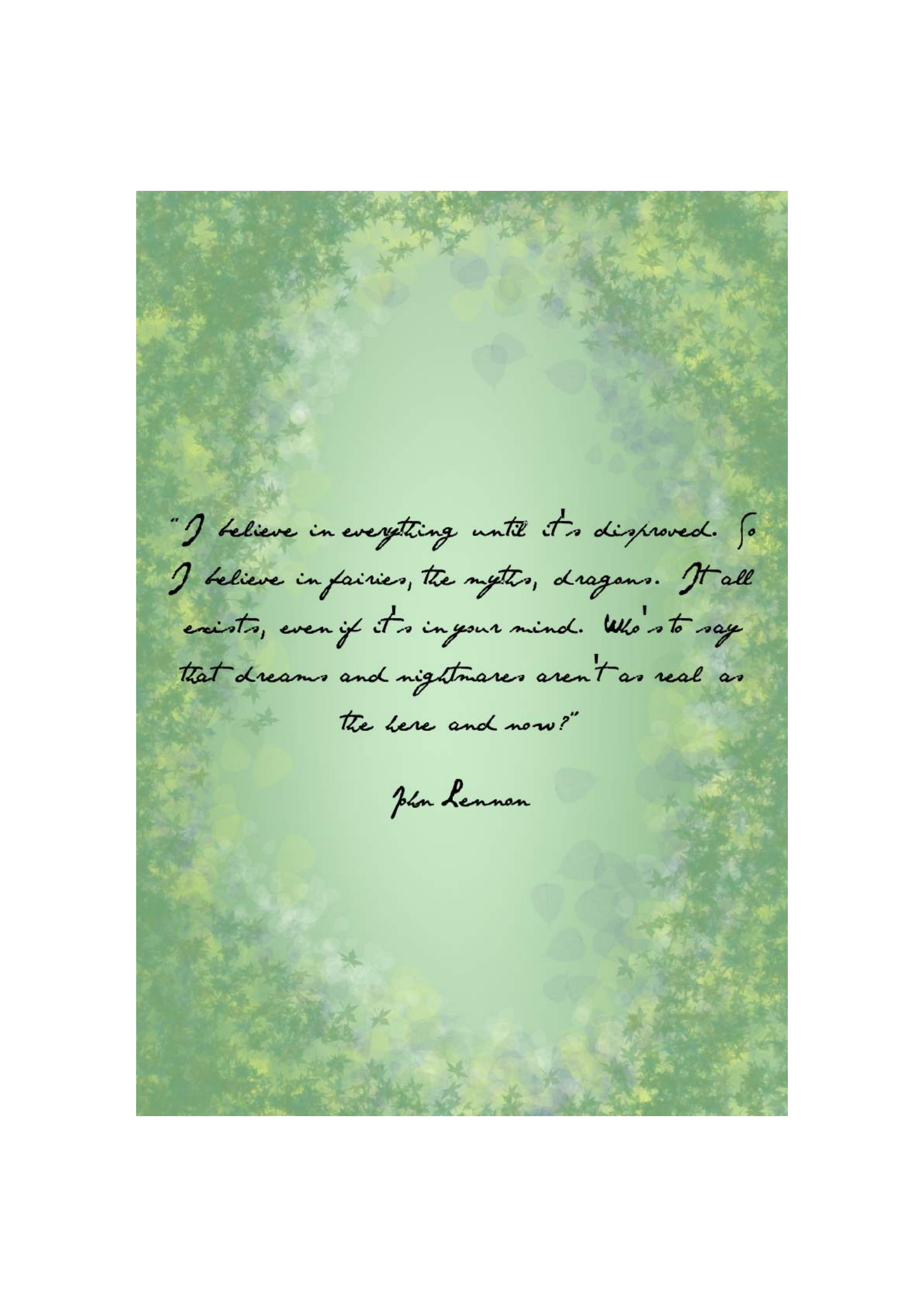
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"I believe in everything until it's disproved. So I believe in fairies, the myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it's in your mind. Who's to say that dreams and nightmares aren't as real as the here and now?"

John Lennon





Tale of Boitata

It has been said that a long time ago, there was a very long night, so long that it seemed that there would no daylight ever again. It was pitch black, no stars in the sky, no wind blowing and no noise of the animals throughout the entire forest, it was a great silence. Families were dying in the dead cold of the night, there was no wood left to be burned so they could warm up themselves, they were starving to death because there was no way of hunting in such dark place.

Days were slowly passing, and people could not even keep track of it. All of a sudden a rainfall began and this rain flooded everything around. The forest that used to have several layers of greens became a plane blue, and eventually many animals faced death for the days that were to come.

There was a large snake that lived inside of a massive trunk tree, and that snake, known as Boitata awoke starving, it was so hungry that it began to eat the bright eyes of dead animals that were floating in the river. Some say the eyes shone because that was the last glimpse of daylight captured by those animals. From all the bright eyes that the snake consumed, she herself became bright. The snake became a monster as bright as fire.

Some say that Boitata scares people when they go into the woods at night. But many believe Boitata protects the forests against fire.

Boitata

Boi + tata comes from the Tupi meaning make and fire.

Boitata kills whoever disrespects nature and devours their eyes.

In letters from jesuit José de Anchieta, in 1560 there were mentions about Boitata as the fire that runs.

The pattern going all over Boitata's body is similar to the Brazilian flag. I wonder what came first, the myth or the flag...

The fire that comes out from Boitata is magical, and for such reason it doesn't burn the forest or its plants.

For the same reason, when he goes under the water the fire on his back is not hurt.



Tale of Boto cor - de - rosa

The tale says that in the Amazonian water, it rests a Boto cor-de-rosa (a pink dolphin) that during the month of June, in the nights of full moon turns into a beautiful and elegant young man.

It is said that Boto wears white from head to toe and that the hat on top of his head is to hide his nostrils, because its transformation does not occur completely. People say he is an astonishing dancer and easily enchants the women during the festivities.

With this, the boto, owner of a communicative style, heartthrob and conqueror, chooses the prettiest maiden of the party and takes her to the bottom of the river where he gets her pregnant and then leaves.

The next morning he turns into Boto again. For this reason, the Boto Legend is often used to justify an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. It is usually said that "the child is the son of the boto" when it is son of unknown father.

Boto cor - de - rosa

He helps the fisher men while fishing, in addition to safely driving the canoes during storms.

The Boto also helps save drowning people from the river.

During the months of June Boto comes out from the Amazon River in the shape of a beautiful young man.

He wears a all white outfit and enchants women by the way he dances.

He wears a hat to cover up a whole in his head.

Even though he transforms completely, he still has pink cheeks because of his original form.

The Boto is an exclusive species from the Amazon.



Tale of Cuca

“Cuidado com a Cuca que ela vem te pegar!” Be careful with Cuca otherwise she is going to catch you. Children fear this tremendously ugly creature.

Cuca is a witch with a scary appearance, she has the body of an alligator, sharp teeth one could cut themselves just by looking at it, immense and long nails that curve around her hands. She has a terrifying voice and lives her life off kidnapping disobedient children.

The song “Nana nenem, que a Cuca vem pegar, papai foi pra roca mamee foi trabalhar.” which encourages a child to fall asleep so they won’t be taken away makes reference to Cuca as a malignant entity.

It is said that she sleeps once every 7 years, and so parents try to convince their children to fall asleep at the correct times, otherwise they will be taken by Cuca and never ever return.

Cuca

Cuca is an old witch with a scary appearance, has alligator bodies and huge nails. She owns a magic voice and kidnaps the disobedient children.

"Nana neném que a Cuca
vem pegar
Papai foi pra roca mamac
foi trabalhar."

This is a song people sing
so babies can go to sleep so
Cuca won't catch them.

Legend says that
the creature
sleeps once every
7 years, and so
the parents try to
convince the chil-
dren to sleep at
the correct times,
otherwise they
will be taken by
Cuca.



Tale of Curupira

Curupira is the protector of the fauna and flora, he protects the trees, plants and animals from the Amazon. He has his ankles twisted, which means his feet are turned back, his hair is red like fire and he rides a wild pig and Curupira always carries a sharp spear with him.

His main targets are hunters, woodcutters and people who destroy the environment in a predatory manner. To scare them, Curupira emits sounds and whistles. Another tactic used is to create illusory and frightening images to scare off the "forest enemies." It is scarcely found by hunters, for their backward-facing feet serve to mislead the pursuers, leaving false footprints and trails through the woods. In addition, its speed is surprising, being almost impossible a human being to reach him in a race.

According to legend, he loves to rest in the shadows of mango trees. He also often takes small children to live with him in the woods. After enchanting the children and teaching the secrets of the forest, he returns the child to the family after seven years.

Legends tellers say that Curupira loves to play tricks on those who enter the forest. Through enchantments and illusions, he leaves the visitor stunned and lost, not knowing the way back. Just so he can observe and follow the person, having fun with the trick..



Curupira

Hair is just like pure fire.
Changes hair tone depending
on his mood.

Most striking body feature is
his feet, as you notice on the sketches
Curupira's feet are turned back.
He uses it as a trick to fool
hunters who follow
his footprints.

Castanha de Pará

Guaraná

Side view Front view

Skirt made of banana
tree leaves.

The background of the page features a faint, sketchy illustration of a Headless Mule. The creature is depicted with a long, thin neck, a body that tapers towards the rear, and a tail. It has four legs, with the front legs appearing to be iron walkways. The illustration is rendered in a dark, sketchy style against a warm, orange and yellow background that has a mottled, textured appearance.

Tale of Headless Mule

The Headless Mule is the result of what happens when you have a love affair with a priest. According to legend, any woman who dated a priest would be turned into a monster. In this way, women should see the priests as a kind of “saint” and not as a man, if they committed any sin with the thought of a priest, they would eventually become a Headless Mule.

The Mule is the form taken by the priest’s concubine. Turns into a strong animal, of controversial identification in the oral tradition, and gallops, haunting who finds. It throws sparks of fire through the hole of its head. Their paws are like iron walkways. The violence of the gallop and the stridency of the neighing are heard in the distance. Sometimes she sobs like a human creature.

The charm will disappear when someone has the courage to tear off the iron brake or if someone takes a drop of blood with unused wood. They say it without a head, but the neighing is inevitable. When the brake is removed, it reappears naked, crying regretfully, and will not resume the enchanted form while the discoverer resides in the same parish.

Headless Mule

There is a saying in Portuguese, for when you are a child, it says "Quem chegar por ultimo e a mulher do padre!" which means that the ones who arrives the last is the priest's affair, which indicates you are a headless mule.

The Mule throws sparks of fire through the hole of its head. The parws are like iron walkways. The violence of the gallop and the stridency of the neighing are heard in the distance. Sometimes she sobs like a human creature.

The charm will disappear when someone has the courage to tear off the iron brake or if someone takes a drop of blood with unused wood.

The Headless Mule runs seven parishes on each night

Tale of Iara

Once upon a time in a tribe in the heart of the Amazon Forest there used to be a beautiful young girl named Iara, she was the daughter of the Pajé, chief of the tribe. Iara was a great warrior and constantly received compliments from her father, which aroused in her brothers a lot of jealousy, such jealousy made all her brothers gather in the middle of the night to plan Iara's murder. The girl, who had a keen hearing was lucky enough to listen the plans and organise herself the murder of her brothers.

When they went to catch Iara, she was two steps ahead and killed both brothers. She knew a horrible act like the one she had just committed would not be simply forgiven by her father, so she ran away in the jungle and tried to hide as much as she could.

In the morning after, when the tribe awoke to see the Pajé's sons lying dead on the ground, it was immediately noticed that only Iara was missing, and for that reason she was guilty. Her father commanded a search all over the forest, all his best men were to look for his missing daughter. The Pajé had a lot of servants and it was no longer than two days that they were to find Iara asleep on top of a tree.

As her punishment, Iara was thrown in to die in the Solimoes River, however she was rescued by the fish that surrounded the area and since it was a full moon night, Iara was transformed in a beautiful mermaid by the god Jaci.

Nowadays Iara is also known as "Mother of the water". People say that Iara spends most of her time admiring her vast beauty in the reflection caused by the water, she plays with the fish and brushes her hair all day.

She stands along the shore of the river, sitting on the rocks ready to bewitch men with her irresistible voice that echoes through the water and forest. Her victims follow her all the way down the river and they never come back.

Jara
or mãe d'água

With her eyes she has the power to bewitch men who look directly into her eyes.

Parrot feathers

(same colour as a guaraná)

Throu her torso, human body part, you can see drawings painted all over. These are traditional indigenous patterns. Meaning she once belonged to a tribe.

Hands have skin between the fingers.

The bright red of her scale resembles the Pirarucu, one of the largest fish in the fluvial regions of Brazil.



Tale of Negrinho do Pastoreio

During the dark days, when slavery ruled the country, there was an evil rancher with thousands of them. On a winter day it was very cold, and the farmer ordered a fourteen-year-old black boy to shepherd horses and colts he had just bought.

At the end of the afternoon, when the boy returned, the farmer said he was missing a small horse. He picked up the whip and gave the boy such a harsh beating that he started to bleed. The rancher said: "You either handle the pain, or you'll see what happens." The young boy was terrified, so he went looking for the animal. In so little time, he found the horse grazing. He tied it, but the rope broke and the horse ran away again.

Back at the ranch, the farmer, even more annoyed, hit the boy again and tied him naked, on an anthill. The next day, when he went to see the state of the boy, he took a fright. The boy was there, but standing, his skin smooth, with no markings of his lashes.

Beside him, the Virgin Our Lady, and further the bay and the other horses. The stoner threw himself on the floor apologizing, but the little black man answered nothing. He just kissed the Santa's hand, climbed into the bay, and drove off with the troupe. From this, among the wanderers, troopers, peddlers, and wagons of the region, they all broke the news, having seen, as if carried in grazing, Negrinho, mounted on a horse.

Since then, when any Christian lost something, at night Negrinho sought and found, but only gave to those who lit a candle, whose light he took to pay for the altar of his godmother, the Virgin, Our Lady, Who delivered him out of the captivity, and gave him a herd, which he leadeth and shepherds, with none seeing.

Anyone who loses things in the field should light a candle with some mourão or under the branches of the trees, for the gracious Negrinho and go telling him: "That's where I lost ... That's where I lost ... That's where I lost ... ". If he does not find it, no one else can.

Negrinho do Pastoreio

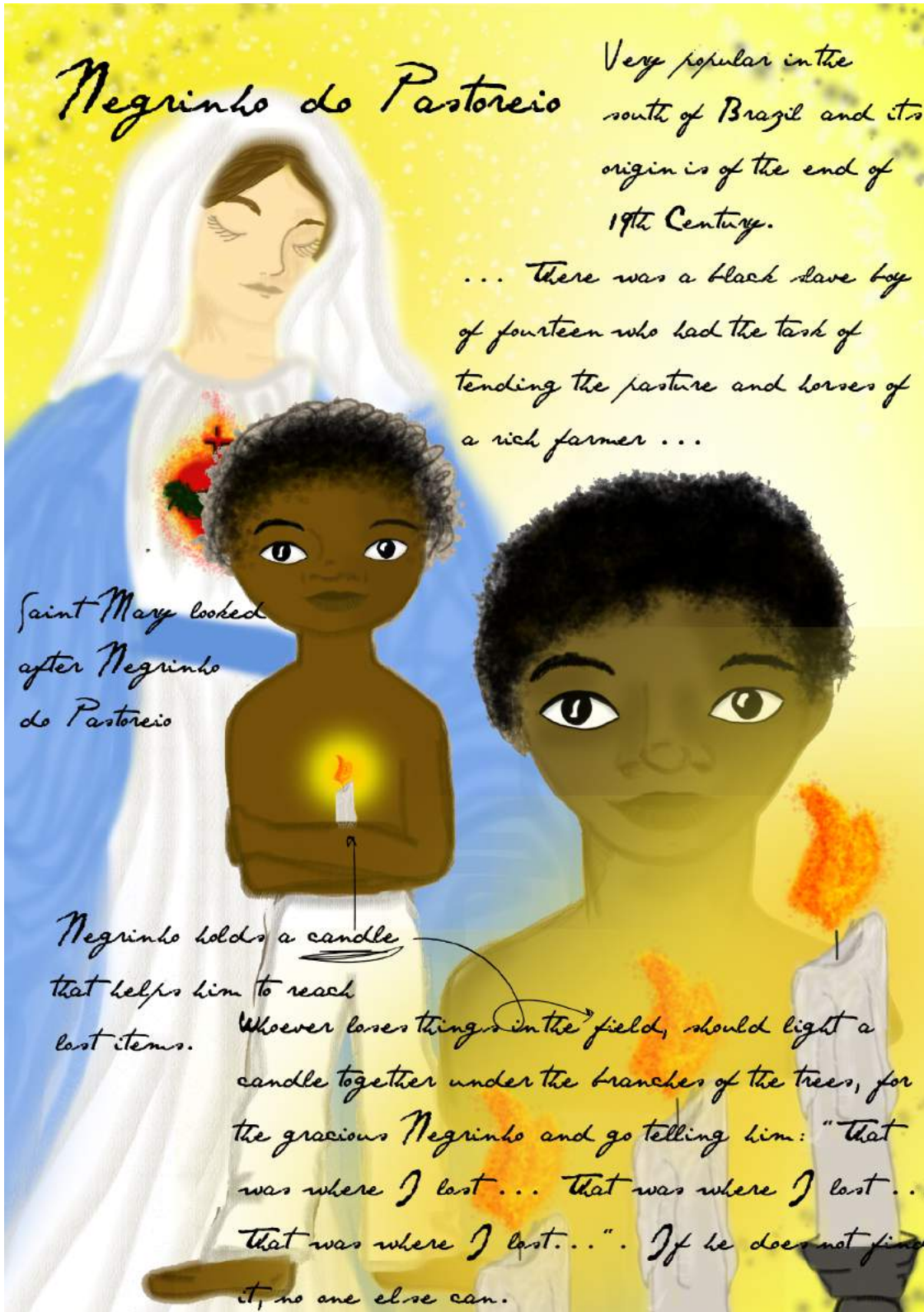
Very popular in the south of Brazil and its origin is of the end of 19th Century.

... There was a black slave boy of fourteen who had the task of tending the pasture and horses of a rich farmer ...

Saint Mary looked after Negrinho do Pastoreio

Negrinho holds a candle that helps him to reach lost items.

Whoever loses things in the field, should light a candle together under the branches of the trees, for the gracious Negrinho and go telling him: "that was where I lost ... that was where I lost ... that was where I lost...". If he does not find it, no one else can.



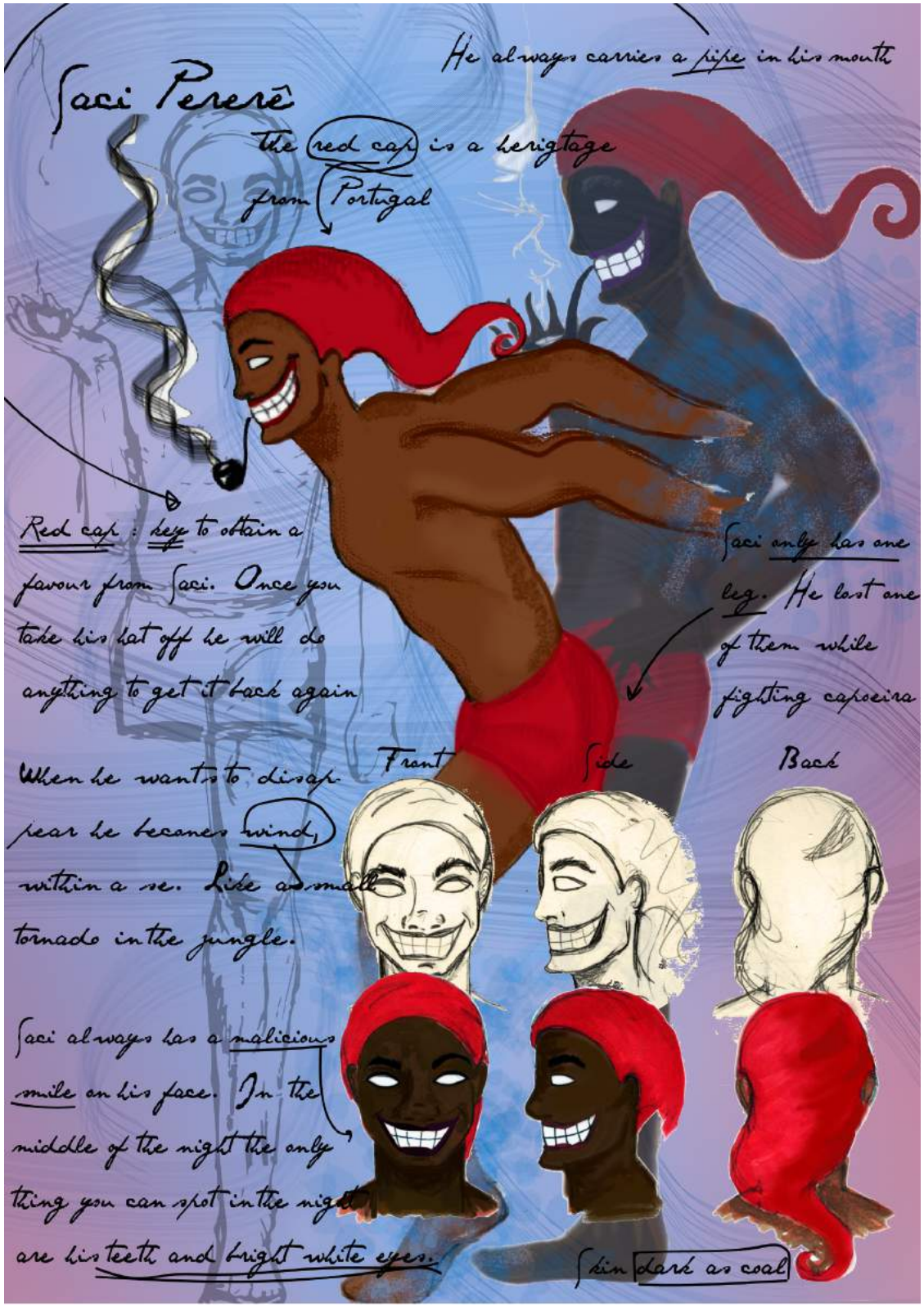
Tale of Saci

Saci-Pererê is a character that was originated between the indigenous tribes in the south of Brazil. Initially he was portrayed as a devilish boy, with two legs, brown skin and a typical tail. However, with the influence of African Mythology, Saci became a black boy, as dark as coal, he lost one of his legs while fighting capoeira and he always carries a pipe on his mouth. From the Europeans Saci inherited his red hood, which belongs to a Portuguese character called Trásgo.

Saci is mischievous by nature, he is very playful and makes fun of the animals and the people. He ends up causing disruptions, like: making the beans burn, hiding objects, bending the needles of the seamstresses and throwing it in holes.

According to people Saci is in the swirl of wind and can be captured by throwing a sieve over the swirls. Upon capture you must remove the hood of the creature to ensure its obedience and trap it in a bottle. However, if you promise to give his hood back, he will owe you a favour.

Every Saci lives for seventy seven years and they are originated from bambu. After seven years inside the bambu he comes out to live a long mischievous life and when he dies he transforms himself into poisonous mushrooms..



Saci Pererê

He always carries a pipe in his mouth

The red cap is a heritage from Portugal

Red cap: key to obtain a favour from Saci. Once you take his hat off he will do anything to get it back again

Saci only has one leg. He lost one of them while fighting capoeira

When he wants to disappear he becomes wind, within a sec. Like a small tornado in the jungle.

Front Side Back

Saci always has a malicious smile on his face. In the middle of the night the only thing you can spot in the night are his teeth and bright white eyes.

Skin dark as coal



Tale of Vitória-Régia

According to indigenous tales the Moon was considered to be a god, and this same god used to flirt with the prettiest indian girls and at some point he always chose one of the girls to come with him to the skies and transform her in a star.

In a indigenous tribe, there was a beautiful young warrior named Naiá. She dreamed of the day the Moon would call invite her to the skies.

The oldest and more experienced people in the tribe tried to alert her that she would not be able to return to her human form, but Naiá was a stubborn girl and did not care about the consequences, she was in love with the Moon. Eventually, this love became an obsession and Naiá did not want to eat or drink, she only wanted to contemplate the Moon.

One day, the moonlight was bright as people had never seen, and Naiá was at the edge of a lake when she saw the reflection upon the water. She believed that the Moon had come to the earth to enjoy the water of the lake. Naiá was so convicted that it was real that she dived in the water in search for the god, but when she realised the truth it was too late and she was not able to return and drowned herself.

The god Moon was moved by the situation and decided to transform Naiá into a different star, an outstanding from all the other ones: the star of the waters - Vitória-régia. For this reason the scented flowers of this plant only open during the night period.

Victoria Regia

It is an aquatic plant of the Nymphaeaceae family, typical of the Amazon region. It has a large circle-shaped leaf that floats on the surface of the water, and can reach up to 2.5 meters in diameter and withstand up to 40 kilos if well distributed on its surface.

Victoria Regia is a flower that only opens at night

The star of the waters

