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The Thing in the Jungle

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Elderlandia Batista Silva
Porto Velho, Rondonia, Brasil
December 2018

The Thing in the Jungle

Brazilian Legend (Supernatural Non-Religious)

Informant:

Elderlandia lives in Porto Velho, Rondonia, Brasil but was born in Manicore, an interior city in the state of Amazonas. She moved to Porto Velho about four years ago. Porto Velho is the capital of Rondonia and is an average sized city near the border of Brazil and Bolivia. I do not know her personally but when a friend of mine heard I was looking for legends she gave me her contact information. My friend said that Elderlandia has a lot of stories.

Elderlandia is married with one son around the age of eight. She is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, though her husband is not. She works as a janitor at a school but is finishing a degree in Chemistry.

Context:

Elderlandia told me this story after a mutual friend put us in contact when she found out I was looking for legends. We sent messages over Facebook Messenger where she typed out all these stories in her native Portuguese. I copied her messages and then translated them into English. She told me four stories over the course of two days (Saturday and Sunday when she had the most time) and began our conversation by saying, "I have great stories to tell, some are really scary." All of the stories she told me happened to people she knows personally. When I asked if she had any personal stories she said no and that she is grateful for it because she doesn't have a psychologist prepared for it.

This story, like the others, takes place in what the Brazilians call "the interior." This term refers to a city or village outside the state's capital and usually has the connotation of being in the middle of the jungle. This story happened in the interior of Amazonas, the state that contains the most of the Amazon Rainforest.

This particular story was prefaced by a message that almost seemed like a warning, "I have a story that is really scary," to which I replied "I'm ready...I think." It was told her by her aunt, Neuza, who used to be their neighbor but with whom they have lost contact since they moved.

Text:

Portuguese:

Quem me contou foi uma tia de minha mãe, seu nome é Neuza. Era nossa vizinha em minha infância e acabamos perdendo contato depois que nos mudamos para outro bairro.

Isso aconteceu com o pai dela. Que ainda era muito jovem. Ele morava com os pais em uma propriedade no interior do Amazonas. Eles tinham uma roça de ceringa (um ceringau) e saiam muito cedo para extrair o látex. Que tem época certa no ano para sua extração. O pai dela estava doente, devido uma malária e estava acamado, assim, só iriam fazer a extração ele e o irmão mais velho. Saíam cedo, 4 horas da manhã de pé e arrumados pra o trabalho, que durava até as 9 da manhã. Depois iam cuidar dos outros a fazeres. Nesse dia eles resolveram se dividir, cada um iria cobrir um determinado lote da roça. O pai de minha tia seguiu seu caminho, cortando a árvore e preparando a extração. Terminaram tranquilos esse dia. E cuidaram de todos os outros a fazeres.

O irmão mais velho teve a ideia de no dia seguinte irem mais cedo. Queria terminar o serviço antes que o pai melhorasse, queriam poupar o pai desse trabalho.

No dia seguinte foram às 3 horas da manhã. O pai de minha tia foi para o local combinado. Começou a extração e assim, também começou a ouvir alguém ou alguma coisa seguindo ele. Por um momento ele pensou que fosse uma onça. Ficou preparado para o ataque, pois eles sempre andavam armados. Mas nada aconteceu. Quando já estava voltando para casa, os passos continuaram a segui-lo. Parou um momento e pensou que era o irmão mais velho que estava querendo assustar ele. Chamou pelo nome dele e nada.

Quando chegou em casa o irmão mais velho já estava lá. Estavam preocupados por ele ter demorado. Mas ele não contou o ocorrido.

No dia seguinte de novo. Os mesmos passos. Ele andava, a coisa andava, ele parava, a coisa parava. Como ele percebeu que estava cada vez mais próximo ele começou a se apressar também. E a coisa continuava. Em um dado momento, ele começou a correr, a coisa também.

A casa era palafita. Aquelas feitas a alguns metros do chão. Ela conta que ele pulou tão alto e não lembra como conseguiu chegar até a porta. Entrou desesperado e contou aos pais. Todos se armaram com as espingardas. Pois o irmão mais velho ainda estava na roça. A coisa ficou rodeando a casa por um tempo e foi embora.

Quando o mais velho chegou, perguntou se ele estava tentando assusta-lo. Pois começou a ouvir uns sons estranhos na mata.

Ui

Isso me arrepiava

[Risada nervosa emoticon]

Coisas estranhas acontecem no interior.

English Translation:

The person who told me this was an aunt of my mother, her name is Neuza. She was our neighbor in my childhood and we ended up losing contact after we moved to another neighborhood.

This happened with her father. When he was still very young. He lived with his parents on a property in the interior of Amazonas. They had a gum tree farm and left really early to extract the gum. There is a certain time in the year for extraction. His father was sick, due to malária and was bedridden, so, only he and his older brother would go to do the extraction. They left early,

four o'clock in the morning by foot and got ready for work, that lasts until nine o'clock in the morning. After they would take care of their other chores. On this day they decided to split up, each one would cover a determined lot of the farm. My aunt's father went on his way, cutting the tree and preparing the extract. They finished tranquilly that day. And took care of all of the other chores.

The older brother had the idea the next day to go earlier. He wanted to finish the work before the father got better, they wanted to spare him the work.

On the next day they went at three o'clock in the morning. My aunt's father went to the planned place. He began the extraction and then, also began to hear someone or something following him. For a moment he thought that it was a jaguar. He got ready for the attack, since they always walked armed. But nothing happened. When he was already returning home, the steps continued to follow him. He stopped for a moment and thought that it was the older brother wanting to scare him. He called out his name and nothing.

When he arrived at home his older brother was already there. They were worried because he had taken so long. But he didn't tell them what happened.

On the next day again. The same steps. He walked, the thing walked, he stopped, the thing stopped. When he realized that it was getting closer everytime he started to hurry too. And the thing continued. In a moment, he started to run, the thing too.

The house was a stilt house. The ones made a few meters from the ground. She [her aunt] says that he jumped so high and doesn't remember how he was able to arrive at the door. He entered desperately and told his parents. All of them armed themselves with shotguns. But the older brother was still in the farm. The thing kept circling the house for a time and then left. When the

older brother arrived, he asked if they were trying to scare him. Because he began to hear strange sounds in the jungle.

Woah

This gives me goosebumps

[Nervous laugh emoji]

Strange things happen in the interior.

Texture:

Elderlandia definitely believes all the stories she told me and mentioned many times in our conversation that they scare her. This one she specifically mentioned as being scary and it seemed to be in relation to the other stories as if to say that it is the scariest story yet.

This story was typed in a Facebook Message so there isn't any form of auditory inflection, though I copied her punctuation use (which is almost always incorrect) and spacing exactly in the English translation. Because I don't know Elderlandia personally, I don't know if her texting reflected anything of her emotions. However, many times when she would tell me how scary the stories she told are, she would follow the text with a nervously laughing smiley face emoji (Finch Stickers on Messenger). It seems that every time I asked her a question or she finished a story she would say again just how creepy the stories she knows are. I get the feeling that she has many more supernatural stories to tell.

After the story I asked a few questions to clarify and learned that they never did discover what the sound was. Also, the older brother asked if they were trying to scare him because it seems that the thing went off and did the same thing to him after it circled the house. Elderlandia also later commented that, after that day, they never again went to cut gum trees split up.

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Dr. Lynne S. McNeill

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