

A dark, atmospheric street scene at night. The sky is filled with dark, swirling clouds, and a bright full moon is visible. A street lamp on the right side of the street casts a warm glow, illuminating the cobblestone path. The buildings on either side are dark, with some windows and balconies visible. The overall mood is mysterious and chilling.

CHILLING TALES

**A COMPILATION OF STORIES
CCB STUDENTS
2021.1**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I - MYSTERY SHORT STORIES	4
The mystery of Friday 13 in Pecém.....	5
The legend of treasure.....	7
Wanaka lake.....	8
The puppy	10
Sheila	12
The mystery of yogurt.....	14
The interaction	15
The knight in love	16
PART II - HORROR SHORT STORIES	17
The reality of madness	18
The cabin.....	19
The tale of Cruviana*	20
The rabbit's paw	21
The black swan paradox	22
If this street was mine	24
PART III - CRIME SHORT STORIES	28
On the other side	29
The mysterious Lady Cooper.....	31
A crime of passion	32
The countdown	33
Discovery	34
The cursed toy.....	35

*We dedicate this e-book in a very special way to our teacher William Netto,
for having helped us to see that we are capable of going beyond what we imagine.*

PART I - MYSTERY SHORT STORIES

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. - Hamlet (1.5.167-8), Hamlet to Horatio"

(William Shakespeare)

The mystery of Friday 13 in Pecém

Ana Jessika de Medeiros¹

It was a night with a red moon in the sky over the municipality of Pecém. In low light, one could see beyond the constellations, planets of the solar system with the naked eye. The strong wind blew with a light, steady, and intimidating sound. It was a coast that housed a small number of inhabitants, where everyone knew each other, but few spoke to each other. They loved to talk about the others, the few outsiders who visited the city.

There were well-known people, ancient figures who lived in the city and were considered folkloric beings because nobody knew the year they were born, nor their age, but they hadn't aged for years. They were common people, they helped everyone in the city, they had a lot of wisdom, but they were very mysterious in their life stories.

Maria was an old black woman with long black hair, tall, with brown, seductive eyes. Antonio was very young; he never changed his strong and shy appearance. He had hair the color of fire and a soft whistling voice. Marcos and Karol were siblings with blond hair, tall and very kind. The four were good friends and always got together in a mysterious ritual on the beach on Friday the 13th of every month, spending the night without anyone being able to see what they were doing. Everyone in the city has always respected this mysterious ritual that endured for many generations, and they always believed in the legend that the elders told. Everyone said that whoever tried to look at what was happening would disappear, without a trace.

Visitors were made aware of the city's legend as soon as they arrived and needed permission to enter the city. In the simple hotel where they stayed, they were instructed on what not to do to have a happy trip.

But a group of very curious young people did not believe the story and thought that those so simple and kind people would never hurt anyone. So, they watched the hidden ritual to record and post it on social media. When the ritual started, Maria, Antônio, Marcos and Karol sang in an unknown language and danced around the fire. Suddenly, images of ancestors in the fire began to appear and the four characters entered a magical portal that opened in the fire. Frightened and very curious, the group of young visitors ran to see what was on the other side. The next morning, the townspeople searched for the visitors who had disappeared and left all their clothes in the hotel. Nobody knew what had happened, but on Instagram, the video ended up with dark and strange images

¹ Teacher at the municipal school network of Pécem.

on the beach. Two days later they appeared, never left the city and never grew old, like the other characters.

The legend of treasure

*Athyla Farias de Araújo*²

In a small town called Crossville, there was a legend of a treasure lost by a cargo plane that had crashed there. As Cris and his friends, Greg and Caruso, learned about it, they went to this city looking for more information about this legend.

After two hundred and fifty kilometers of car journey, Cris and his friends saw a sign at the entrance stating that, about twenty-five kilometers away, there was an area isolated by the police due to the search for the treasure that could possibly be there, awakening and encouraging even more their curiosities.

While staying at a hotel, they asked the concierge about this legend, and he confirmed everything. So, Cris and his friends arrived at the possible accident spot and searched for clues about what happened. When they were already quite tired and night was approaching, Caruso, leaning against a wall, was surprised by a secret passage and then called Cris and Greg. After entering the passage and walking a few minutes, they were surprised by the wreckage of the plane, along with some sealed boxes. Cris found an iron bar, managed to open the boxes together with his friends, but there were only a few toys and clothes, which confirmed the whole legend.

Returning to the hotel, they informed the local police that they had found the plane and its wreckage, and the police, upon arriving at the scene and confirming the information received, notified those responsible for the cargoes, and that they had located them.

² System Analyst, graduated in Information Systems.

Wanaka lake

*Chrislayne Silva Monteiro*³

It was Saturday, 01:00 a.m, Alex, Sam, Chloe and Anny, inseparable childhood friends, spent another weekend at Chloe's parents' country house. As usual, they bathed in the lake that was right next to the house, drank, danced and had a lot of fun. Soon afterwards, they built a small fire, sat together, spent hours telling each other their secrets, and then they went inside to sleep.

The night was cold and silent, and the friends were sleeping soundly, only the faint sound of the lake's waters that stirred in the wind could be heard. Anny got up to drink some water, looked at her sleeping friends, and then went back to sleep too. Half an hour later someone could hear the noise of someone closing the window, Sam woke up for a moment and, with his vision still confused by sleep, he thought it was Alex, but defeated by sleep, he didn't give it much importance.

When day dawned, Chloe got up first and realized that Alex wasn't in bed. She went out through the house, calling her friend, but she couldn't find her. Worried, Chloe woke up her friends and soon they started looking for Alex all over the house, in the garden, near the lake and even in the neighborhood, but they didn't find her. The friends were desperate because Alex wouldn't leave early without saying anything to anyone because she didn't usually go out alone and she hated getting up early. So, they decided to wait a little longer, until they told Alex's family about her disappearance. Sam and Anny cried a lot, as they couldn't stand the idea that something bad had happened to their friend, but Sam always positively tried to cheer the others up.

Hours of waiting and no sign of Alex. The friends decided to go out into the field again in search of their friend. Already exhausted and hopeless, Sam found, among some dry leaves, the tiara Alex always wore in her hair. She had definitely gone that way! They continued looking for other clues, that's when they saw something stuck in the branches of a small tree. They approached and realized that it was a note and when they opened it, they recognized Alex's handwriting that read the following message "We carry some secrets with us until the end".

From that moment on, the friends called the police and got in touch with Alex's family. Everyone was very worried, and her friends were crying desolately. When the police arrived, they started to make more intense searches in the area, until, among some

³ Licensed in Spanish Letters.

bushes near the lake, they saw something, which was floating on the edge of the lake... it was Alex's secrets, drowned in Wanaka along with Alex's body.

The puppy

Diego Arnaldo Lins da Silva⁴

It was eleven o'clock at night. A girl was returning home with her friend after a party. They were walking through the park when her friend started talking about something she had heard a few days ago. It was a story about some people who used to mysteriously disappear in that park. Some said that a serial killer murdered these people and vanished with their bodies. No traces of the victims were left. This happened every 14 years, and, recently, there have been cases of people disappearing into the park. "Wow, I'm so scared... What a silly story, but still, stop it's late." said the other girl. When they reached the end of the park, they said their goodbyes and went their separate ways.

It was midnight. The girl was in a hurry to go back home when suddenly she heard... a bark. She turned around and saw a small puppy. It had fluffy white fur and was very small, so the startle she got from the bark vanished when she saw it. However, something was off. The puppy acted... strange. It didn't wag its tail, and its eyes were fixed on the girl. Its eyes were totally fixed - on her. The girl stood still as she watched its unusual behavior. After some time, the dog turned around, and just walked away. The girl was concerned with what she saw and decided to follow it, after all, it was just a puppy. She followed it for a while when she arrived at the local cemetery that was on the right side of the park. The puppy turned around and began to stare at her again with its weird look. The girl approached to try to catch it, but suddenly she heard a noise of something breaking. Fortunately, it was just a branch she had stepped on. When she looked down, she saw a cluster of branches bunched together in an odd way. She looked closer. There were the branches she had stepped on and, on their side, was another bunch of branches, but this one seemed to have formed... a letter. An... "E". And the bunch next to this bunch a... "L". And finally, another one that formed a... "P". The cub was still looking at her intently. The girl was too scared to... react. However, it was just a strange puppy, not frightening at all. It could just be someone playing a trick on her. Maybe her friend was attempting to prank her. After a moment making up enough excuses to allay the fear, the girl calmed down, turned around, and left when...

"Let's...take...a walk."

She heard those words. They didn't come from the puppy.

⁴ Student of Systems and Digital Media at the Federal University of Ceará.

It was 7 o'clock in the morning. A group of police officers walked through the local park after they received a report of a missing person. The last time she was seen was near the local cemetery. They searched through the area, but they found nothing. They found nothing. Only. Two. Small. Puppies.

Sheila

*Jamile Souza Pereira*⁵

Sheila walked down the street a little hurriedly as she reflected on her conviction that she was unworthy of anything. Her beauty was never enough to boost her self-esteem, her body up to standard, her skin without any imperfections, and even her beautiful tousled hair didn't mean anything; she martyred herself for her way of life. She felt that she was being chased, she looked back and saw a brown man in simple clothes approaching and she was filled with fear. But soon this feeling dissipated when he heard the boy speak with a calm face and a peaceful voice: "Lady, don't be afraid! Where are you going? Do you want company?"

The woman had just got out of a customer's car and was walking along this deserted street towards the subway, which was five minutes away. She walked this path almost every night. The man gained the girl's trust, and they began to talk. "I'm always scared when I walk this street," said the girl. So that guy said that we all have a guardian angel ready to protect us. "It's not that I don't believe in it, I just don't think something so divine would be willing to protect me. I'm not worthy of this," Sheila insisted on this as they talked about supernatural things. "Do you know baby Jesus, Sheila? He did not come from perfection; his forefathers were sinners and yet they did not fail to receive blessings. If you are looking for a Father who only works in the life of one who is perfect, you are looking for the wrong God". When she arrived at the station, Sheila greeted Maria, a homeless woman, and gave her some coins from her purse, as usual. Maria thanked her happily and went to buy her dinner. The man contemplated Sheila's attitude, said goodbye, and left quickly, without even saying his name.

When she got home, she thought about everything that mysterious man said and how nice that conversation was. Then she realized how much value she herself had. The next day, she put on her high heels and her low-cut dress for yet another appointment with another customer, and she decided to go to the subway station in hopes of finding that man to thank him. Later on, the same day, at the station, she saw Maria again. "Maria, do you remember that boy who came here with me yesterday? Does he always come this

⁵ Law Bachelor and student at the House of British Culture at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC).

way?", Sheila said hopefully. Surprisingly Maria looked at Sheila and said, "Yesterday you were alone. There was no one with you."

The mystery of yogurt

*Karolina Duarte*⁶

Christina was a young woman that worked at an accounting office. Every day she took her lunch and afternoon snacks to eat at the office, but about 3 months after she started to work there, a strange thing began to happen.

Every day Christina kept her food in the fridge, but that afternoon when Christina opened the fridge, her snack wasn't there. She asked all her colleagues, but nobody knew about her snack. That day, she even thought she might have confused herself and forgotten her snack at home, but one week later, it happened again. She suspected two people: the receptionist, Josefine, and the oldest accountant in the office, John.

Intrigued, Christina told her workmate, Paul, about the disappearance of her snack. Paul asked Christina about what kind of food was gone and she remembered that all the time that she took yogurts, they disappeared. Christina talked with her boss about the mystery of the yogurt, but he didn't care and said that it was impossible for someone in the office to be doing this. So, she had an idea. The plan was simple, she bought a laxative liquid and a syringe to put the liquid inside the yogurt. Anyone who showed up with a stomachache would be to blame.

The next day, she executed the plan. Christina inserted the laxative liquid inside her yogurt and waited until the afternoon was over. When she opened the fridge, the yogurt wasn't there, and she needed to wait until the next day. In the morning when she arrived at the office, she met Paul, but his face wasn't good. When Christina asked if Paul was well, he answered that he wasn't because he spent the night with a stomachache. At that moment she knew who the yogurt thief was.

⁶ Computer engineer working as a product owner, and a software engineer specialist certificated by UTFPR.

The interaction

Lamartine Cortez⁷

It was late at night, close to 10 p.m. Sarah left the library later than usual because she had to finish some research for her monograph. The wind was blowing hard, ruffling her hair and sweeping away the leaves that fell from the big trees.

As she watched the empty streets of that Thursday in the middle of her vacation, her bus arrived. It was no surprise, it was empty. She sat down in her usual place and began to listen to music.

The long trip was made with uneasy tranquillity up to a certain point. Her cell phone suddenly crashed, the music stopped, and there was no signal. This is unusual, she thought, this neighborhood has two signal antennas. The bus also stopped. She looked at the door and saw a man getting on. His face, mostly covered by his long hair, had hard lines and an enigmatic expression. He was bent over, impatient, as he passed through the turnstile. He chose a seat in the front, but he constantly looked back - at her.

Her blood froze. Sarah tried to ignore the bad feeling in her stomach. Just when she thought she could, the man stood up and walked towards her. What does he want with me? she thought, mentally shouting. He sat down beside her. Among so many empty seats, he chose to sit right where she was.

Everything bad went through her thoughts at that moment. To make matters worse, not only was her cell phone jammed, but the lights on the bus began to flicker. They were in a naturally dark area, for the lack of lampposts, and the scene was complete. She could hear her heart beating, loud as a cannon. She clutched her backpack tightly. She could barely breathe.

The man then took hold of her arm and said:

- Hi. Can you tell me how to catch two buses for only one fare?

⁷ Commercial Manager, student of Graphic Design and student of English.

The knight in love

*Marli Maria e Silva*⁸

Many years ago, when today's technologies didn't exist, courting a maiden was an unusual adventure, you never knew what was ahead, because knights had to travel miles and miles to reach their lover's house, and in this path, a lot was seen and heard that we cannot even imagine.

João was in love with the beautiful Mariazinha, but she was not yet awakened to love, at least to João's love. João mounted a horse like no one in the neighborhood. In turn, her lover was a wonderful cook, no one made delicacies as delicious as Mariazinha, cooking was his true love. She was of medium height, she had white and blue eyes, and a strong personality; she was impatient and sometimes nervous. In fact, opposites attract! Both lived in villages far from the city and, because they were places with such exuberant nature, they didn't want to live in the city. But where there is an advantage, there is also a disadvantage. Despite so much beauty, getting from one village to another was not easy, you had to travel a long cart road and, at night, face the darkness or wait for the starry nights or the full moon.

Our knight was in love with Mariazinha and every night he would visit her to conquer her heart, but it was not an easy task, it was night and night from here to there. However, on one of those nights, precisely on a night of full moon, João met another knight, despite so many conversations and laughter, the two never revealed their names, but they became friends. An interesting detail of that conversation made João intrigued and eager to get to know this other knight better: he appeared from nowhere and disappeared.

A few days passed and the mysterious knight did not appear again. However, João told Mariazinha everything his friend had taught him. After the full moon, when João was returning from the house of the young maiden, he met his friend and soon told him that, with his advice, he won Mariazinha's heart and even conquered a little kiss. João asked him how he knew about these things, to which he replied: - When I was alive, that was how I conquered the maidens, and he disappeared like a butterfly before João's eyes.

⁸ Manager of the Nossa Senhora da Assunção School.

PART II - HORROR SHORT STORIES

"Fate is as motionless as a mountain, it stays while we pass. Fate never changes."

(Halloween - The night of terror)

The reality of madness

Danilo Silva Moura⁹

That day I was suddenly woken up from my endless nightmares, Victor and Neto were looking at me with semblances of strangeness and concern. "Sir Daniel, do you know where you are now?" - asked Victor, my stage partner, "What a stupid question! Can't you see that we are going towards the show?" - I answered, annoyed by his stupid question, "Daniel, you are now in a hospital bed" - said Victor, "For the love of god! Victor, stop this bullshit". At that moment, Victor looked directly at Neto and asked me to point his finger towards him. "Daniel, do you recognize this person?", "Obviously, it's Neto." - I replied roughly and continued, "Really could you let me sleep? I'm exhausted!" After this answer, I looked at Neto's face and noticed that he was crying. I ignored this fact, turned my head to the bed and went back to my nightmares.

I woke up the other day in the hospital, chained to my bed, and I heard fondling noises. "Good night, Mr. Daniel, I'm just going to run some tests."- the nurse spoke with her clothes entirely bloody. I went into despair after the nurse took some leeches from her trolley; they would tear my flesh, but I could not speak at that moment because of the drugs in my veins; they were making me weak. It was the worst pain of my life.

On another day I was woken up again by Danilo and Felipe, my son and my doctor, but I felt that they wanted to steal my riches hidden under my sheet: "Get away from me, who let you into my room?" - I shouted: "Mr. Daniel, relax, are you ok?" - Asked Felipe making calm gestures towards me, "stay there" - I ordered Felipe, who obeyed my order without question. After a few seconds, I realized that I was not in my luxurious house in Dubai, but in a hospital bed with serum in my veins, I looked directly at Felipe and asked: "Where am I?" and before even knowing the answer, I could not remember anything else that happened before, but I could only think one thing while waiting in that bed together with my son. I wanted to return to my family, when finally I noticed the noise of silence in my ears.

⁹ Digital Game Student and FGC Player.

The cabin

*Fernando Máspoli Fontenele de Carvalho*¹⁰

Sam was an experienced hunter, he was 43 years old, and on his trip, he decided to change course to add diversity to his hunting, so he turned his truck around and parked it in front of an area of unknown forest that had a reputation for being plentiful of large prey. He had his shotgun in his hands, so he waited for some careless animals, but he couldn't see any further than his nose, as a heavy mist suddenly came over the spot. It was so thick and deep that the hunter could not find his original course, and wandered deeper into the forest than he had planned. He walked and walked, rubbing his hands on his forearms, for the fog brought with it an excruciating shiver that chilled the poor hunter to the marrow, while a distinct white smoke rose from his mouth with each breath.

At the same time, trembling like a leaf, the hunter began to give piercing cries of despair, for he felt that two whole days had passed. He felt hunger, thirst, cold and anguish. Until, in the distance, he suddenly saw a small wooden hut. He ran to the cabin and, out of desperation, entered without even knocking on the door. Everything was dark so, at best, he found a small switch, but when the only room lit up, horror flashed in his eyes as he saw a set of pictures with portraits of people looking at him, some of them full faced, but others, not exactly. Some had no eyes, some had teeth, and some had a whole face.

However, even tired, confused, terrified and, at the same time, relieved to have found shelter, he decided that any hole would be better than that torture, so he took off a blanket and practically passed out from hunger, thirst, and anguish. After a while, the man woke up suddenly due to a suffocating light hitting his face, and at that moment, he realized that those paintings weren't portraits... They were windows. He ran desperately from the cabin and disappeared in the mist. A month has passed and a friend of his goes looking for him in the forest. When he found the cabin, he saw Sam's head in one of the windows.

¹⁰ Student of English at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC).

The tale of Cruviana*

*Francisco Ilan de Queiroz Leite*¹¹

It was late afternoon and the Traveler was still far from his destination. Walking along the road, he saw a large house and went to its gates to ask for a place to set up the hammock for the night. A middle-aged man appeared and informed him that the Colonel of the farm had gone out with some cowboys in search of some horses that had run away from the stable and that he doesn't like strangers sleeping in his house.

However, he said that, six kilometers down the road, there was an abandoned house, which also belonged to the Coronel, and he could sleep there. He handed over the house key and said to not to sleep on the porch, because Cruviana would attack at dawn.

The Traveler walked towards the house thinking what Cruviana could be. Arriving at the place, he preferred to set up the hammock on the porch, because the house was very dirty. "If this Cruviana appears, I have my shotgun to protect me", he thought.

The Traveler woke up in the middle of the night with a cold that he has never felt in his life. At the same time, he heard footsteps near the house. He put his head out of the hammock and saw a figure that seemed to be a white-haired woman in a dress. So, Cruviana was a ghost, and the great cold could only be her doing to kill him and take his soul. He took his shotgun and shot it towards the figure and then ran into the house and locked the door.

Early in the morning, he saw the middle-aged man on horseback approaching the house and then decided to get out. Still scared, he told the man that the Cruviana appeared at dawn, and he had shot her with a shotgun. The middle-aged man didn't understand. "How can someone stop Cruviana with a shot?". He said that in the dark of dawn, he saw the ghost of a white-haired woman in a white dress standing in front of the house.

Then the very nervous middle-aged man said that Cruviana was the cold wind at dawn and the Traveler had shot the Colonel's favorite horse and that he should leave as soon as possible. The Traveler without thinking twice took his things and went off on the road before the Colonel discovered the truth.

¹¹ Geographer and bachelor's degree in Law.

*Adapted from Piauí Folklore.

The rabbit's paw

Luiz Eduardo Soares Martins¹²

It was just another ordinary day at the house at 458 South Street when Mr. Juarez a Mr. Silva's old friend decided to pay a visit. Upon meeting his old friend, the two recalled the past and said what they were doing with their lives during the time they didn't meet. When they realized, Mr. Silva's children and wife arrived home and both continued talking and eating a little. When telling his stories, the old visitor reported that, some time ago, he traveled to the Asian continent and there he saw and experienced many different things while he was looking for a kind of amulet made with a rabbit's paw.

Noticing a certain air of melancholy in his old friend's voice and eyes, the patriarch asked the reason for such sadness. His friend, Mr. Juarez, talked about how his life has undergone a complete change since he met a kind of mystic in the far reaches of Asia, showing off his weird old amulet. By claiming that the amulet had the power to grant three requests, everyone in the Silva family began to laugh at the old man. He continued and said that he had already fulfilled his wishes and was going to get rid of the amulet once and for all. Knowing this, the eldest son asked his father for the amulet, stating that it would be of no use to Mr. Juarez. Before giving the oldest son the amulet, the old man stated that it was a path of no return and that it had brought him a lot of suffering.

When they were finally alone, the eldest son told his father to make a request and so it was done. The man asked for an amount of 5,000 pounds thousand to pay off his debts and stay calm. The other day, upon waking up, the patriarch realized that his children had gone to work and his wife had left and he thought that nothing had gone as expected. At the end of the day, everyone returned to their homes except their oldest son. As time went by and the affliction with the son's disappearance increased, an employee of the company where the eldest son worked went to the Silva's house to inform them that there had been a fatal accident with the eldest son and as a form of compensation, the Silva would receive an amount of 5,000 thousand pounds. Upon learning, the man burst into tears and in despair and decided to burn the old amulet before it brought more misfortune to the family.

¹² Medical student at the Federal University of Ceará.

The black swan paradox

*Nicole Maria Cavalcante de Meneses*¹³

There was a girl in the lake, looking at her reflection.

She was standing on the land, contemplative, like someone saying goodbye to something, like someone releasing something into the world and observing her own truth and chaos.

That day, on her way home, she faced the volume under the covers of her bed. The lifeless body of the girl she had killed.

With the corner of her vision darkening as she tried to remember how that happened, everything began to have a new texture and colors. Everything was a jumble of memories and sensations.

Red. Red. Red.

A dead girl in her bed. Was there someone to protect her?

Was there anyone who could get the black-dressed girl out of her own mind?

Get out, little swan, enjoy the beauty of disorder!

The girl needed to do something about the life she had taken. She would eternally honor that guilt. That deep guilt.

Girl in black, did you kill her? - asked the sudden voice behind her.

Then she ran. She rushed past the doorway in a frenzy and ran like an animal in danger, even though the danger was herself.

She ran, ran, ran, ran.

Then she heard a series of footsteps following her. Someone was chasing her.

She entered the woods around the swan lake and ran. More and more.

As she reached the edge of the lake, she felt a strong blow on her head and fell to the ground. Her chaser had succeeded after all.

She tried to explain that she didn't know how she had killed the girl in the bed, that she didn't remember anything, and that she didn't want to hurt anyone, but she couldn't. She couldn't breathe.

She couldn't breathe, because two hands squeezed her neck. Her pursuer would return the life she had taken.

Wait! Wait, I'm sorry - that's what she wanted to say.

¹³ Student of Public Policy Management at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC).

With her vision darkening and her breathing failing, she finally looked into the eyes of her end.

And she saw despair. The pain. She saw the hatred and the acceptance. She looked into the eyes of her end, and found the beginning.

She saw herself.

She saw herself clutching her own throat, unyielding. She saw her dark eyes and her lack of control.

Feeling the thread that separated her from life, she asked herself: Was there a more fitting end for a crazy girl than to succumb to her own mind?

...

There was a girl in the lake, looking at her reflection.

Calling out, as she sank to the bottom, for the girl who was watching her go.

YOU! YOU! YOU!

The girl looked at her calmly, but didn't answer the calls. It occurred to her that she didn't know the girl's name. Her own name.

She watched her white-dressed reflection one last time until, slowly, her eyes closed, and life drained from her body.

She watched until the moment her reflection left as well.

If this street was mine

*Régis Barbosa do Nascimento*¹⁴

This was a story that someone told me a long time ago.

My family and I moved to a very quiet and peaceful place in the countryside, there was a forest in front of our new house, and I was dying to explore it, but the first thing my mother said was, "Never walk alone in that forest, it's dangerous." It got me curious, but I didn't ask why she said that. I quickly made new friends in the neighborhood and asked them about the woods in front of my house. "It's just a bunch of trees and bushes. There is nothing there, but if I were you, I would never go there". - they said.

That same day in the late-night hours, I was at my computer and a little whistling sound outside caught my attention. So, I opened my window to see if I could find where it was coming from. It was when I saw a little girl outside wearing old, dirty, torn winter clothes. She was singing, and her voice gave me goosebumps.

"If this street; If this street was mine; I would bid; I would tell someone to tile it; with pebbles; With pebbles made of diamond; Only for my; only for my love to pass."

She repeated this verse three times while jumping and dancing, then stopped moving and looked directly at me. Her eyes had deep purple circles under them, and she stared at me in a frightening way. Then I realized that I had stopped breathing. The little girl smiled and ran off into the forest.

The day after, I went to the beginning of the woods. As soon as I got there, a shiver ran down my spine, as if something didn't want me there.

- Hey, kid! What the hell do you think you are doing there? You're not thinking of going in there, are you?

- No sir.

- Well, I hope so. It's too dangerous. Once you get inside, you never go back.

¹⁴ Business student at the State University of Ceará

Startled, I turned around and saw that a gentleman was standing right behind me, looking very unfriendly. He was very old, with only a few strings of white hair on his head and an unshaven beard, gave me a lopsided and frightening smile, but I couldn't help myself but ask:

- So, are there stories about these woods?

- The Solitude? What do you think?

- Solitude? - What a strange name for a forest, I thought.

The old man let out a laugh that made me take two steps back.

- Do you know the history of these woods?

- Of course, I know stories about it. I've always lived here, and if you want a tip from me, stay far away from it.

My curiosity was bigger than me, so that night I stood by the window waiting for the little girl. And at four o'clock in the morning, I heard that low whistle again. She came skipping down the street singing that same song. The little girl stopped right in front of my house and looked up, staring at me again. Those big blue eyes with deep dark circles under them. Every second seemed like an eternity, she smiled at me and moved her lips, but I couldn't hear what she said. I narrowed my eyes and leaned lower, so I could listen better to her, then I heard:

- ... heart...

She looked down, put her hand on her chest, and then I was shocked. Blood started gushing out of her chest. A lot of blood. She spat more blood on the ground and gave me a wide smile, then continued down the street singing.

“In this street, in this street there's a wood which is named, which is named Solitude.”

I cringed and lost my strength. My breath got faster and, before I realized, I was crying. So, I waited to calm down and ran to the computer, searching for the complete lyrics. Right after her last words, the song went like this:

“Inside it, inside it dwells an angel who stole, who stole my heart.”

The next day the sun was setting, and I glanced out the window. That old man was there at the entrance to the woods. I decided to go down and talk to him.

- Hey old man! What are you doing here?

- Well, well, well. Haven't you given up? - He slowly turned to me.

- Gave up? What?

- To go into the woods. - He answered.

I shrugged. The old man gave me a yellow smile, looked back into the woods and suddenly began to sing. That little nursery rhyme had been tormenting me. He sang it all the way through with a sad tone. Even after he finished, he continued to look into the woods, but this time in a melancholic way.

- It's been a long time. 75 years ago, to be precise.

I looked at him without understanding a single word. Was he talking about the name of the forest?

- What happened 75 years ago, old man?

- I lost my little sister. - He told me sadly.

- What happened to her?

- She got kidnapped by some maniac. He dragged her into these woods and murdered her in a terrible way. The police searched everywhere, but they never found her heart.

At this moment, all the air left my lungs. Did that little girl have this horrible end? Tears started streaming from my eyes without me even understanding why I was crying.

- There's no need to cry, boy. It's been a long time. Besides, the maniac is no longer with us.

I swallowed my fear and dared to ask:

- What happened to him?

The old man gave a wide smile and his eyes sparkled in a very bizarre way.

- He is dead, - He looked at me and added - but "They never found his heart".

And he burst out singing:

“If I stole; If I stole your heart; You stole; You stole mine as well; If I stole; If I stole your heart; It's because; It's because I care for you.”

PART III - CRIME SHORT STORIES

"The punishment for crime is in the crime itself."

(Seneca)

On the other side

Carlos Eduardo Galvão Marinho Elcias¹⁵

Mr. Reagan was a very successful and bright medical professor at the British Health Institute, but also a quite strange man. People didn't know many things about him, except for the horrible fact that he didn't have the chance to spend time with his son due to his premature death. Mr. Reagan divorced his wife in 1985, when his son was only three months old, and because of the fights and the evidence of violence, his ex-wife got custody of the child in court. A few months after that, when Mr. Reagan had already moved from New York to London, he got the news that his ex-wife and son died in a car accident.

On a dark day in 1998, Mr. Reagan had a nightmare about a child and woke up sweating. After that, he had a shower and went to the morning class, quiet, with the same empty countenance. As he never spoke to anyone, he didn't realize that the college was empty, only noticing when he got into the room. He stayed there and waited for about 15 minutes, not even hearing a breath. When he was leaving, he heard a whisper coming from the end of the room, which was dark. It was the same boy that he saw in his nightmare.

He tried to leave the room in a rush, but the door was locked, and the kid started to approach him. He closed his eyes trying to believe that he was still having the same nightmare, but nothing happened, and then, after slowly opening his eyes, the child was standing in front of him with his hand outstretched. Mr. Reagan had no option but to take the kid's hand.

Suddenly everyone appeared in the college again, but no one seemed to notice Mr. Reagan and the kid passing by. The boy took Mr. Reagan to his own house, and when they were coming, they saw a crowd, police banners and vehicles, but again, no one saw them, and they got into Mr. Reagan's room. He saw his body on the bed being covered with a bag.

After that, a flash came over Mr. Reagan's vision and he could see all the atrocities he had committed against his wife. Reagan's violence against his wife culminated in the purposeful car crash she caused due to all the sadness and loneliness she was experiencing. He started to cry a lot in front of the child and felt so much guilt. He wanted

¹⁵ Production Engineer student at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC).

to go back in time and do everything different. After a few minutes feeling all the sadness that he kept inside for years, the boy poked him and said:

- Come on dad, mom is waiting for us, now you can have peace in your heart, I forgive you.

Mr. Reagan was murdered asleep by his ex-wife's brother. He never forgot the anger caused by the death of his sister and nephew.

The mysterious Lady Cooper

*Débora Silveira de Lima*¹⁶

It was already winter and, just like every year, the ground was white with so much snow, the trees had several ice crystals in their leaves. There wasn't much movement; the animals were gathered in their burrows and people did not leave their houses due to the strong and icy wind that was blowing that day. It had been exactly a year since Mrs. Cooper's murder.

Mrs Cooper was a very beautiful and cheerful woman. She had just moved to town, and no one knew much about her. Every morning, Mrs Cooper went out with her Siberian husky for a walk; it was as happy as she was and, although it walked without a leash, it never left her side. Mrs Cooper's dog was the only companion we saw at her side. Despite being happy, she never talked to anyone, some wondered how she managed to support herself since she spent the day locked in the house.

Once, Ms. Cooper, while going through her morning routine walking her dog, she did something out of the ordinary. During the walk, she stopped at a store, left the dog outside but soon left. After that, she stopped at a pay phone and spent a lot of time talking. When she returned home, she looked distressed and scared, looking around all the time. That's when we suddenly heard the shots.

That woman, who was admired for her beauty and her mystery, had been hit full in the heart. Soon the place was closed by the police, but the Siberian husky did not move away from that dead body and would not let anyone get close.

After a few weeks, we found out that Mrs Cooper was actually called Amelia Rostova, a Russian woman who was part of a billionaire robbery plan and who had been a fugitive for over 5 years. After Mrs. Cooper's death, things never returned to normal in that city, because so far no one found out who she had spoken to on the phone and how they managed to reach her.

¹⁶ Nurse student at the State University of Ceará.

A crime of passion

*Francisca Eliscy Castro Almeida*¹⁷

James was a very polite boy and studied dentistry. Since childhood, James has always loved playing video games, spending hours and hours at home playing and everyone who knew him always saw him as a quiet and homely boy.

At twenty-four years old, while in his last year of college, James met Cris, a nineteen-year-old girl who, like him, loved to play video games. The two met through the chat app Discord game, and even though they lived in different cities, they had a long-distance relationship for a few months. Cris even traveled to James' city, where she spent a few days; this was the only time they saw each other personally as a couple.

However, after a few months, Cris decided to end the relationship because of the distance and because she was no longer in love. James, not agreeing with the breakup, traveled to her city to find out what had happened and try to get back together. On arriving at Cris's house, who did not know that he was in her city, James took the opportunity when Cris went to the bathroom and looked at her conversations on the computer and saw messages exchanged with another boy. When Cris came back from the bathroom, he, blind with jealousy and saying nothing, positioned himself behind her and stabbed her with a knife in the neck and wrist, killing her.

After the crime, he went to the bathroom of the house and washed his hands, but he left the place with blood on his clothes and went to the hotel where he was staying. At the hotel, James looked for a taxi, which took him to a popular shopping mall, where he was caught red-handed buying clothes with the intention of getting rid of any items that had traces of blood and, finally, fleeing to his city.

¹⁷ Student of the British House of Culture at the Federal University of Ceará.

The countdown

*Igor Lopes Siqueira*¹⁸

Farah and Mohammed were a happy couple in rural Afghanistan. Farah was a language teacher, a lover of pedagogy, and having kindness as her essence, she was responsible for teaching hundreds of Afghans previously forbidden to attend educational institutions. Mohammed, on the other hand, was a fruit merchant in the region and had always been a guy who was very proud of his activity, the scar on his face dates to his past when he had not yet met Farah. Both lived quietly until the birth of their son, Nassib, changed the couple's course.

Nassib was born during a troubled moment in local geopolitics. They lived in a region far away from the capital Kabul, where there was some influence of terrorist groups. However, they gradually became independent from the Kandahar region. This period coincided with the last months of Farah's pregnancy, and she had to stay in a hospital in the capital, which was protected by government troops.

After Nassib's birth, Farah received a visit at the hospital from a person who called himself an acquaintance of Mohammed, and he told her that her husband was a former member of a terrorist group who defected and was running away from his past. He revealed that Mohammed's scar came from shrapnel from an explosion he caused in a school, and one of the victims was Farah's mother, also a teacher. In addition, he warned that Mohammed was being persecuted by his former group because he denied their extremist ways and was found in the town where he lived.

Upon hearing this, Farah was very shaken to learn that the woman who supported and encouraged her the most to teach amid difficulty has died at the hands of her husband, with whom she had just had a child. Farah decided to flee the hospital with Nassib, upset to learn that the truth had not come out during their relationship. When she left the hospital, she got a message... from Mohammed, who was in another country, asking her forgiveness for the past and asking her to protect Nassib at all costs.

¹⁸ Student of Agronomy at the Federal University of Ceará.

Discovery

*Mercia Mendes de Lima*¹⁹

Millian Vouler was a forensic psychology student when her fiancé, Max Terry, was killed by Millian's sweet dogs and, from there, she found out that Max wasn't who he always said he was.

Millian Vouler was 1,72 meters tall, she had brown eyes and black hair, she was intelligent, happy and in love. Max Terry was 1,84 meters tall, and he liked to manipulate Millian's behaviour to his advantage. They lived in a small apartment on the third floor of a building located in Dallas, Texas. They had a pitbull called Chester and a Border collie called Nuvem.

One day, Millian got out of her class and, when she came home at night, she found her fiancé dead, in the bedroom, in bed with his leg ripped off. She panicked because she never saw anything like it. She locked herself up in the bathroom quickly, got her cellphone that was in a bag and called the police that helped her in fifteen minutes. In the attempt to contain Chester's behaviour at home, the animal control accidentally shot at the dog and killed it immediately.

After fifteen days of Max's death and Millian's mental recuperation, she searched for his family to tell them about the accident, but she was surprised when she found out that the address written by Max on the calendar didn't exist. After various investigations about the localization of his family and friends, Millian found that Max was a sociopath that planned to kill her dressed as a bride on their wedding day.

She came to town and was welcomed by her family and friends. On that occasion, she felt relieved to be alive. After three months, she got a court order to release Nuvem from the kennel. It was detained for the investigation of Max's death. According to the evaluation and advances in the animal behavior testing, it was considered sweet.

The conclusion pointed that Max's death was caused by the pitbull for some stimulus made by the victim, ending the investigations.

¹⁹ Student of Pharmacology at the University of Fortaleza.

The cursed toy

*Jéssica de Lima Costa*²⁰

It was the 24th of August 1980. Elliot's family were celebrating in the small village where they lived, called Greenlife. The reason? Mrs. Marla Elliot was returning from a trip at the Capital. Isaac Elliot, a 6-year-old child, was euphoric. His caregiver, Ms. Roma, dressed him with the most beautiful outfit that he had in his wardrobe. Ana Elliot, the cutest 4-year-old child, did not stop to run around the house and Ms. Roma, already tired of putting the dress on Ana, left the responsibility of dressing her to her father, Mr. Onel Elliott.

Mr. Onel Elliot was in a good mood. As usual, he got up early, drank his black coffee and checked the news in the newspaper. After this morning ritual, Mr. Elliot went to the kitchen and asked Ms. Roma to prepare the children because it was Mrs. Elliot's return day. Ms. Roma immediately obeyed her master's orders. Just before lunchtime, the children heard the carriages approaching and ran out into the garden. Mrs. Elliot had arrived. With tears in her eyes, she got out of the carriage and went towards the children. After a few minutes of hugs and kisses, the children pulled her into the house. Mrs. Elliot gave Mr. Elliot, a hug, who soon disentangled himself from his wife's arms, sat on the nearest armchair and opened the newspaper he had already read hours before her arrival. Baffled, Mrs. Elliot gathered the children in the living room and began pulling two presents wrapped in red paper out of her suitcase. The children, overjoyed, took the packages from their mother's hands and quickly unwrapped the gifts. Ana got a very pretty doll, which looked a lot like Mrs. Elliot. Isaac, on the other hand, got a doll with the same characteristics as Mr. Elliot. With the presents in their hands, they ran to the garden and spent the entire afternoon playing with the presents.

Mrs. Elliot went upstairs to rest on her bed, leaving orders to Ms. Roma to take care of her children and to make her husband's dinner. When the clock hammered at midnight, desperate screams and moans could be heard from downstairs. Immediately, Ms. Roma went to the children's room, placed them in her arms, and went downstairs searching for the noise. Once there, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot were sitting in the room, their eyes were red and their mouths full of blood. They looked at Ms. Roma and the children,

²⁰ Student of English at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC).

and in a very frightening voice, they shouted: - “Can't you see that this house is on fire?!”. Suddenly there was fire throughout the house. Ms. Roma walked out into the garden with the children in her arms, leaving behind a burning house. The next morning, police entered the house searching for survivors. Nothing but ashes and a house completely ravaged by fire was found. However, unlike all the objects in the house that were destroyed, the police found, above the bed in the children's room, Ana's and Isaac's dolls, completely intact and saved from the fire.