

A BRAZILIAN GHOST STORY

Today it is Halloween up there in the northern hemisphere. We have no such holiday in Brazil – nothing like the Day of the Dead in Mexico. I would love to be by a campfire listening to ghost stories. I remember a tale I heard from a friend who lived in the north of my country. There are other versions of this tale; maybe you know some.

Maria lived all alone in a hut by the shore. Her life was work: waking up before sunrise, carrying heavy buckets of water from the well, drying meat in the sun. It was work all day long. Her only companion was a dog, who followed her faithfully wherever she went. Sometimes she dreamed of a better, joyful life, full of laughter and music. But the dream always faded back into tedious reality. One day at sunset, Maria was home when she heard a distant melody. It was so sweet that it made her want to laugh and cry at the same time. It was a man's voice – rich and deep, dark and mysterious, but somehow vaguely familiar. She could not understand the words. The voice seemed to be approaching her house. Maria felt her heart thumping. She longed to be in the presence of that voice. Through the window she could see a dark silhouette outside, by the door. She hurried to open it, but the dog suddenly began to sing back.

“Go away. If you look for Maria, she is not here. “

When Maria opened the door, no one was there. She was mad. She kicked the dog. “Stupid animal!” she screamed.

Next day, as it grew dark Maria heard the voice again at a distance. She tied the dog in the back yard and fastened a rope around its jaws so that it could not open its mouth. She went to sit by the window. The song became clearer and clearer. She saw a silhouette by the door. All of a sudden, the dog began to sing. “Go away if you look for Maria. Maria is not here.”

I'm sorry to say that the girl was so mad that she killed her only companion and buried in the back yard. The next day, she sat by the window at sunset, waiting to hear the wonderful voice. It was there, with the same sweet melody, getting closer and closer to her house. She saw the dark silhouette by the door. Suddenly, she heard another voice. “Go away if you look for Maria. Maria is not here.” The dog, though it was dead and buried, still sang.

Enraged, Maria unburied the dog, made a fire, and threw the dead animal into it. The next day she waited anxiously for the voice and watched as the dark silhouette approached her door. All of a sudden, she heard another voice. “Go away. if you look for Maria. Maria is not here.” The ashes of the dog still sang.

Blind with rage, Maria gathered the ashes and went to a cliff. There she threw the ashes into the sea. The next day, Maria bathed in perfumed water. She combed her long black hair and put on her Sunday dress. She sat silently by the window waiting for sunset. When darkness started to descend, she heard the voice singing faintly in the distance. The sound grew louder, and her heart beat fast. The voice had never sounded so sweet, so gentle, yet at the same time so strong and intense. The dark silhouette approached her door. And the beast came in.

