



THE LITTLE VAMPIRES OF THE ABANDONED MANSION

João José da Costa

THE LITTLE VAMPIRES OF THE ABANDONED MANSION, by João José da Costa

THE LITTLE VAMPIRES OF THE ABANDONED MANSION

SEVERAL EVENTS AND COINCIDENCES LED THE CHILDREN TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS A FAMILY OF VAMPIRES.

João José da Costa

Children's story that integrates with the natural fantasy and creativity of children and young people, entertaining, educating and adding to the development of character, moral values, citizenship, ecological awareness, family values, culture, knowledge, spirituality, respect for educators, encouragement to study, order and discipline. This book is for children and young people who enjoy intelligent, sensitive, cultural, educational readings and themes of social reality. It is a book with largest literary content, a better reading exercise.

Synopsis:

The book tells the story of Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert, four friends who saw their playing routine change when a strange and sinister family moved to an abandoned house on the corner of the square and the street of the cemetery. The children's parents banned the approach to the mansion because of the dangers it could present. Beggars lived there, as well as animals like rats, spiders, and scorpions. The mysterious couple had two children, Vladimir, and Norma. Various events and coincidences led the children to believe that it was a family of vampires. Although scared, they set out to demonstrate this, and the story unfolds into adventure, suspense, and mystery, until it all clears up in a surprising ending.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to all those who reserve part of their lives to educate children in some way, as a mission and a belief that in them is the hope of a better world.

In special to parents, teachers and grandparents, the basic triangle of early childhood education.

I thank God for the child that He still allows to exist in me.

João José da Costa

Games in the square were a routine in the lives of Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert. The square had a sports field, swing, seesaws, and other toys, as well as a beautiful garden.

The two girls and the two boys did not separate. They were neighbors, they attended the same school and the same class.

At birthday parties, amusement parks, shopping centers and even circuses that settled in the neighborhood, the four friends were always together.

In the square, they played volleyball, soccer and did what they liked best: playing ball and running one after another.

The mothers laughed when William said he would marry Elizabeth and Ro said he would marry Jennifer when they were older.

At the corner of the square and the street where a cemetery was there was an old and abandoned mansion. And the house made goosebumps and fear in all the children.

It was dark, the trees were dry, the undergrowth was high in the yard and the gardens abandoned. The windows were broken and swayed in the wind. When this happened, they made noise as if they were people moaning.

The worst was at night. Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert covered themselves with the sheet when they heard the moans coming from inside the mansion. Some even thought they were children tied up and trapped inside.

In the abandoned mansion there were many scary animals, such as bats, rats, spiders, cockroaches, scorpions. Some beggars and homeless people used open doors to sleep inside.

It was a dangerous place. Beggars are known as "the men of the bags" because they generally carry a bag on their back with the things they collect in the squares. Many mothers often say:

"Look, the 'man with the bag' can catch you!"

They said this to scare and warn children against the danger of approaching strangers.

Therefore, they kept the children away from the large mansion.

And, as she did every day, after doing her homework, Elizabeth asked her mother:

“Mother! Can I play in the square with Jennifer?”.

“You can but call her first and see if her mother agreed. But come back soon. And there is one more thing: don't go near the abandoned house on the corner!”.

This was a recommendation that the mothers of Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert always made. They could play, but never go near the abandoned house. In fact, the children were so afraid of this place that their mothers would not even have to ask for it!

The mansion was like this for many years and the building was old. No one knew who the owner was. In the neighborhood, no one knew whose mansion it was. It was built many years ago by an immigrant couple who had come from Transylvania, a city in Romania.

And some older residents remembered their names: Elena and Eugene.

Elena and Eugene died old and were buried in the cemetery near the mansion. And no one else came or went to live in the mansion, which was abandoned.

And Elizabeth invited Jennifer:

“Jennifer, would you like going to ride a bike on the sidewalk?”

“Yes, I would! I already talked to my mother and she agreed. She just said that...”

“I know it! So, we don't play near the abandoned house!”. Elizabeth replied, laughing.

“That's it. But what is it about the house that scares people so much?”. Jennifer asked.

“My mother always says that the ‘man with the bag’ lives there and that he can pick us up. It is dangerous!”. Elizabeth replied.

.

“Since we are on a bicycle, will we pass the house very quickly?”. Jennifer said with great curiosity.

“If we go too fast, I will! I'm scared!”. Elizabeth agreed.

Then, Elizabeth and Jennifer approached the mansion and stopped for a few minutes to look at it from a distance. They were really very scared.

And it did not take long for the terrible ‘man with the bag’ to appear.

They both did not want to wait anymore and kick their foot, or rather, the pedal of their bikes.

The terrible ‘man with the bag’ left the mansion in a hurry to start his daily job of picking up cans and cardboard in the trash to sell. That way, you could get some money for lunch for the day.

On the way back, they found William and Robert coming to play ball:

“Why do you two races so hard on these bikes?”. William asked.

"We just saw the 'man with the bag' and we were afraid he would catch us!". Elizabeth said.

"Ah, I would like to see you looking at the abandoned house at night!". Robert replied.

"Have you been there?". Jennifer asked.

"Yes! We are boys and boys are not afraid like girls!". Robert said, showing courage.

After they left, William asked Robert:

"Have you ever been near the big house at night?".

"I have not!". Robert answered.

"Neither did I!". William said.

"Then we lied to the girls!". Ro confirmed.

"But what do you think of watching the big house tonight, while our parents watch television?". William asked.

.

"Is there any danger?" Robert wanted to know.

"There is danger, but we go fast, and we return fast!". William tried to encourage Robert.

William and Robert disobeyed their parents and dared to see the mansion in the early afternoon.

When they got closer, they could see that if the abandoned house scared people by day, it was much more terrifying at night.

Lampposts illuminated part of the bedrooms and living room with open windows and doors. It looked really haunted!

The wind creaked doors and windows, mimicking ghost screams. The dry trees made it seem even more sinister.

When they reached the door, they heard a loud scream and fled in terror.

A cat, who was waiting to hunt down an inattentive mouse, was surprised when

approaching the two friends and gave a loud meow: MIAAAAUUUUU!

But, when we are afraid, any noise seems to be a ghost! Even the bats that lived on the roof flew in fright at the cat's scream.

Therefore, the four friends decided to forget the big house and play away from it. Everyone thought that they really should obey their mothers.

Until a Saturday...

A moving truck stopped in front of the big house. The men were pulling down some dark and old furniture, bringing them to the mansion. This caught the attention of the entire neighborhood.

Many people soon went to spy, including Elizabeth's parents, Jennifer, William, and Robert. And they, of course, followed their parents. Everyone was curious to see the new residents of the famous abandoned mansion.

.

Soon after, an old black car pulled up, from which a couple and two children, a boy, and a girl, got out. They were all dressed in black and their skin was incredibly pale. The father had a cape on his back that swayed in the wind. The mother wore a long dress, the boy a suit with a tie and the girl a long dress. They were really weird! They looked like people of old.

As they got out of the car, the sinister family looked at the people on the other side of the sidewalk. And so, they remained silent for a few minutes, fixing the neighbors on the eyes. The new residents were surprised because so many neighbors came to accompany their move.

When the new residents started to cross the street towards the people, in slow steps and without saying anything, everyone left in a hurry. Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert simply ran, showing fear to their new neighbors.

The whole strange family stopped in the middle of the street, one looked at the other without understanding what was happening, the reason

why the people ran away, and everyone returned to the big house.

In the days that followed, the four friends took the opportunity to see the movement of the new residents at the mansion. They saw the man repairing the doors and windows, the woman cutting the bush and sweeping the dirt. The boy helped the father and the girl helped the mother. They were not very talkative, there was no screaming.

And the strange and unknown family every day in the afternoon, near dusk, repeated a ritual: everyone went to the cemetery with slow steps and in absolute silence. And what they did in the cemetery intrigued all the neighbors.

And one thing immediately caught the attention of Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Ro:

“Did you pay attention that when the sun rises, everyone enters the house and no longer leaves?”. William exclaimed.

“Yes, I already realized this!”. Elizabeth replied.

“And I've seen them work at home and in the yard at night, when the moonlight is strong!”. Robert observed.

“How strange is this, isn't it?”. Jennifer said.

But the suspicions of the four little friends grew when William told this story:

“You know, friends, yesterday afternoon I came with my parents to the side of the big house and I saw two huge bats coming out of the roof and flying towards the square. When we reached the square, I saw the children of the big house playing, one after another, jumping, hiding behind the trees. I think the bats that came out of the house have become these children!”.

And the reaction was general:

“Wow! Now I am starting to freak out. Are our neighbors vampires and their children vampire children?”. Robert said.

.

“It is very strange that they do not like the sun. Vampires do not like sunlight because they die! I read it in a book”. Elizabeth clarified.

“It is true! They like the moonlight. That is why they leave the house when the moonlight is strong!”. Jennifer added.

“And did you notice how everyone dresses in black, wears old clothes and has very white skin?”. William warned.

“I'm starting to get scared. Vampires are said to be dead people who live by drinking other people's blood. Good grief!”. Elizabeth said, very scared.

At night, Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert began to talk to their parents about their concerns:

“Dad do vampires exist?”. William asked.

“They do not my son! Vampires do not exist. This is an old legend that started with Count Dracula. This legend was inspired by the historical

character named Count Vlad Tepes, who was born in 1431 and lived in the city of Transylvania in Romania. This Count Vlad was known for the evil with which he treated his enemies. Although he was not a vampire, his cruelty fueled people's imaginations. He then became a legend as a true vampire because it was said at the time that he thirsty for human blood! But this was a force of expression to demonstrate its cruelty, nothing more”.

“Mom is it true that vampires can become bats and bats can become vampires?”. Elizabeth wanted to know.

“Yes, it seems that vampire stories tell events like that. But let me watch the soap opera!”.

“Dad, what is a vampire?”. Robert asked.

“Well, as far as I know from the movies I saw, in fact bad movies, vampires are dead people who can revive after drinking other people's blood. So, in order to stay alive, they need to take blood at night, right after the moonlight appears. They use their large canine teeth to pierce the veins in the

neck of their victims. Vampires cannot pass under running water, they need to sleep in coffins during the day, and their image is not reflected in mirrors or photos. I also remember that if a vampire's hair is cut, it returns to its original size in a few hours. But I saw it in movies. Real vampires don't exist!"

"Mother, what can make a vampire die, do you know?". Jennifer asked.

"Ah, my daughter! You always come with such questions! Why don't you study for tomorrow's exam? Well, from what I once read in a book, we can kill a vampire with holy water, a crucifix, a wooden stake caught in their hearts while sleeping during the day, a silver bullet or a silver sword, sunlight, and fire. But none of this will do any good because, in fact, vampires do not exist. It is pure imagination of writers and film producers. What really exists is a math test waiting for you tomorrow. Now go study".

In the days that followed, Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert only talked about their new

vampire neighbors and exchanged ideas about what each had learned from their parents.

And they all shared the information they got from their parents:

“Vampires exist. The first vampire was Count Dracula, who was born in 1431 in the Transylvanian city of Romania. Vampires can become bats, and bats can become vampires. Vampires are dead people who manage to revive after drinking other people's blood at night, right after the moonlight appears, piercing the veins of their victims with their huge canine teeth. Vampires cannot pass under running water, they need to sleep in coffins during the day, and their image is not reflected in mirrors or photos. If a vampire's hair is cut, it grows back in a few hours. We can kill a vampire with holy water, a crucifix, a wooden stake driven into their hearts while they sleep during the day, a silver bullet or a silver sword, sunlight and fire”.

On a hot day, the four friends went to have ice cream at mister Quincas' ice cream parlor.

Mister Quincas was one of the oldest residents of the neighborhood.

And while everyone enjoyed their ice cream, William asked old Quincas:

“Mr. Quincas, did you meet the former residents of the abandoned mansion?”.

“Oh, I did. Not much, but I did it. It was Mrs. Elena and Mr. Eugene. They were good people, although they always lived in isolation in the mansion and only came out at dusk. They did not like sunbathing. Although they were strangers, they never harassed anyone. They were Romanians, they came from Romania, from a city called Transylvania”.

The four stopped eating ice cream and spoke in one voice:

“Transylvania, city of Count Dracula?”.

“If it was this count's land I don't know. What I do know is that they said they were born in Transylvania and arrived in America shortly after

the end of World War II. They spoke English very badly. I think that's why they separated from people".

"Do you know if his image was reflected in the mirror?". Robert asked.

"Did they sleep in coffins during the day?". Elizabeth insisted.

"Do you know if they became bats and vice versa?". Robert wanted to know.

"Did you see if they could pass under running water?". William asked.

"Did they cut their hair? Did you see if the hair grew back in a few hours?". Elizabeth asked.

"And they died like, with holy water?". Jennifer asked.

"Did they die looking at the crucifix?". Robert asked.

.

"Did someone drive a stake through their hearts while they slept during the day?". William continued to ask.

"Did the police shoot them with a silver bullet or stick a silver sword at them?". Elizabeth asked anguished.

"Wasn't it when they saw the sunlight?". Jennifer asked, even more frightened.

"Or did the house catch fire and they died?". Robert asked.

Old Quincas, tired of so many questions, said:

"Children, what nonsense are you asking? I have work to do. Go away! Go away! Finish your ice cream and leave me alone! If you want to know the truth, the couple Elena and Eugene died of old age, more than 100 years each. Mister Eugene died first. Two weeks later, Mrs. Elena. They were buried in the cemetery next door. They had no children or relatives in America. After her death, no one else lived in the mansion. It was an incredibly beautiful and well-kept house

with beautiful trees and gardens. Now everything is abandoned. Recently, from what I heard, some relatives of Mrs. Elena and Mr. Eugene came to live at the mansion. But I still don't know them”.

Elizabeth gathered friends and made a statement:

“I discovered a terrible thing! My father said that the first vampire was Count Dracula. And he said that Count Dracula was born in 1431, in a Romanian city called Transylvania”.

“And?”. Jennifer asked.

“Therefore, Mr. Quincas said that the first residents of the mansion were Mrs. Elena and Mr. Eugene”.

“Then... Please, Elizabeth, say it soon! What do you want to conclude?”. William insisted.

“So, don't you remember? Mr. Quincas told us in the ice cream parlor that Mrs. Elena and Mr. Eugene are from Romania and were born in the same city as Count Dracula, Transylvania”.

.

“So...?”. Robert asked.

“As soon as they are relatives of Count Dracula and the family that moved into the mansion are also relatives of Count Dracula, therefore, they are all vampires!”. Elizabeth replied.

If Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert had doubts about the new residents of the mansion, now they had no more! They believed they were all vampires! Even the couple's children were the vampire children of the big house!

But Jennifer still insisted on one question:

“But all our parents said that vampires do not exist, that they are the fruit of the imagination of writers and film producers. So, how do we stand?”.

“Jennifer, look. I do not think our parents tell us the truth, so we do not get scared! But the evidence is there!”. Elizabeth gave her position to Jennifer.

.

“What evidence? We have no proof yet!”. Robert replied.

“Well then, why don't we prove it first?”. William suggested.

“You're right, William. My father is a lawyer and he always says that you cannot accuse anyone without proving that they are guilty of something!”. Elizabeth finished.

And so, they agreed. They would try to prove that the residents of the abandoned mansion were truly vampires.

A few days later, Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert played on a Sunday afternoon. It was a gray afternoon, but there was no threat of rain. And, to everyone's surprise, the two children of the mysterious couple appeared outside the mansion, dressed in dark clothes, different from those worn by the other children, with black hair combed back.

And they introduced themselves, speaking with a foreign accent:

“Hi! Good morning! We are your new neighbors. Can we play with you?”. My name is Vladimir.

“And my name is Norma!”.

Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Ro hugged each other, protecting themselves, with visible fear. But they managed to answer:

“Hi! Good morning! Well, we have seen you playing in the square at night...”.

“It is true, we love the night and my parents sleep a lot during the day and work at night. So before going to work they let us play a little in the square!”. Vladimir said.

“Ah, do your parents work at night? And what do they do?”. William wanted to know.

“We don't know very well, but they come home with their apron always soiled with blood!”. Norma replied.

“Can I ask another question?”. Elizabeth said.

▪

“Sure, ask what you want. We are your neighbors and you need to know us very well!”.

“Why don't you play in the sun during the day?”.

“Oh God. We do not like the sun. The sun is bad for us. In addition, we avoid noise at home during the day so that my parents sleep peacefully. They have a lot of work at night!”. Vladimir clarified.

Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert stopped asking questions for the moment and decided to play hide and seek with the brothers Vladimir and Norma. And the two brothers knew how to hide so well that they always won the game. It seems they just disappeared. Then they played run and catch.

But at one point, Vladimir and Norma said they had to leave. Night was coming and it seemed that the moonlight would be strong that night. They had to stay home.

“We are happy to meet you! Americans are truly kind and friendly! Whenever you want, show up

at home. The big house where we live is old, but now everything is in order!”.

As soon as they left, the four friends showed their concerns.

“You see it? The boy's name is Vladimir, Count Dracula was named Vlad!”. Robert exclaimed.

“I was terrified when they said their parents slept during the day and worked at night! Also, they return with their bloodstained aprons! Jesus Christ! Surely they must be vampires!”. William said convinced.

“And they confessed that they don't like the sun and that the sun is bad for them!”. Jennifer said stressed.

“We have to think of a plan to get the evidence! I have been thinking... If they come back tomorrow to play, we will play barbershop and cut Norma's hair. If it grows in a few hours, we will have a first proof!”. Elizabeth suggested.

.

“And I'll bring a mirror to see if they have a reflection in the mirror or not!”. Robert said.

“Good ideas, this would help a lot. And let us try to see if their canines are large”. William completed.

“Great, so we all agree!”. Elizabeth finished.

The next day, Vladimir and Norma did not show up, nor the entire week. But the following Sunday, they returned to look for the four friends:

“You disappeared!”. Elizabeth asked.

“Right, but during the week our parents won't let us out. We have to take care of the house at night so that they can do their job well! And when they come back with their bloodstained aprons, we know they worked really well at night!”.

Jennifer spoke softly in William's ear:

“Wait a little longer, but let's prove they are vampires and call the police!”.

.

Then Elizabeth asked:

“Shall we play beauty salon? Just the girls. The boys play something else!”.

Norma agreed immediately.

“I want! And I want to be the first to take care of my hair and put on makeup!”.

The "beauty salon" was already improvised with a chair under a tree and a mirror attached to the trunk.

Jennifer carefully picked up a pair of scissors and cut the two curls from Norma's hair that fell close to her ears. When she saw her haircut, Norma was truly angry:

“It wasn't supposed to be real! You cut my curls that I liked so much! I do not want to play more”.

Norma came out crying, followed by Vladimir, who spoke:

“My mom will I be very angry with Norma!”.

"And you, Robert? Did you see the image of Vladimir reflected in the mirror?"

"I did not!"

It was not clear whether Robert's "I did not" meant "I didn't see Vladimir's image reflected because I couldn't position him in front of the mirror" or if it meant "Vladimir's image was not reflected in the mirror even though he was fine In front of the mirror".

But what was valid even for suspicious and frightened friends was the second answer. And the children considered that the image of Vladimir was not reflected in the mirror!

When the children met Vladimir and Norma again the following Sunday afternoon, they had another surprise! Norma's curls were in the same place, hiding each ear.

"You see it? We have one more proof! Norma's hair curls grew quickly and are the same size. In a week it would be impossible for them to grow

like this. Now we have two proofs!" Elizabeth said.

"Two?". Jennifer asked.

"Yes! Vladimir's image was not reflected in the mirror and Norma's hair grew in a few hours! They are vampires, there are no more doubts".

"Wait a minute! Vladimir and Norma invited us to visit them at the mansion. I think we should go and check everything there!". William suggested.

"But how are we going to protect ourselves?". Robert asked anxiously.

"I'll have a crucifix and holy water!". Elizabeth said.

"I'll take a silver skewer that my father has for grilling!". Jennifer said.

"If necessary, I'll open the window to let in the sunlight!". William said.

.

"I'll take a lighter and show the fire if they threaten me!". Robert said.

But Elizabeth tried to control and calm her friends:

"Well, first we have to have the approval of our parents to visit Vladimir and Norma in the big house. So, we have to take all this hidden! After all, they were truly kind to invite us. It would be rude to arrive with all these threats. But just in case, bring all this hidden! Is it okay like that?"

Everyone agreed.

In the evening, Elizabeth tests her mother about visiting the mansion:

"Mother! We knew the children of the vampire... I mean, that family that moved into the abandoned house. Their names are Vladimir and Norma. They invited us to visit them at the mansion. Can we go?"

"And who would go?"

.

“Me, Jennifer, William and Robert!”.

“But isn't an adult going with you?”.

“Well... this is the idea!”.

“No lady! You will not go alone! See with Jennifer if her mother would go with you. So, I am going too! I do not think it is a good idea for only kids to go. After all, we hardly know these new neighbors, who, by the way, are very strange”.

A few days later, the visit was scheduled. Vladimir and Norma warned their parents that their new American friends would visit them with Jennifer and Elizabeth's mothers.

And on Sunday it seemed to favor the plans of Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Ro. The day was beautiful, the sky was blue, and the sun was bright and intense.

Following the sidewalk towards the mansion, the four friends and mothers of Elizabeth and Jennifer discussed the behavior that everyone should have during the visit.

But the children exchanged sinister glances and did not comment on what they had in their minds and pockets to test Vladimir and Norma.

This was the day that they finally believed that the mystery of the vampires in the mansion would be unraveled.

Upon reaching the great door of the mansion, the group looked for a bell, but could not find it. In place of the bell, a rope, with a sign: "Pull the cord to be announced".

When Elizabeth's mother tightened the cord, the bells rang inside the mansion. After a few minutes, Vladimir and Norma's parents went to the front of the mansion to open the door.

"Good morning! Welcome to our home. My name is Tristan, and this is my wife Mircea. "

They all showed up and were greeted in the great hall. The dark furniture, the red curtains, the wooden floor, and the large chandeliers gave an air of haunted house.

.

As soon as they were seated on the red and green velvet couches, Mrs. Mircea said:

“Vladimir and Norma, take your friends to the other room and show them your toys and books”.

And a good part of the morning was busy with conversations between the couple Tristan and Mircea and the mothers of Elizabeth and Jennifer. On the other hand, Vladimir and Norma were talking to Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert.

And Mrs. Arlete, Elizabeth's mother, took the initiative in the conversation:

“Then you are from Romania. And are you moving to America?”

The children in the next room were able to hear part of the adults' conversations and Mr. Tristan's response:

“Yes! We came from Romania two years ago. My uncle Eugene and my aunt Elena died. We are the only relatives. We take care of the goods they left here in the country, especially this beautiful

mansion. We missed them so much, they were good people. We came to pay our last respects. We go to the cemetery every day out of respect for his memory. We are looking to save the small factory they had for Chisca production”.

“Chisca?”. Exclaimed Mrs. Suely, Jennifer's mother.

“Ah! Chisca is a traditional sausage from Romania. And we produced it to sell to Romanian immigrants who came to the country”. Mrs. Mircea clarified.

And Mr. Tristan continued:

“We prefer to work at night because it is cooler. We are not bothered by insects. And our aprons with pork and beef blood are washed at home”.

And Mrs. Mircea added:

“We don't like the sun. We avoid sunbathing. Where we were born the climate is very cold and our skin is very white. The sun can cause diseases on our skin. So, we let the children play

a little in the square in the early afternoon. Therefore, we will work more relaxed, knowing that they will be sleeping. Also, they like to see the bats that go to the square at night to eat fig fruit”.

And he said something important:

“Ah! These children! Do you know that one of these days Norma came home crying because your daughters cut the two curls of hair that she liked so much, playing in the beauty salon? We had to find a way to tie the cut curls to make her stop crying. I was happy to know that in two months her hair would grow back normally”.

The four adults in the next room were able to listen to part of the children's conversations:

“Vladimir and Norma, look at this crucifix that I received from my mother!”. Elizabeth said.

“How nice! We also have crucifixes; we are Catholics like you”. Vladimir replied.

.

"Don't you feel anything when you see or touch a crucifix?". Elizabeth asked.

"Yes, we feel a lot of joy and a feeling of peace, because it is the symbol of Christians, the moment of the crucifixion of Jesus". Norma replied.

"Look! I have this glass of holy water! Do you want to bless yourself with it?". Elizabeth insisted.

"Yes. We usually dip our fingers in holy water to make the sign of the cross! Holy water is a way to feel the tears of Jesus". Norma replied.

"I have this silver skewer. My dad uses it for roasting. Do you want to catch it?". Jennifer said.

"Yes! It is a beautiful piece. But we are vegetarians. We don't eat meat!". Vladimir replied.

"I received this lighter from my dad! It is for making a fire in the Scout camp. Look at the fire it makes! Are you afraid of fire?". Robert asked.

.

"I am not! Why should we be afraid of fire? But we highly respect fire. It can be dangerous if used incorrectly". Norma said.

"Can I open the window? The sun is beautiful outside. Do you like the sun? Are you afraid of the sun?". William asked.

"Yes, you can open it. We love to see the sun on the plants. But our parents do not let us expose ourselves to the sun. We have very thin skin and we have already had cases in the family of skin diseases caused by the sun. What a pity! .

The children decided to stop asking questions that were trying to put Vladimir and Norma to the test and turned to normal questions:

"Do you speak Romanian?". Elizabeth wanted to know.

"Yes, we speak fluently". Vladimir replied.

"Is it difficult?". Jennifer asked curiously.

.

“Not for us. In fact, the Romanian language has many words similar to several other languages.” Norma clarified.

“Oh yeah? And how do you say: What's your name?”.

“Cum te cheamă?”. Vladimir said.

“And the white, black and green colors?”. Robert asked.

“Alb, negru e verde”. Norma replied.

“And cow, ox, bull, pig and goat?”. Jennifer asked curiously.

“Vacă, bou, taur, porc e capră”. Vladimir replied.

“Wow! These words are really similar to the European languages. And how do you say milk, meat, bread, and fruit?”. William asked.

“Lapte, carne, pâine e fruct”. Norma replied.

.

"Just one more: how do you say mountain, valley, lake and sea?". Elizabeth added.

"Munte, valle, lac and mării". Vladimir said.

Vladimir, seeing the interest of his friends, asked:

"And do you know why many words are so similar to several European languages words?".

"No, I do not. Why?". William replied.

"Because Romanian is one of the five sister languages that originated from Latin, such as Portuguese, Italian, French and Spanish!".

"Is it true?". Robert asked, the most curious of the group.

"Yes, it is true! Take, for example, the words: white, black, milk, bread and mountain".

"In Romanian: alb, negru, lapte, pâine and munte".

.

"In Portuguese: branco, negro, leite, pão and montanha".

"In French: blanc, noir, lait, pain, montagne".

"In Italian: Bianco, nero, latte, pane and montagna".

"Ah! How interesting, I didn't know about it!". Jennifer replied.

The visit was coming to an end. If, on the one hand, the children were happy to know that Vladimir and Norma were not the vampires in the mansion, on the other hand, they could not hide their frustration!

Jennifer's mother asked the last question in the adults' living room:

"And will you stay in America forever?".

"No, we will not! We will return to Romania as soon as we finish our mission here. Our dear uncles Eugene and Elena never had children. And they left the will that the mansion should be

donated to a children's orphanage and that the Chisca factory be reactivated to help pay for the expenses of the orphanage. As soon as we finish our mission and fulfill this last request from my uncles, we will go back to Romania”.

Before leaving the mansion, Elizabeth wanted to take photos of the entire group. She took one in the living room, one in the garden, and the last one in front of the big door. It would be a reminder of this friendly and welcoming family that, despite appearing strange and sinister, was made up of peaceful and well-meaning citizens.

The time has passed. The abandoned house gave way to an orphanage that housed 32 abandoned orphaned children. It is no longer sinister and haunted. And it gave way to a colorful house illuminated by the joy of the children who played and made a pleasant noise of happiness every day.

Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert started celebrating a birthday party at the orphanage every year. The party was to celebrate their birthdays and the birthdays of all the children in

the orphanage. But instead of receiving gifts, Elizabeth, Jennifer, William, and Robert took gifts for all the children and everyone put out the candles on a large birthday cake.

And they always reminded their friends Vladimir and Norma that they were gone.

Seeing the photos, she took, Elizabeth noticed that Mr. Tristan did not appear in any of the photos.

And she was very intrigued:

“But he was there in all the photos I took! I'm sure!”.

Instead only empty spaces appeared...

But Elizabeth did not give any importance to this and did not even comment with her parents and friends! She already had enough evidence that they were not vampires!

How strange, isn't it?

Why did Mr. Tristan not appear in the photos?

Would it be possible?

Is Mr. Tristan a...

No, no way!

Or could he be?

The end