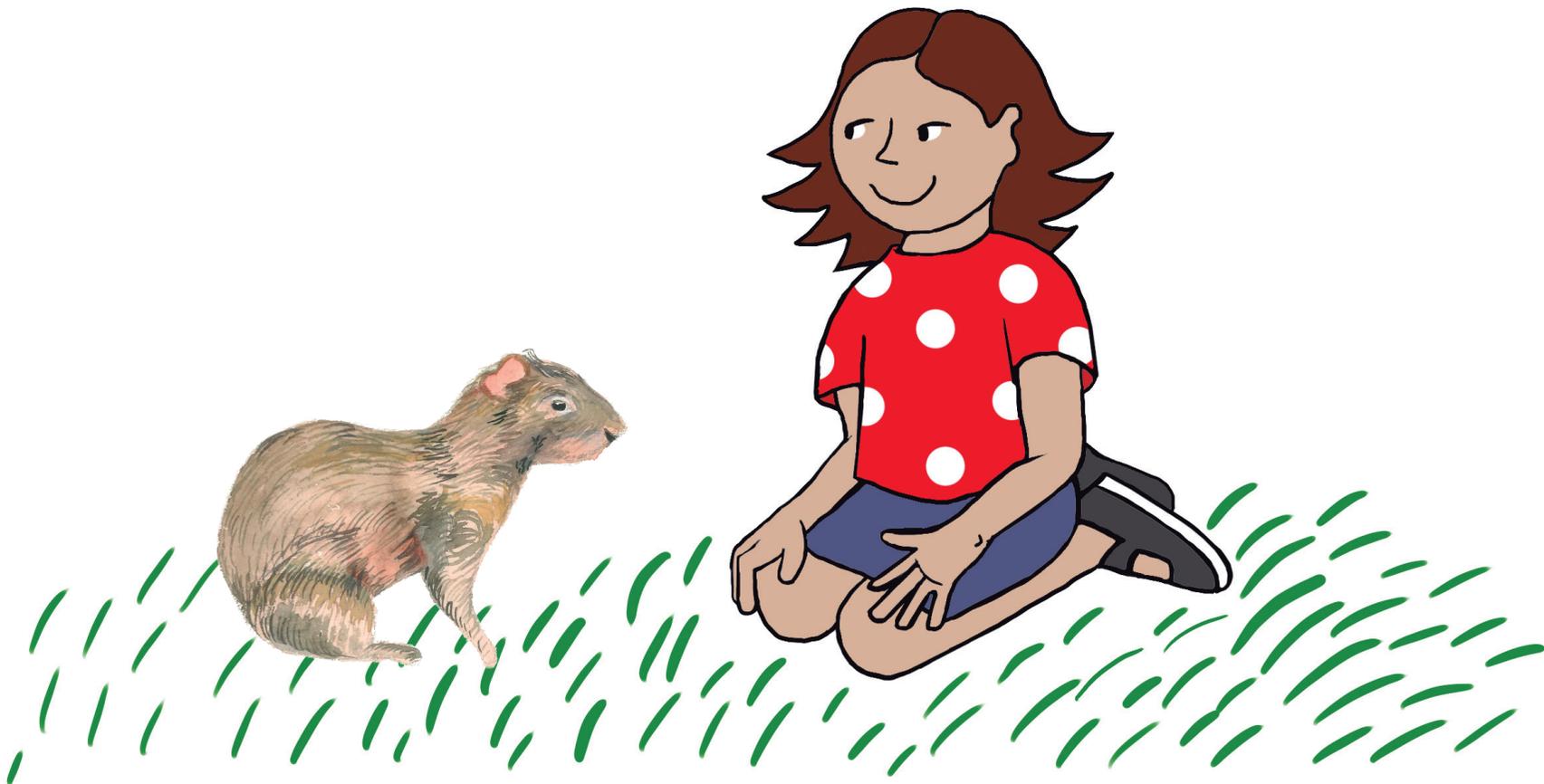


MINISTÉRIO DA CIDADANIA PRESENTS:

GabyGaby

AN AMAZONIAN EXPERIENCE

Gabriela Brioschi



SECRETARIA ESPECIAL DA CULTURA

MINISTÉRIO DA CIDADANIA



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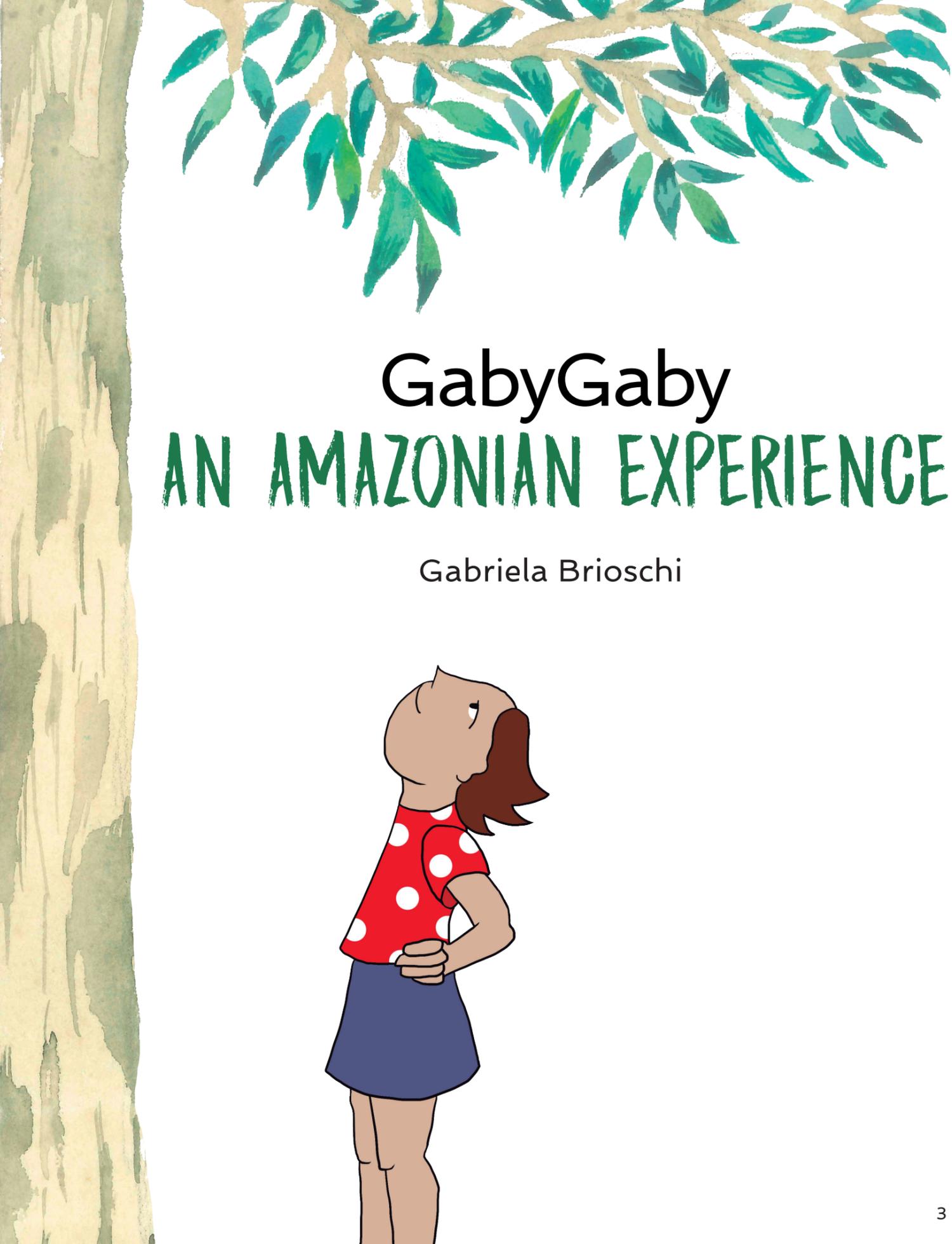
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A ViaQuatro, concessionária que opera a Linha 4 – Amarela, do Metrô de São Paulo, incentiva projetos culturais que ajudam a tornar o mundo mais sustentável. Por isso, apoia a obra *Viagem Amazônica*, que retrata a cultura dessa região, a floresta e os animais que lá habitam. A empresa também estimula ações que enriquecem a viagem dos passageiros e tornam melhor a vida das pessoas que moram perto das estações. Boa leitura!



A Companhia de Gás da Bahia – Bahiagás, concessionária estadual dos serviços de distribuição de gás natural canalizado, convida o leitor a conhecer o livro infantil e ambiental *Viagem Amazônica*. A obra, que recebe apoio técnico da Fundação Amazonas Sustentável (FAS), busca estimular os jovens a lidarem com as diferenças regionais que vivemos no século 21.

O projeto tem sintonia com uma das principais missões da Companhia: a responsabilidade socioambiental. Endereça questões ambientais que podem tanto ser usufruídas pelas crianças como lidas junto com os adultos, criando uma atmosfera rumo ao início de uma mudança efetiva, buscando a sustentabilidade.

Viagem Amazônica conta com patrocínio da Bahiagás, tendo sido selecionado no Edital de Patrocínios a Projetos Culturais, Sociais, Esportivos, Científico-Acadêmicos e Ambientais de 2018-2019 da Companhia, que visa a difundir e estimular a produção cultural, bem como atividades esportivas em suas diferentes modalidades e projetos sociais, ambientais e científico-acadêmicos de interesse da sociedade.

Boa leitura!

Luiz Gavazza – diretor-presidente da Bahiagás



This book is dedicated to all Amazonian children,
from all times: past, present and future.

This book is dedicated to all children who yearn to learn what
the Amazon region is all about and what lives within it.

This book is dedicated to all those children who live within
the forest and its adjacent areas.

It is dedicated to all children who live on the margins
of the Amazonian rivers.

This book is dedicated to all children from the Amazon
region, from Brazil and from other countries of the
Amazonian territory.

FROM THE PLANE





“Whose eyes are those that shine in a full moon’s night? Is it the howler monkey, the jaguar or is it a haunting?” GabyGaby always had goosebumps when she reached that point in the book she’d received as a gift from Uncle Miguel.

She couldn’t even remember the last time her uncle and aunt had come to her town. Now she was on her way to see them in Manaus and was going to visit the planet’s largest tropical rain forest!

“Jaguars are able to kill an ox! And the river dolphin? What size can it be? Does it eat smaller fish? How much a day? The pink dolphin must be gorgeous”. Gaby was dreaming about these animals when the flight attendant asked her:

‘Would you like something to drink?’

‘Some juice, please,’ she took the juice, thanked the lady, and turned round towards the window once again, lost in her own thoughts: “this looks like a huge broccoli carpet A river here and over there... So much green!”

Long before boarding this plane, her dream of visiting the Amazon region already existed. This was the region with the largest river, in water volume; the biggest tropical rain forest of the world and what else? The animals! She had with her the notebook full of photos, drawings and information on all the animals she yearned to see. This notebook also held the cards she had lovingly prepared, by hand, for her loved uncle and aunt: Aunt Leia and Uncle Miguel.

Her dear uncle, white beard and all, spoke with a strong northeastern accent. He had been very young when he’d first moved to Manaus. He had, just recently, opened a travel agency. But even before his travel agency existed, he had already taken many people to visit the forest, the animals and the Amazonian rivers.

Manaus was a city inserted in the middle of the jungle. Gaby’s mum had told her Uncle Miguel owned a boat which was moored on the banks of the Amazon river, a river so large that even yachts could navigate it. The girl could imagine tourists sunbathing amongst dolphins and Sucuri snakes and laughed at her own thoughts.

‘Are you travelling by yourself?’ Asked the woman sitting besides her, closing her laptop.

‘Yes, but my uncle and aunt will meet me at the airport.’

‘Wow! Your parents must be very cool to give you a trip like this. And travelling on your own, too!’

‘Yes, they are,’ answered Gaby, remembering the huge fight she’d had with her Mom because of the mobile phone, and all the mixed feelings she still had. She continued speaking ‘And I saved up to be able to afford my plane ticket!’

‘Hmm, that’s even better. I believe that we’re living in a time when women conquer what they want. Don’t you think so?’ She held out her hand towards Gaby, saying ‘My name is Karina’.

‘I’m Gaby,’ answered the girl decisively, looking at Karina. ‘Do you live in Manaus?’

‘Yes, I moved here because of my work. Congratulations Gaby, you have there a beautiful art notebook and....’

‘Animals!’ Said Gaby, a bit shy, but very happy that her travelling companion had noticed ‘this here is the howler monkey, a monkey that I really love’, she said showing the page with the drawing, a photo and some notes on the size of the animal, its eating habits and other curious facts about this monkey.

‘Please place all your personal belongings in the overhead storage compartments for takeoff’ said the stewardess.

‘I really want to see many diferent species of monkeys: The Capuchin monkey, the pied tamarin monkey and the howler monkey. There are so many!’ Gaby said enthusiastically.

‘Oh! I live here in Manaus and don’t even know about these monkeys. It’s so cool to be a child with such joy”,’ said Karina.

‘Hmm, I don’t believe joy is only a child’s thing’, said Gaby looking seriously at Karina, who, in turn, answered firmly:

‘You’re right, of course! That’s it girl, you are absolutely correct.’

Almost four hours later, the flight attendant announced they were landing. At the time to disembark, Karina helped Gaby with her back-pack. She said goodbye with a kiss. Gaby thanked her:

‘Thank you!’



"If only I could bring her some joy... I know!" She closed her eyes and imagined a tiny shining star circling around the woman. Karina kissed her and walked off. She didn't even have any luggage.

"Jeez! What a big airport", thought the girl, observing the shiny floors and the well lighted shop windows. She then heard her name being called.

'Gaby! Are you ready for the forest?' That was Uncle Miguel, smiling through his ever present white moustache.

'Uncle Miguel!' Exclaimed Gaby, frightened by his big thunderous voice. Recovered shortly after, she embraced her uncle.

'So you made it, didn't you, girl? Even pestering your father and mother you did well, eh?' Miguel laughed out, his big belly shaking all over. 'That's cool!'

'People chipped in at my Birthday and Christmas: the collection worked out well!' She laughed happily, thinking "My uncle does not believe joy is only a child's thing".

'I even had bake sales at school!', she completed. 'Every Friday, which became known as Amazon Fridays!'

'Is that so, eh? And who was it that actually baked the cakes?' asked the Uncle.

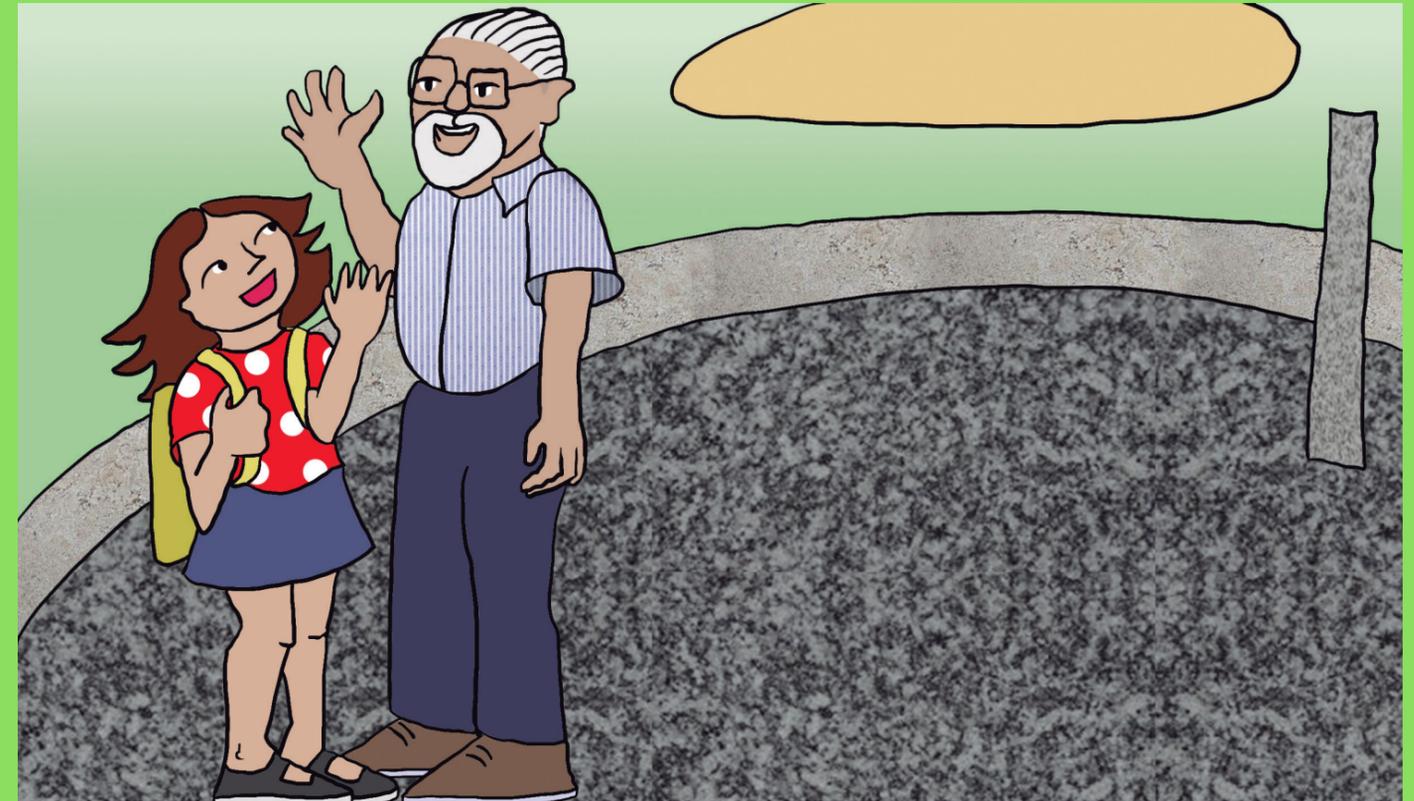
'I did, of course!' said Gaby. 'I saved all the money and now, here I am! Uncle, Mommy thought I would quickly forget about your invitation and give up on this dream of visiting the Amazon region.'

'Hmmp! She doesn't know my niece well!'

'Yes, but you helped me out a lot, with all your e-mails and phone calls. Thank you, uncle.' She hugged her darling uncle once more and then remembered: 'We have to call mom back home. I don't have a mobile phone, uncle! Can you believe it?'

As she removed the identification tag from around her neck, which had been given to her by the flight attendant, Gaby was reminded of the fight about the mobile phone.

'My parents say that children shouldn't own mobile phones. But all the children in my apartment building and street already have one!'



'We didn't even have telephones lines when I was a boy back at the Dry Ranch, in the Northeast.'

'You're serious?' Asked Gaby.

'Yes, I am, of course,' answered Miguel. 'And each person has a different opinion. Your parents allowed you to travel more than one thousand kilometers to be with us.' After a while, he completed 'I have an old mobile which you can use to take your own photos.'

'Wow, thanks so much, uncle!'

'Hi!' Said a dark boy, who showed up carrying three water bottles. 'I'm Edu.' He gave Gaby one bottle, another to Uncle Miguel and opened his own, adding 'The climate here is very hot, you have to drink loads of water!'

'Oh! This is your forest guide,' said Miguel.

'Nice to meet you, Edu.'

'Edu is my 'foster nephew,' explained the uncle.

'Foster nephew?' Asked Gaby.

'Yes, the adopted kind,' added Edu.

'Let's continue talking on our drive home.' Said Uncle Miguel, already holding the car keys in his hand.

Gaby noticed that the boy looked like a native brazilian "indian", but he wore shorts and sneakers just like all the boys in her own school. She thought: "Should I ask him?"

Uncle Miguel interrupted Gaby's thoughts: 'Are you hungry? Come on, let's go. Your aunt Leia is preparing loads of yummy things, such as the Amazonian fried bananas!'

On the drive to her relatives' home from the airport, they stopped at a traffic jam.

'Wow! How many cars!' Said Gaby.

'Yes, indeed. And we even have a shopping mall!' Said Miguel.

'All I could see from the plane was the forest, and now it turns out that this city is huge!'

THE PINK HOUSE



Uncle Miguel's and Aunt Leia's home was situated in the old part of the city of Manaus. Looking at it from the front, all one could see was a wall with several windows. When she walked in, though, what a surprise! It had a back yard garden and even many fruit trees.

'It's been too long! How you've grown, girl!' Aunt Leia hugged Gaby.

'What a dream to be here, auntie! Thank you for having me!' Gaby took deep breaths of the humid Manaus air.

It was at that moment that she noticed the yard and the trees. When they sat down at the table, a different smell drifted in through the yard door.

'What is that sweet smell?' asked Gaby.

'It's the soursop fruit! Would you like to try its juice?' Said Edu, holding a full jug of juice.

'The tree is heavy with fruit this year!' Said Aunt Leia, offering a platter with small 'tapiocas'.

They were all around the table, laden with corn meal cake, small 'tapiocas' made with Brazil nuts and the famous fried bananas, the most delicious ones she'd ever eaten! Uncle Miguel was really right.

They were all eating their food when, without a care in the world, a duck waddled its way into the dining room.

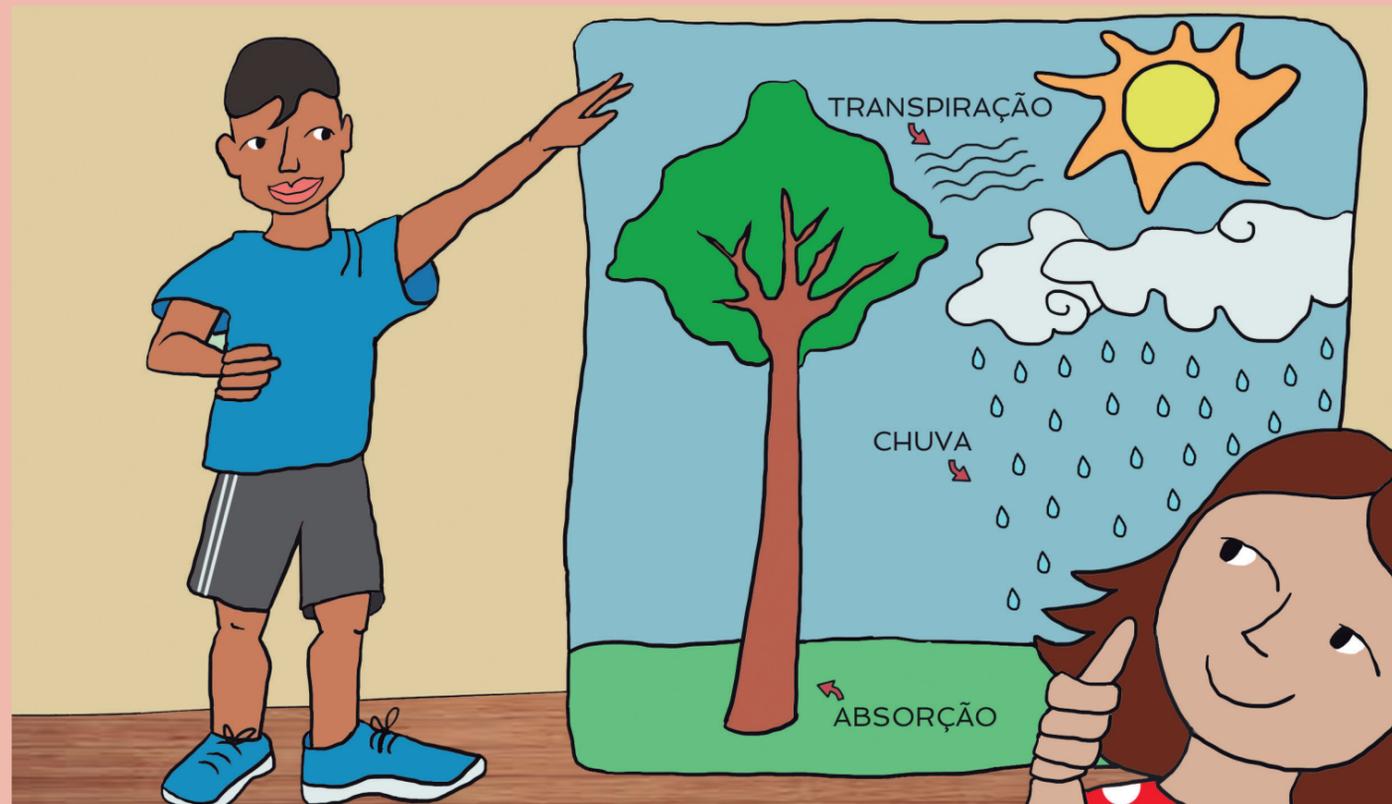
'A duck in Manaus?' Asked Gaby.

'Your Uncle Miguel does love his pets. There are two ducks, one chicken, a cat and a dog.'

'We've also had a Sucuri snake, called Carolina, but that is prohibited nowadays.' completed Miguel.

'A sucuri snake? Carolina?' Gaby laughed out loud.

'Yes, indeed. She had many injuries when she first arrived,' explained Aunt Leia. "She was caught and hurt



by a boat propeller. Once she recovered, we released her at the Santa Rita do Japiim community.'

'Yes, over there, in the community I belong to, we are allowed to have pet snakes,' said Edu. He then whistled loudly and a parrot flew in, landed on the table and started pecking at the tapiocas. Everyone laughed.

'How is it that he calls to the parrot? And what is this community, the one he mentioned? And why is it that this boy lives with my relatives?' Thought Gaby.

'Parrots are very smart, and, when there is a food shortage in the forest, they come into the towns,' explained Aunt Leia.

'I've come to see the wild animals of the Amazon region, and they're already here!' She added enthusiastically.

'Hmm... the people of Brazil think that we've only got trees and animals in the Amazon region,' said Edu.

'The people of Brazil? What do you mean?' Asked Gaby.

'It's that, here in the Amazon region, we say that Brazil is everything else,' explained Uncle Miguel. 'Anything else outside our Amazon region is referred to as Brazil, people of Brazil etc.'

'How strange. So they think that it's so far away they don't think they're actually in Brazil?' The girl thought.

Edu helped Aunt Leia clear the table when the meal was over. He knew where all things were kept, even the napkins.

'This way, you'll be able to, apart from learning English, get into a good university as you've always wanted,' said Aunt Leia, smiling. 'And do you know why?'

'Because I do the dishes, auntie?' Edu asked.

'That's almost it, but not quite: It's because you cooperate joyfully. Joy is so important in this life, Edu! It's so wonderful to have you here at home with us.'

'Thankfully, the adults in this house also believe joy is not only for children. I'm relieved,' thought Gaby.

'We will be able to help the Santa Rita do Japiim's community based tourism this way,' said Edu, in a lively manner.

'Community based what?' Asked Gaby.

'Community based tourism!' It's a way of travelling and getting to know places, having the locals offer services, an experience,' uncle Miguel explained. 'For example, in Santa Rita do Japiim, you'll be able to eat in a family's home, taste their traditional food and listen to their stories. You can even go out on a boat with the fishermen. This way, tourists may experience the life of the local population, and they, on the other hand, have a secondary source of income. Do you understand?'

Gaby nodded her head affirmatively.

'Yes, I do want my community to receive people from all around the world. That's why I'm studying English.'

'This boy, who is in part a native Brazilian Indian, but isn't Indian, is strange. How does he know so many things? He's almost my age. And why does he live here with my relatives? Why does Aunt Leia like him so much? Am I jealous of him? Oh, no, I'm not,' thought Gaby.

'Here in the Amazon region, we are all "Caboclos", of mixed race', explained Edu. 'All of us have either a grandfather or a great-grandfather who came from another place. My grandmother was born in the tribe's village, a native Brazilian Indian, but I was born and raised in the community.'

'So, you descend from native Brazilian Indians, but you're not a full native Brazilian Indian. You seem to have read my thoughts.'

Feeling brave, she pulled out the notebook, full of animal images, from her back-pack and showed it to Edu.

‘See! These are the animals I researched before coming here,’ she said.

‘Wow! Even before you’d seen any of them, you were able to do all this?’

‘I read there are, here in the Amazon, monkeys which can travel long distances by jumping from tree to tree. Is that true? And that the world’s largest fresh water fish live here as well. Is that also true?’ She spoke of the animals with intense happiness.

‘All that is true,’ answered Aunt Leia, walking into the room. ‘What a pretty notebook.’

‘How cool! You draw really well. Did it take you long to finish this notebook?’ asked Edu. ‘You seem to be as talented as your Aunt Leia.’

‘Oh! But auntie Leia is an artist! I want to be a biologist! Ah, let’s see...,’ spoke Gaby thoughtfully, ‘Was it last year or... I think it’s been two years since Uncle Miguel visited us back home.’

‘No, that can’t be so! No ...’ they all heard Uncle Miguel’s thunderous voice booming out from his study.

‘Miguel? What’s happened now? Your hair’s standing on end!’ Asked the always serene Aunt Leia.

‘Everybody should know by now! Amazonian trees are being cut down, when everyone should be aware that the continent’s rain cycle depends on this tropical rain forest! Don’t they know the consequences of this devastation?’ He was so red in the face, so angry, that he looked like a stranger.

‘What’s going on now, uncle?’ asked Edu.

‘Conservation of the rain forest, doesn’t anyone understand? A new illegal logging field has been discovered in the Santa Rita do Japiim community region. We already knew about it but it seems that they’re accelerating the clearing of trees.’

‘And now, uncle?’

‘Whilst all of us are making so much effort to keep the forest standing, to develop new income sources for the Community,’ completed Uncle Miguel. ‘We must go out there to speak to more people.’

‘But Miguel our niece has just arrived to visit us. We’ve made plans to see the ‘meeting of the waters’ and the Manaus theatre,’ pleaded Aunt Leia.

‘We must slightly rearrange the order of our plans, I believe, let’s think. What is it that you most want to see here, Gaby?’

‘I would really like to see the dolphins, the sucuri, the monkeys, uncle’ said Gaby.

‘Humph! Yes! That is really all the tourist want to see: the animals! But you, city girl, you, please be aware that without trees, there wouldn’t be any animals! With no trees, nothing would exist!’ Retorted an angry Edu.

‘Why is he talking to me like that? I can’t understand. Is it just because I want to see a dolphin? Hmm he was born here and has already seen many of them, so that’s ok. But I’ve never seen a single one’, thought Gaby.

‘These you’ll see for sure, darling’, said Aunt Leia.

‘And you’ll go into the rain forest’ completed Uncle Miguel.

‘Besides, everyone should already understand the importance of a standing forest!’ Edu completed.

‘For the whole planet!’ dared Gaby.

‘We must head out to the community tomorrow, Leia,’ said Uncle Miguel. Then, turning towards Gaby, he added: ‘You’re in luck. Out there, at Santa Rita do Japiim, you’ll certainly see some animals.’

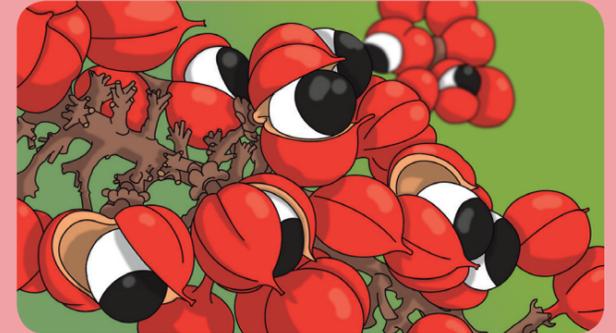
‘I’d imagined this change of plans, Miguel,’ said aunt Leia gravely, but with a smile. ‘Gaby, we’ll see the

‘meeting of the waters’ and visit the INPA zoo on our way back.’

‘A zoo! Yay! I love zoos. And we’re really going into the forest!’ Even though she was happy, Gaby felt that something serious was happening. She had already studied about the importance of preserving the Amazonian rain forest and the need to plant more trees, but just being out here, in the midst of it all, felt very different. It was one thing to study through books and watch videos. but a very different thing altogether was to be here, to see the felling of trees so nearby.

THE GUARANA LEGEND

Once upon a time, there was a couple from the Maués tribe who really yearned to have a child. The powerful god Tupã gave the couple a beautiful, good and fair son. But the god of darkness, Jarupari, was very jealous. One day, Jarupari turned himself into a venomous serpent and bit the boy. When the parents found their dead son, their sorrow was immense, and the sky began to thunder. At that moment, they understood the god Tupã’s message, who was ordering that the eyes of their beloved son be buried. And so, the two did it. In the exact place where the boy’s eyes had been buried, the first guarana tree cropped up and, from this tree were born small fruit, which resembled the eyes of a boy. Guarana is a fruit that supplies energy to those who eat it.



The girl left her relatives and walked into the yard. To her surprise, every tree had a small plaque with an inscribed name: sourhop, ‘bacuri’, guarana tree.

‘So this is it, the guarana fruit? It looks like a black eye. This tiny fruit is so pretty,’ she thought.

Just beside the tree, she saw a plaque with the guarana legend written on it.



The next day, Gaby woke up lighthearted. She stretched out in bed for a long time, while listening to the birds. They chirped and twittered in a different manner in this town. Little by little, she began to realize that the forest was very close to her: in the stories she'd been told, the parrot that had flown into the dining room and even by the toucan she had just seen through her window! Even though there were shopping malls and traffic jams here, the forest was very close.

She had her breakfast, which was full of exotic flavours. She had tried some Açaí today. She was being introduced to new foods every day.

Gaby was clearing the breakfast table with aunt Leia, when she noticed a round roof and a green and yellow flag:

'What's that, auntie?'

'That's the Manaus theatre. It's very close to us here. You'll love visiting it', said aunt Leia. 'Edu?'

'What's up, auntie?'

'Could you please take Gaby to the theatre?'

'Is he going to hate me, even more now, just because aunt Leia asked him to take me to the theatre?'

'Hmm good idea, auntie' and, turning round to face Gaby: 'Let' go see something that isn't either the forest nor animals, outsider!'

The pair walked down the roads to the theatre, which was, indeed, very close.

On the outside, the theatre was pink, with impressive staircases. Loads of tourists were roaming around. They entered the building with high ceilings and looked at the beautiful staircases, the very detailed and opulent finishings, the paintings high up on the ceiling it was a time travel experience.

'The Manaus theatre is one of the most important in Brazil. It was inaugurated in 1896 and is a symbol of the wealth brought by the rubber industry to this city and all the surrounding Amazon region. In fact, its official name is exactly that: Amazonas Theatre.'

The guide told them about some construction curiosities, how life was at the time of the exploration of the Amazonian rubber and how much wealth and prosperity this brought to the town. They admired the details of this beautiful building together with the other tourists.

'Awesome! The painting on the ceiling is amazing,' said Gaby to Edu.

'Yes, this is a very beautiful theatre. My favourite bits are the chandeliers and the stage curtain.'

On their way back home, she said, thinking hard:

'Edu, if I understood it correctly, if we can produce rubber from the Seringueira, the rubber tree, and this is what generated such prosperity in the town What else can trees give us?'

'Loads of things', said Edu, contented. 'Loads of stuff, city girl! You'll see all of what they can produce when we visit the community, where I was born: fruit, oils, medicines, resins, straw, small coconuts'

Arriving back home, uncle Miguel was calmer and ready to laugh, which would make his whole belly shake. He was waiting for them in the living room and said:

'Did you enjoy visiting the theatre, Gaby?'

'Oh, it's beautiful and so old, uncle.'

'Well, darling,' then, changing the subject, 'on another note now: since this illegal exploitation of lumber has obliged us to change our plans, let's make the most of it and have some fun at the same time, at the guesthouse we own out there. We should go out to the Santa Rita do Japiim community tomorrow!' And, turning around to face Edu, he carried on: 'How are you doing as my niece's official guide? Make use of this opportunity and practice for the Santa Rita community based tourism.'

'Of course, uncle! Aunt Leia came up with this idea and we've already visited the theatre,' said Edu, happily.

'So, Edu, I'll need to talk to everyone in the region and to the people who are handling the sustainable management of the Pirarucu, as well as the people in the neighbouring village.'

Everyone took a 'siesta', grabbing some Z's after lunch, a local custom because of the midday heat. Gaby opened her animal notebook and admired the collages she had made and collected over such such a long time. She was in the town of parrots! And in a house where even a sucuri had lived!

She thought about the old theatre, the shopping malls, the traffic jams and all the different food she had tasted. Some weird words, such as 'sustainable management of the pirarucu' kept popping up in her mind. Would she actually see all the other animals? So many were still missing: the dolphin, the sucuri, so many different breeds of monkeys, the harpy eagle.

She imagined herself being on a trip, on the other side of Brazil, in a place called the Amazon, where she met new friends and where these people would say that they would travel to Brazil. Was that a dream? She fell asleep.

"How loud these birds are here in Manaus! I believe they're happy. But then, with this garden so full of fruit", thought Gaby, stretching out on the freshly made bed aunt Leia had prepared for her in uncle Miguel's office. She soon remembered the enchanted garden at the pink house. She looked at the books and ceramic vases, each shaped and sized differently. Some had drawings, others not.

She saw, in a glass enclosed bookcase, some bones and something else which reminded her of a dinosaur's claw. On a piece of paper next to it, she read: 'Scale from a Pirarucu'. A picture frame held a photo of her uncle and aunt under a gigantic tree.

'This is a Samaúma tree!' said Edu, pointing at the huge tree in the photo. Then he continued, now looking at the fish scale 'It's from a Pirarucu. In some places it's sold as a nail file, did you know that?'

'Jeez! How big is this fish then, if its scale is this huge?'

'It can weigh up to 50 kilos. It can be massive. You'll see.'

'Where?'

'In my community, Santa Rita do Japiim. It's close to the Anavilhanas archipelago, a region in which some of the animals, you want to see, live in. That's where Uncle Miguel's guesthouse is located.'



'Is that where you live?

'I live here now, but my whole family is from there. I live both here and there.'

'Cool. You're not even an adult and already have two houses.'

'I've never thought about it in this way. Shall we set the table for the afternoon tea? Get the plates in the kitchen'

Gaby walked into the kitchen where the door leading out to the garden was open. Suddenly, she heard an enormous noise: 'crash!' A small black faced monkey had knocked a metal basin down, jumped onto the wall and ran up a tall tree that leaned out towards the town square.

The girl walked back in to the room, her heart beating madly, both from fright and her own excitement.

'I saw..., I saw it! I saw a small monkey.'

'Oh! That's the white collared Pied Tamarin monkey', explained Aunt Leia, walking into the kitchen. 'The Manaus symbol pays us a visit sometimes, even though we're downtown, in the city centre. Poor dears, they are threatened by extinction.'

Both youngsters began setting the table. Aunt Leia went in to the study and brought a plastic file back. When they opened it together, Gaby couldn't believe her eyes: there were paintings and drawings of many different plants and animals, the most amazing she'd ever seen.

'That's it!', exclaimed Gaby, recognizing the white collared Pied Tamarin monkey.

'Yes, it is.', replied aunt Leia, happily.

They walked back to the table.

'Your uncle Miguel and I have owned the travel agency since we first came to Manaus. We've seen a lot of change here and over there, at Anavilhanas,' she explained.

'And now we're developing the community based tourism,' completed Edu.

They took their lovely afternoon meal, fried bananas and all. Gaby then returned to the study. She wanted another look at her aunt's incredible paintings. That's when she noticed some small sculptures: two were frog-shaped, one was geometrical. And they had a cord attached to each of them.

"It looks like a necklace", she thought, bringing them towards her neck, asking herself whether they could be made from precious stones.

'They're pretty, no?' asked uncle Miguel in his loud voice as he walked into the room.

'I'm sorry, uncle,' said the girl, frightened for being caught unaware. She remembered her mother telling her she shouldn't touch other people's belongings.

'No problem,' said uncle Miguel. 'Did you know that these are magic amulets?'

'Magic?' Gaby carefully laid the amulet back down on the shelf.

'These are "Muiraquitãs," made by the the native "Icamiaba" women. These warrior indigenous women were the ones to name the Amazon river.'

'Warrior indigenous women, uncle? Do they still exist?'

'Now see, here in the Amazon region, you'll hear many stories about animals, about hauntings, of people who are able to transform themselves into animals, of forest creatures and beings. These are our Amazonian legends. These legends make up the cultural knowledge of this people.'

Miguel touched the "muiraquitã" shaped as a frog from green stone. It magically tickled his hand and he soon felt the smell of humidity, of a river. He then told Gaby the story.

'How cool! And are we really going into the forest?' asked Gaby after listening to the story.

'Yes, in this respect, you can relax.' Uncle Miguel then tied the 'muiraquitã' around his niece's neck. 'With this "muiraquitã" amulet to protect you in this Amazonian adventure of yours, certainly nothing bad will happen to you!'

LA LEYENDA DE LAS AMAZONAS

The first navigator and colonizer of the Amazon River was Francisco Orellana, from Spain. He sailed with his ship during the the first half of the sixteenth century. Friar Gaspar de Carvajal, who was travelling on this ship, was the one who said that the vessel had been attacked by Amazons.



This legend of the Amazons comes from Ancient Greece. They were warrior women who rode horses and lived without any men amongst them.

It is told that the banks of the river were populated by the 'Icamiabas', the indigenous warrior women. The colonizers related the Icamiaba natives to the myth of the Amazons of Ancient Greece. And this is why their name was given to their great river: Amazonas.

Gaby felt a cold chill run down her spine: a mixture of happiness, emotion and fear. After all, what if she came face to face with a jaguar inside the community? Stroking the amulet with her hand, she smiled at her uncle.

'Thank you, uncle.'

'If you come face to face with a harpy eagle, a very powerful bird, no harm will come to you. Not even if its a jaguar!' said Miguel, guessing her feelings.

'Not even if I meet with the Curupira?'

'No, not even the Curupira.'

Both were laughing when an agitated Edu walked into the study room.

'You really want to see the animals, don't you?'

'Of course!'

'Is he going to stop teasing me because I dream of seeing the animals? Is the power of the muiraquitã already working, I wonder? Am I able to get rid of this fun making?', thought Gaby.

'Well, as you, a city person of Brazil, think, any three trees together form a forest'

'City person of Brazil?', what a weird way to speak!

'Well, I'll show you some creepy animals at the community. Lot's of things are different here in the Amazon.' Edu said, laughing. 'And you already know that without trees, no animal would live, don't you?'

'Yes, of course I do.'

'So, you'll help us with this campaign?'

'Yes, certainly,' replied Gaby.

Uncle Miguel laughed merrily:

'She's my niece, Edu. We are all courageous in this family. And she's already wearing your "muiraquitã".'

THE TRIP WITHIN THE TRIP



"I brake for sloths!" exclaimed uncle Miguel, when he braked energetically, making all of them bump and rattle inside the car.

"Lucky all of us had our seat belts on." thought Gaby. Noticing how the wind screen window was covered with bugs, she thought: "poor dead bugs."

Meanwhile, the sloth crossed the road at a very slow, slow, slow pace!

'Edu, can you put her back into the woods before she gets run over?'

'Yes, I'll take it back. But first, we need to find out in which direction it was going,' answered Edu.

They waited for the sloth to move a little.

'Know in what direction it was moving? Why?' Asked Gaby.

'Look, my dear, the sloth might be slow, but it won't give up going where it meant to go,' explained Aunt Leia.

'You want to do a good deed for all by removing the sloth off the road, but if you return the critter to the side of the road where it began its crossing, you can be sure it will go back onto the road!'

'I'd never thought of that', Gaby realized.

Edu got out of the car and very carefully helped the sloth reach the correct side of the road, the side it intended to go.

'May I stroke it?' asked Gaby leaving the car as well. 'Wow, what stiff fur its got!'

'I know. You'll be able to find other animals inside its fur, such as beetles and even roaches.'

'Yuk! Cockroaches!' Said Gaby, quickly removing her hand from the animal. 'May I take a photo?'

They followed the road for some kilometers and later turned onto a dirt road.

'I must speak to this tribe's chief, in this village. Let's find out whether the loggers have reached the boundaries of this indigenous reserve' completed uncle Miguel, leaving the car.

A few children rushed up to talk to Edu and Gaby through the car's window. They were smiling. A small boy called their attention and proudly showed them a parrot perched on his shoulder.

'It roams free, like this?' asked Gaby.

'Yes. It fell from its nest and we took care of it. It's always with us. He began making some sounds which the parrot would then imitate. All of the children laughed!

The floor was made of packed dirt and far away one could see a large straw construction.

'This construction is called an "oca"' said Edu.

'The "oca" is our home', explained a girl.

Uncle Miguel returned to the car, smiling happily.

'They're aware of the loggers and will let others know too'.

The children from the tribe waved goodbye!

After another hour on the road, they reached their destination on the margin of the river. There was a wooden hut and a boat waiting for them. They took the boat. The surrounding vegetation was low, nothing like the forest she had imagined. They all boarded the boat which was piloted by a man in a red cap. The pink and light blue sky, with very few clouds, was reflected on the smooth water, as if in a mirror.

The motor boat left behind a soft trail in the river's water surface.

'Is that your niece, Mr. Miguel?' asked the boatman.

'Yes, she's come from the big city. She's come to see what the Amazon is all about and dreams of seeing the local animals.'

'Oh, ok! Now let's find out if she's in luck.'

The pilot changed his course, drifting into a smaller canal. He then reduced the boat's speed and soon after, switched the motor off altogether.

"Chuff, ccchhuuufffff".

It was then that Gaby saw! Everyone had heard the noise.

'That's them!' She exclaimed merrily. 'Those are the dolphins!'

All of them in the boat went quiet to listen to their breathing noises. They were swimming so close to the boat that Gaby felt she could touch their curved humps with her hand. They were beautiful and their wet skin glimmered in the sun.

'Are they not scared of us?' asked Gaby.

'Dolphins are not fished. In these parts, no one eats dolphin,' explained the boatman. Gaby's heart beat faster when she heard the breath of these animals, which was growing louder, clear and present.

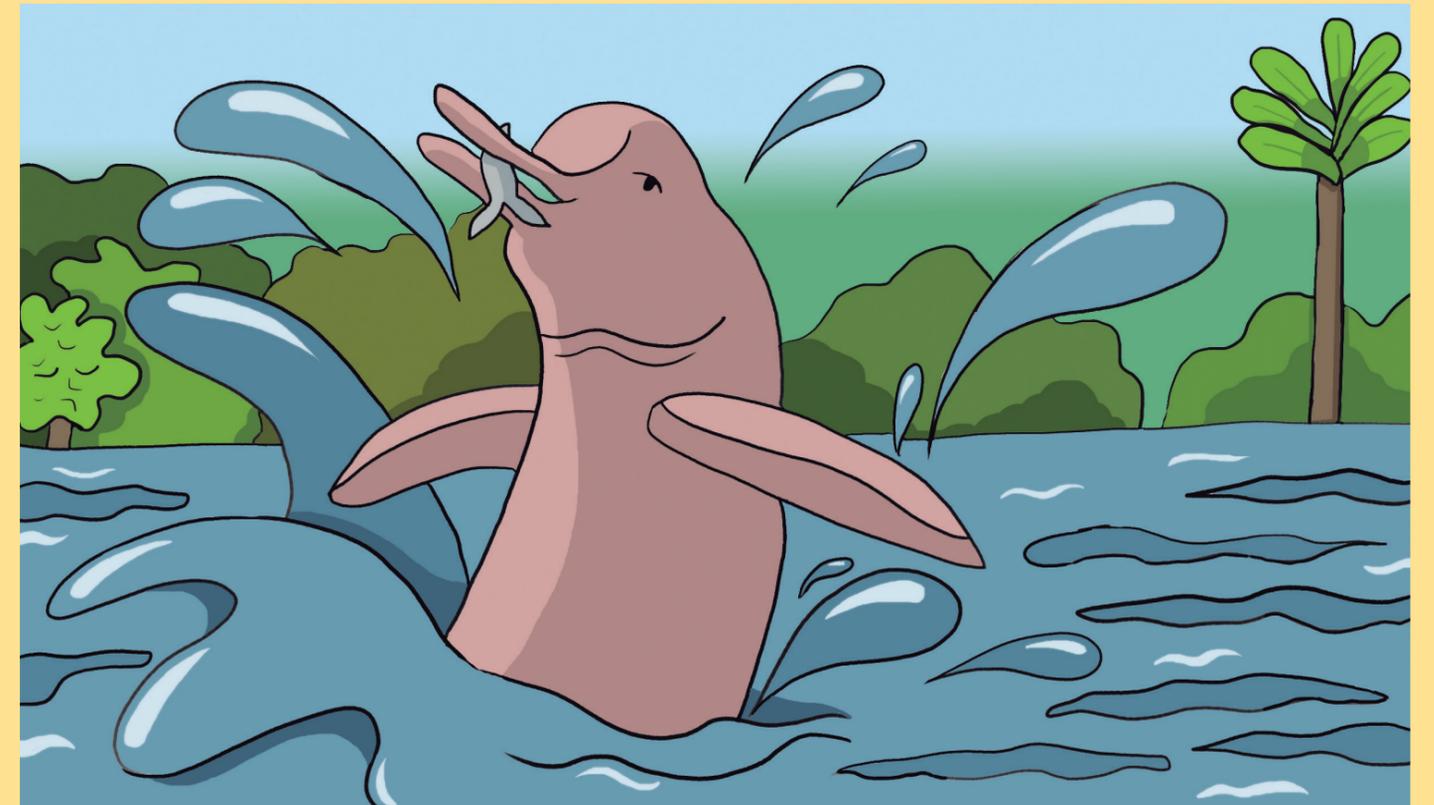
'Look over there' said Edu, pointing at a distant pink dolphin who was diving in and out of the water. 'It's got its baby calves with it.'

How exciting to see a mother with her baby calves. Gaby's eyes filled with tears.

The huge pink dolphin jumped out of the water to catch the fish the boatman was offering. When it dived back into the river, it splashed everyone in the boat with water.

'How cool to get wet this way!' said Gaby, laughing.

Once all the dolphins had swum away, the boatman turned the engine on and continued their journey once again.



Some minutes later they reached the community Edu talked so much about!

These were wood huts raised over the water on stilts. "The famous stilt-houses. I wonder what it feels like to live this way" thought Gaby.

As the boat approached, some children dived from the tree branches directly into the water.

'Edu! Edu!' a small boy called.

"Why is it that this boy is so well liked by people here as well?" thought Gaby.

The boatman docked on a wooden pier facing a porch. They had arrived at uncle Miguel's and aunt Leia's guesthouse.

They all stood in a line, transferring the luggage and packages from hand to hand. It was fun to unload the boat that way.

When the task was completed, Aunt Leia showed Gaby around the guesthouse.

The children who'd been in the water came running in from across the porch:

'Edu, Le's play soccer?'

Although still being wet, they all took off towards the small field.

'A field out here in the Amazon?' said Gaby.

The grass was indeed perfect on this field, way deep inside the Amazon region. A small girl walked up close and offered Gaby a roseapple.

'I'm Liziane. Edu's sister.'

'I'm their cousin', said another girl, quickly. 'My name is Clara, what's yours?'

'Gaby.'



The girl was very pretty, with long sleek black hair, as were her shining black eyes. Happy and curious, she took Gaby's hand and said:

'We've seen many tourists out here in our community, but very few tourist children. Will you play with us?'

'How do you play?' asked Gaby.

'Oh! We swim in the river and play of 'Curupira' as well.'

'Curupira? Is it that the small creature from the jungle?'

'He's not a small creature. He's a boy with fire-red coloured hair whose feet are turned backwards. He protects nature! To play the 'curupira' is to play catch', she replied laughing

Other girls joined them. Some were shy, others asked where Gaby was from. After all, she was, in fact, a child tourist. Soon enough there was a group of them standing close to the field where a game was going on.

'Look!' said one of the girls, pointing at an enormous bird perched on a dry tree.

'That's a Harpy, an eagle, one of the largest birds on earth' said Gaby sighing, happy to have seen this animal during her trip.

'That's the one we call "Uiraçu". It must have spotted an Agouti, a small rodent, to hunt' said Clara.

'The penalty shot championship is to start tomorrow' said the small girl, Liziane.

'We've made small flags, as decorations for the championship, at our indian school.'

She took Gaby by the hand and walked to the river margin. Out there, surprisingly, they saw a beautiful yellow boat that had 'School' written on its side.

'Do you go to school by boat?' Gaby asked.

'Not us, no. We're from this community. The children from the other communities come by boat, yes.'

Edu arrived with some boys wearing their teams' T shirts. They were from other riverside communities. Each community had chosen a particular colour to represent them. They walked past the girls in a businesslike manner.

'And why is it that you only have a penalty shot championship? Why don't they play the full game?' asked Gaby.

'There are so many different communities wanting to participate in it, that, were we to have full games, the championship would take days and days to finish!'

'You could have knock-out stages of the championship', insisted Gaby.

'And what would be the fun in that? To come out all the way here and not play? Besides, the coolest thing about this championship is the party' concluded Clara.

'And how is this party?'

'Many people come in canoes or other types of boats.'

'And popcorn is made out on the field; there's music and dancing' added Liziane.

The girls took Gaby to visit the community school, which was very colourful and had no glass window panes. As it was never cold here, there was absolutely no need for windows or a door.

They then went to the the indian school, which was built of wood: wooden plank separated by empty spaces so that, from the outside, one could see the entire room and who was studying in it. The teacher was there. She showed them her books and explained:

'I recognised myself in the culture of my grandparents and decided to study at the indigenous teacher's course'

She was a pretty young woman and did not seem to be any different to all the other young women within the community. She carried her small son in her lap and seemed to be very happy in doing what she had chosen to do.

‘Wow! How cool, I enjoyed visiting the two schools. Would I be able to chose one of the schools if I lived here?’

Smiling at the question, she said yes. She then said it was time to feed her child so she greeted the girls goodbye and thanked them for their visit.

‘Thank you for all the explanations’, said Gaby.

She then headed back to the field with Edu, on her way back to the guesthouse.

The sky was becoming pinkish and Gaby new that, in this place, this meant that night was almost there.

She took a deep breath and noticed the different wonderful smells that came from the tall trees. Even the air was different here. Different...how? She was not able to say how but, yes, it was the air of the Amazon, indeed.

Gaby found uncle Miguel lying in his hammock out on the guesthouse’s porch:

‘Hello kids! Did you have a nice day?’

‘A great day, uncle’” replied Gaby as she walked in.

The guesthouse was a house built from wood. Many local handicraft bits and bobs decorated the walls, as well as many watercolours made by aunt Leia, depicting Amazonian plants and animals. The straw, used on the roof of the porch, replaced tiles and gave the guesthouse a different atmosphere.

They went into a bedroom with a bed and a hammock: guests could choose where they preferred to sleep.

‘That’s nice! I’ll sleep in a hammock tonight’, said Gaby noticing that the walls had slits in them. Look, you can even see who’s in the next room through the slits!’

‘Some houses here don’t even have internal walls. Uncle Miguel’s guesthouse is quite similar to the houses in the city.’

‘Hmm’ said Gaby, thinking. ‘Are there other differences to city houses? Can you explain that to me in a better way?’

“We live over the river, here. Did you know that we have something called the “maromba”?”

“Maromba”?’

‘It’s a wooden platform, a platform that can be raised when the river level rises and floods the house. We then are able to raise the flooring as well’, explained Edu.

‘Amazing! This really is a water land. I would very much like to be able to go to school by boat.’

‘Yes, fancy city girl. That’s why we’re called “riverines”. There’s a lot of water in this region that we live in.’

Gaby laughed and Edu laughed as well. She had an Amazonian friend and she now knew where he lived. She was slowly learning how people lived in the Santa Rita do Japiim community.

At sunset, the two of them once again walked towards the only shop in the community. On their way back home, they met a friend of Edu’s who was fishing by the water edge. They talked about the festivities, about the time when they had taken the saint’s image on the boat. Suddenly the boy said:

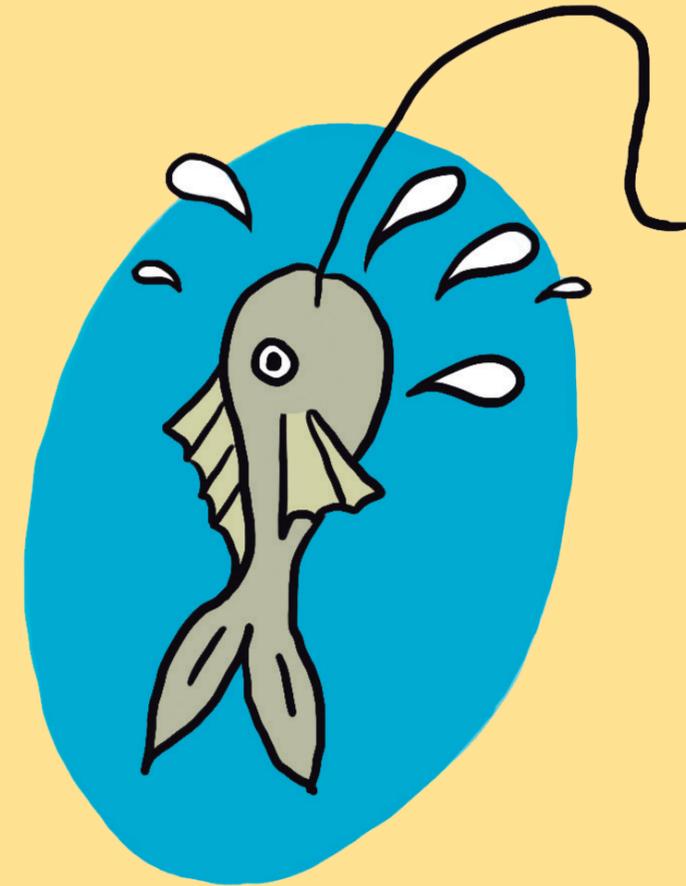
‘Sshhh! Quiet!’

The three of them went quiet, looking out, concentrated, till: ‘splash!’

The silver fish jumped at the end of the fishing line. It struggled back and forth and splashed water all around! Caught by the hook, but still alive, it struggled, splattering water on everyone.

‘This one’s for dinner at home’ he said, delighted.

“Edu and this other boy are slightly different to the boys I know. He seems to be an adult already, catching fish in the river for the family’s supper” thought Gaby.



COMMUNITY AND NATURE



She had slept long, in the hammock. Gaby went out to the wooden porch and watched the river's waters. She had a full breakfast, as she had done everyday since arriving.

"I've never seen so many huge insects at once! Lucky that mom hasn't come. She would be scared to death by so many bugs", she thought, missing her mom and remembering the ugly fight she'd had with her mother before the trip.

"I love bugs. I think I'll draw them. I've never seen fresh water ones before, so many insects with such different shapes and colours. The many shapes of their wings Wow How wonderful it is to touch one and not be scared. My notebook is almost full," Gaby thought proudly, as she opened it.

"Once upon a time there was a big river. A river so huge it resembled a sea. So placid, it reflected the sky and its pink clouds. It's as if we existed between two skies! I think I'm about to start writing poetry", she thought, delighted.

'Gaby! Come!' Edu shouted from the motor boat that was coming towards the guesthouse's porch. 'Let's go out to the manioc plantation on my family's plot.'

"He's so excited, he hardly resembles the boy I met in Manaus" noticed Gaby.

On the boat, the dog called Lorota wagged its tail in welcome to Gaby, who then asked:

'Did you let uncle Miguel and aunt Leia know?'

'Yes, of course' said the man piloting the vessel. Two more boys and Liziane, Edu's younger sister, were also on board.

'Are you the animal girl? It seems that animals also like you, at least our Lorota here does,' he added laughing.

'Woof woof!' confirmed Lorota.

'Hello' said Liziane, Edu's sister. 'I'm five years old.'

'I'm Ronaldo, Edu's cousin' said the boy. 'I'm Fifteen.'

'Pleasure to meet you. I'm Lúcio, eighteen,' the last boy completed as everyone laughed together with small Liziane, who was happy that everybody had introduced themselves.

'Ever since I arrived at the community, I've met so many people that say they're cousins. Are you really all cousins or is that just a way of speaking?'

Everyone laughed. Laughter really seemed to be the custom in the region.

'Yes, I don't really know how many cousins I've got,' explained Lúcio. 'The community is small and, when someone in a family gets married, everybody starts referring to each other as cousin, aunt, uncle and niece.'

The motor started abruptly. With the noise it'd made, a flock of white birds suddenly appeared close to the community's small sand beach. Some children, perched on a tree branch, called out to Edu, and jumped into the water. They always did that; it was quite cool.

They cruised on. Shortly after, Uncle Ednei cut the motor close to the river margin. The boat gently drifted towards the thicket. The trees had, every single one of them, leaves in different shades of green and varied shapes. They were also beautiful, gently swinging in the wind.

'What a wonderful smell,' said Gaby.

'It's the Lofantera, or the Amazonian Rain of Gold tree,' answered Ednei, removing a bunch of bananas from his satchel and passing them around. In silence, they all ate their own banana. Then... suddenly...

'Look out!' Gaby's heart skipped with happiness when she saw, for the first time, a monkey in its natural habitat. 'And over there too!'

Ednei smiled, contented. He had placed some bananas on the boat's bow and two monkeys had, taking a risk, grabbed one each. They quickly dashed off to the jungle, to eat them in peace. Other monkeys appeared. More and more the monkeys crept closer. Noticing that no one in the boat was paying them any attention at all, they tiptoed closer and closer: one, two,



three, four small monkeys climbed onto the boat. Suddenly, a mother monkey appeared carrying her infant on her back. The mommy monkey reached out for a banana that was very close to Gaby.

'Wow!' exclaimed Gaby.

Everyone laughed joyously.

"So they also enjoy observing the monkeys! But, I think this happens every single day," thought Gaby.

'They're taking bananas from Ednei's hands!' Liziane exclaimed.

'Did you enjoy this?' Ednei asked, feeling happy, and winked at Edu. Gaby realized that the two of them had arranged to stop at this crowded spot so that she'd be able to see the monkeys. She was incredibly happy! It was, perhaps, because of these nice gestures, that Edu was so esteemed in this community!

'No, no... I didn't like it. I Loved It, Ednei!' Gaby replied. 'Thank you, thank you, Edu!' Somewhat daringly, she continued: 'I do now understand your life here is very different to my own, and that is why you call me city girl. That's fine...'

'You're welcome. So, let's move on. Harvest time!' Said Ednei, turning the boat's engine on.

Further along, they docked the boat and hiked the trail that would take them to the plantation. They picked some manioc.

'Manioc is used, in our everyday diet, in several different ways, such as tapiocas, manioc flour, biju-a coarse flocked flour, manioc cake, the 'cauim'drink, cooked, fried and in many other forms!' said Ednei with pride. The indigenous Brazilian people cultivated this root even before the Portuguese first landed. We plant the roots in the river bed during the dry months, when the water is very low,' he explained.

'I love manioc, but at home we only have it every now and again', commented Gaby.

'It's manioc every single day, here!' blurted out Lúcio.

They carried on, the boat loaded with manioc!

FEAR AND THE FOREST



'It's so cozy to sleep in a hammock, auntie!' Gaby remarked, admiring the immense Amazonian sky.

'I'm glad you like it Gaby, not everyone gets used to it.' Said aunt Leila, spreading out sheets of paper and paint brushes to begin one of her watercolours.

'I think I'll walk to the local shop,' said Gaby, daring to walk on her own in the area.

Gaby then had a second thought: 'And what if I bump into a spotted jaguar?' An ice cold feeling ran down her spine. The same fear she'd felt when she read the book. Only now it could be a real flesh and blood jaguar!

The trees surrounding the guesthouse were tall. The local noise was not from cars and other city noises. In that silence, that was not quiet at all, she could hear many birds calling, not a single one like the other, and very different to the ones she already knew. She listened to a bird suddenly taking flight.

When her eyes grew used to the tight knit vegetation, she noticed a sloth, high up on a tree branch! 'This place is magical.' Further along, on a trail that followed the river path, she heard a sudden noise: 'splaaash!

She saw an alligator plunging into the water. Now Gaby really felt that cold shiver running down her spine!

Further down the path that followed the river margin, she met Ms. Nelina, the nice lady uncle Miguel had told her was one of the community's leaders.

Edu ran up just behind the two of them and pinched Gaby's back. She jumped in fright:

'Jeez, you scared me!'

'You'd be really scared if you saw a wild boar. That is, for sure, a fierce animal.' Said Edu.

'Wild boar? Asked Gaby. 'But, isn't the jaguar the most dangerous animal in the jungle?'

'No, its not! Edu answered, firmly. Come see. I'll show her one, auntie.'

He carried on walking, gesturing at Gaby to follow him. He took a trail leading into the jungle. Ms. Nelina, bearing a big sweet smile, cried out loud:



'Make sure you come see me at home tonight!'

The vegetation was growing taller and taller. Gaby bumped into a spider web and shivered.

'Be careful!' Edu cautioned.

The huge spider jumped into the jungle, disappearing through the leaves. They walked some more, coming to a clearing in the jungle. Complete silence. It seemed that even the birds had stopped chirping and calling.

Gaby shuddered! The light coming in through the leaves illuminated the area around a tree, where she could see many bones.

'These bones are from a wild boar', said the boy, pointing at the jawbone full of sharp teeth amongst the other ones. It is fierce, but do you know why it's more dangerous than the jaguar?'

Gaby signed no with her head.

'They move in packs, that's why. And if one turns up around here Hmm. You can be sure there'll be others close by.'

'So?' Asked Gaby.

'Then you might as well run up a very tall tree and wait, because it's useless to run! The beast will really catch you! Or, better: the beasts.'

Gaby felt the ice down her spine once again. Throughout their way back, she had this story in her mind, she couldn't forget it. Her fear only increased when Edu showed her a carcass with even larger bones.

'These bones here belonged to a tapir' he said, pointing at some very large bones. It is much larger than the wild boar, but even so, it's not got a chance with the boars.

Gaby sighed and looked around. Everything seemed so peaceful...! Even so, something in her urged her to pick her pace up and get home soon!

¹¹ NT: Jabalí de la Amazonia

She felt relieved when the first house came into view. After all, animals usually respected human territory, and both men and beast would try to remain within their own boundaries. Gaby had never thought she'd be so happy to be in human territory!

Edu pointed at Ms. Nelina's house, far away.

She remembered how uncle Miguel appreciated Ms. Nelina and what he had told her about the woman's achievements. It had been Nelina who'd brought all the women together to create the Santa Rita do Japiim's communal vegetable garden. She would always gather the local community to decide about their own local festivities. It was her, as well, who'd organized the handicraft women's association: where baskets were weaved, bead necklaces were strung with seeds and other crafts were produced.

COMUNIDADES RIBEIRINHAS

The leaders of the riverine communities work the same jobs as the other residents: they also participate in the fishing and harvesting. In addition to these chores, however, leaders conduct meetings, organize activities and parties. They also listen to the people's demands and act as mediators when communicating their needs to government authorities, in Manaus or other cities.



Gaby and Edu walked around the whole community that morning. They returned to the guesthouse at lunch time, where they found uncle Miguel feeling happy for himself.

'I believe we'll be able to put a stop to this deforestation. We'll be able, at least, to halt this particular one!'

'Miguel, do you remember how it was here, when we first arrived in this region? Do tell the children.'

'All right, Leia. There was no electric power and it took us six hours by boat to get here. No roads existed at that time.'

The two listened carefully to Miguel and Leia's stories for many hours. The stories were illustrated by aunt Leia's watercolours: some depicted local animals; others, the Amazonian flora. Uncle Miguel and Aunt Leia knew how to make their guests feel comfortable. So much so that they helped with the chores, having fun while tidying up the living room and porch for breakfast. "These chores seem so tedious back home, but are just like a game here. Is it because we are close to the river? Or is it because we're on vacation?", thought Gaby amazed.

In the evening, the two friends went for a walk. Edu was telling Gaby who lived in each of the houses.

'All of them are cousins, eh?' Asked Gaby laughingly.

At the end of the road, very close to the river, a stilt house, over the water, drew her attention: it was vivid green in colour and had been painted with a lot of care. It was Ms. Nelina's house.

'Let's have a cup of coffee,' invited the lady.

The wooden house was decorated with several crochet samplers and a lot of craft art produced by the local community.

'How neat!', exclaimed Gaby.

'Thank you,' replied Ms. Nelina. 'Do you like it here, then? The Santa Rita do Japiim community?' she proceeded to ask bearing a sweet smile.

'Very much so!'

A child walked in through the door.

'Hi, auntie! What nice treats have you prepared today?'

'The usual... and manioc bread.'

'How yummy!' said Gaby.

'And, cooked manioc, pirarucu soup, rice and beans. Oh! Fried bananas as well!'

Gaby and Edu were setting the table when more children walked in:

'Your blessings, grandma', they all said, even though some were not her grandchildren.

They then took their places at the table, waiting for everyone to find a spot, so all could begin to eat.

'Gaby, we've even got jaguars here,' said Liziane. 'I saw one the other day. I was scared. It walked across the yard and went swimming in the river.'

'Jaguars swim?' asked Gaby, surprised.

'Yes!' replied all the children at once.

'They are accomplished swimmers too' explained Edu. Jaguars are able to catch peacock bass. What they most enjoy eating, though, is the alligator. It'll catch fish, as well, to appease its hunger.'

'If you pay close attention, you'll be able to see at least three different kinds of monkeys just by the river margin, right on the edge of the river bed, in the bordering vegetation,' said Clara.

'The sloth too, the gators' continued another boy.

'Yep! And the yellow rumped cacique, a bird that builds those long and deep nests. Have you seen it?'

Gaby gestured no with her head. The children were excited, competing among themselves to tell Gaby, one by one, different animal tales, each more incredible than the previous one.

'What about the "jaçanã", the bird with long twig like legs?' asked the other girl.

'And what about the macaw, have you seen it? It's really colourful' Liziane completed.

'Liziane would hand feed the Agouti, remember?' said a girl who'd arrived late and was sitting on a small stool, a meter or so away from the other children.

The children burst out laughing.

A big gecko, almost the size of a lizard, walked across the wall. A bat flew over the table, moving its wings so frenetically they could feel the air move. All these animals seemed to be taking part of the dinner, and no one was scared. The children would point at them, laughing.

'How cool!' concluded Gaby. 'Here in the Amazon, you people are able to see things that we, back home, only see on TV or in a zoo.'

'And on the internet too' exclaimed a tiny boy.

'Saulo's sister carries a pet sloth around her neck. Some say that can be dangerous, because have you seen the size of its claws? They're huge claws! But the girl won't leave the sloth alone. They don't seem to harm one

another' said Ms. Nelina.

All the children had at least one story to tell.

'And what is it that you're most scared of?' asked Gaby, feeling curious.

'Of hauntings!', all the children replied at once.

'Yes, it's only hauntings we're scared of, because we hunt the gators and catch the pirañas', said Liziane, laughing and showing off.

'And we're not "indians" as many people think, did you know that? We are called "caboclos", members of the riverine communities' explained Ms. Nelina.

'Caboclo is when your grandmother was a native brazilian "indian", and your grandfather was Portuguese,' said the girl.

'The "indians" are those who live in their tribes. The people who maintain the culture, the customs and the indigenous language.'

'Did you know that there are more than 270 different indigenous ethnicities in Brazil?'

'Is that so?' Gaby asked, surprised.

'Story time!' said Ms. Nelina. And she told them, with much suspense, the dolphin's legend. She was a great story teller. She then finished, phocusing on all animals once again:

'The jaguar is a very elegant and independent animal. If you don't threaten it, don't scare, attack or capture it, it will leave you alone, in peace. The other day, one of them came across our yard, dived into the river and swam far away, towards the other margin.' She turned round to face the children and said 'Bedtime!'

Each of them set up their own hammock for the night. Carrying a torch, Gaby and Edu left the house and walked to Uncle Miguel's and aunt Leia's guesthouse. The adults would be worried by now. Gaby would occasionally be reminded of the scattered bones around the tree, the wild boar's sharp teeth, the alligator diving so close to her. She felt that icy cold fear run down her back once again.

"What if we met with some animal on our way home?", she thought, shivering in fear.

When Gaby and Edu arrived back at the guesthouse, they found uncle Miguel in his hammock, out on the porch of the "Jungle Lodge", as the place was known.

'We've been able to halt them,' he said, pleased. 'At least for a while!'

'Wow, uncle! How'd you manage it?'

'Well.. see now: only by obtaining everyone's support. The local leader adressed the governmental authorities with videos and request letters bearing many signatures. Some people from that village, the village where we stopped on our way here, joined us. We also gathered many friends from Manaus. We received support from all over!'

'We've been promoting campaigns in the local schools. Every teacher and pupil supported us', added aunt Leia, delighted.

'It's important to mobilize people. Congratulations, uncle', said Gaby, feeling proud. 'I believe this is not only happening in the Amazon, auntie. We had a recycling rally back at my school, to teach everyone the importance of separating waste, trying to make people change their habits,' she added.

Gaby and Edu sat besides the uncle, and listened to the night noises.

'You know, uncle, I never thought I would meet so many different people around here, in the Amazon', confessed Gaby.

'It's not only you, Gaby, who thinks in this way. Many people believe that we are all native brazilian "indians" or that they'll only find wild animals out here' said Edu, who was, now, in a good humour.

'You can tell everyone, back in the rest of Brazil, that this is not a people free region', said uncle Miguel, serious now. 'We know very little about Amazonian history. Just recently, researchers have learnt that the local indigenous population, before the arrival of the Portuguese, might've reached twenty million people.'

'Twenty million is a lot of people!', exclaimed Gaby.

'Yes, and they have also learned that the forest might've been planted by these same indigenous people, as some tree species, from a particular region, have been taken to different areas".

"INDIANS" AND GEOGLYPHS

The geoglyphs may correspond to fortifications. Researchers have found ceramics and other evidence of human occupation near these shapes on the ground. They derived from a large, well-organized population who lived here. It's the opposite to what everyone believed: that, in the Amazon region, only a small population lived.

What is an "Indian"? An "indian" is a member of an indigenous community, a community established by kinship or neighborhood relations, which still today, maintain a pre-Columbian social organization. That is, they already existed before 1492, when Columbus arrived in the islands of Central America.

These are many human populations, groups that can have very different languages and culture! The story is long. When the Portuguese first arrived on the coast of what was to become Brazil, in 1500, these peoples were already here. Some groups began mingling with the european settlers. Even before that, several different cultures of Brazilian indigenous people, with different languages, different customs, habits and all, already lived on this land.



"Amazing!'

We now know that huge designs or motifs have been dug out from the earth, just like the geoglyphs in Acre. And we still don't know the reason why they were made.

'Geo...what?'

'Look at this photo...' Edu brought her a magazine.

'Wow!'

'We don't know what these geoglyphs are but, they do have perfect geometrical shapes.'

'Man! How will I be able to learn this all?' said Gaby.

'The only way is by visiting us again', laughed uncle Miguel. 'You now know your way!'

'Yes, we've already rallied the community and pushed the loggers out. Tomorrow will be another day, unfortunately new loggers will come. But this is how we do things here in the Amazon, one thing at a time', concluded uncle Miguel.

'And what can we do to stop this, uncle?'

" Tell everyone about what's happening, Gaby! Only by making people aware of the problem can we educate people so far away from the forest, in their own cities. We need to explain to all that all of what we consume in the big cities may affect the rainforest. You'll usually find that people are ignorant about the need for conservation.'

'I understand, uncle. And will the forest be able to grow back once again?'

'Yes, everything can grow back, even if it takes a very long time.'

'Go! Go and make sure that when you're home, you'll tell everyone what the rainforest is all about. And that 20% of the planet's oxygen depends on its existence. This is the largest rainforest in the world.

'I want my community to have electric power and lights, schools, health care and enough jobs that'll make youngsters feel they can remain here, in their own land' said Edu.

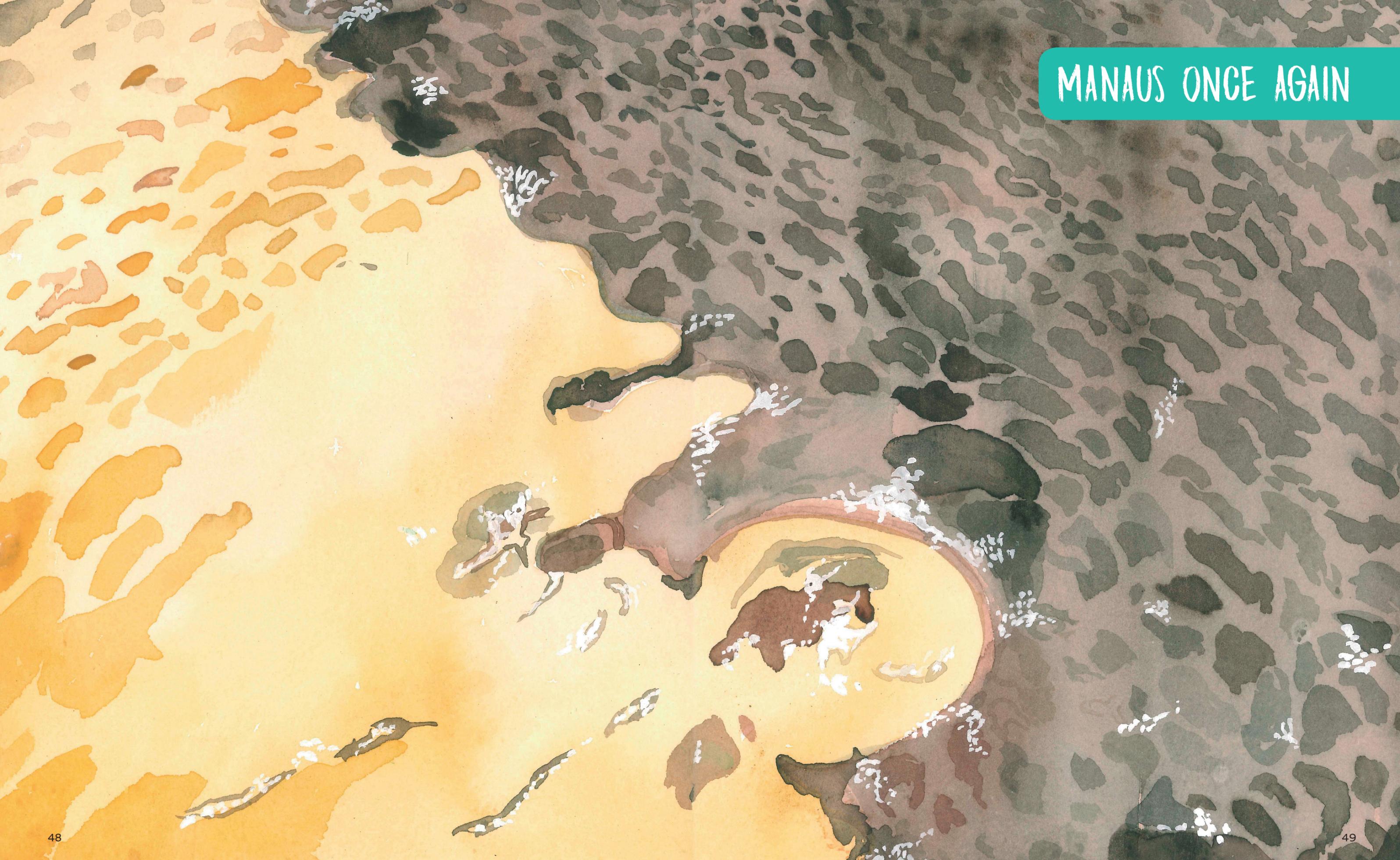
'And how are we to do that?'

'Let's imagine a future for the Amazon which includes the rainforest, wealth and comfort for all!' said Edu

'Very happy to!' said Gaby.



MANAUS ONCE AGAIN



“Hmmm small nut tapiocas, cupuassu juice, the tucumã fruit, loads of manioc flour, tucunaré fish and the best fried bananas in the planet”, thought Gaby, while she stretched out in bed and thought about her breakfast and a new day in Manaus.

Her mouth watering, she could now remember the name of all the new food she’d learnt to love. She listened to the birds in aunt Leia’s yard garden; she could already distinguish the song of a few of them, apart from having learned several new bird names. She sat at the breakfast table smiling to herself.

‘I’m glad you like your aunt’s food,’ said Leia. ‘What is it going to be today? Shall we go see the “meeting of the waters”?’

‘I’ve heard about it. What’s it like, auntie?’

‘It’s the famous meeting of the water from the Negro river the waters of the Solimões river. The first one, as you can well imagine, has very dark water whilst the other has muddy coloured waters. These waters come together at one point, but continue to run separately. It’s very beautiful.’

‘What fun’ said Gaby with her ever present enthusiasm. She then added ‘Auntie, I have to tell you something, now that my trip is coming to an end Mom and I had a terrible fight before I came here!’

‘Darling, arguments are a part of life’. She then opened her arms to embrace Gaby with that big heart of hers and the experience of having lived through many different situations throughout her life. ‘Tell me what happened.’

‘It was ugly, this time Mom didn’t want me to have a mobile phone. She even threatened me with cancelation of my trip!’

‘Don’t feel that way, honey. Maybe she was only protecting you’

‘Yes, but I slammed the door. I even swore. I only wanted to be able to photograph with it, auntie.’

‘Shall we call her? Instead of messaging? Let’s make ammends... after all, let bygones be bygones’.

The aunt picked the telephone up and dialed Gaby’s mom’s number. She heard it ring, gave the telephone to her niece, and discreetly left the room, leaving Gaby to talk to her mother on her own.

Shortly afterwards, Gaby walked into the study.

‘Are you going to paint now, auntie?’ asked Gaby, observing her aunt as she organized her papers and paint brushes in the study room.

‘I am, yes. How did your conversation go?’

‘It was good. Everything’s at peace back home.’

‘That’s great! You’ll tell her every detail of this unforgettable trip when you get back, won’t you?’

Gaby nodded, agreeing. She was relieved and slightly emotional. Aunt Leia prepared her sheet of paper, where a rare orchid would be painted. Scattered on the table were photos and some drafts which she herself had drawn in the jungle.

‘Are you ready for another adventure, city girl? Edu had walked into the room, excited. ‘Let’s visit the INPA?’

‘INPA? What’s that?’

‘The National Institute of Amazonian Research. You’ll find the electric fish there, one of the creatures you’ve still not seen!’ Edu felt even happier talking about Gaby’s passion for animals.

‘I’m ready, she said, happy. ‘But... what about the “meeting of the waters”?’

‘We can go on that tour during the afternoon. I’ll meet up with you guys on the docks, Edu knows where

that is’ said aunt Leia. ‘Now go! Enjoy your visit with Edu, you’re going to like it’

‘Oh, aunt Leia, can you please give us a ride to the bus stop?’ asked Edu.

On the bus, Gaby was able to see a bit more of that huge city, which didn’t seem to be inside the actual rainforest.

They arrived at the park where the Research Institute, the INPA, was located.

‘Would you like to see the electric fish?’ asked Edu.

‘Of course I do! What happens if we touch it?’

‘Oh! You’ll receive an electric shock!’

Although this wasn’t the forest, the park had some huge trees as well. Even in the shade, they felt hot and humid. They saw electric fish, alligators, piranãs, the giant otters and others.

Gaby wanted to learn by heart all the information she had picked up about the animals. She wanted to have every minute of that visit imprinted in her memory forever.

They came to a straw built house, where arts and crafts were being sold: necklaces and small wood animal figurines could be found inside. Three women had their handicraft on display.

‘Edu, are they native brazilian “indians”?’ Gaby asked her friend in a very low voice.

‘Yes, they belong to an indigenous ethnicity and live in their respective tribes.’

‘All of these wooden animals, the baskets, these bead earrings did they make all of them?’ Edu nodded yes in reply.

‘I would like to take mom these earrings.’

Edu and Gaby listened to their explanations about the meaning of the designs on the earrings. The indigenous women had a strong accent. Edu explained to Gaby that Portuguese was not their first language.



They walked on to another small room, full of books. Edu introduced Gaby to Camila, a researcher. After introductions had been made, Edu told her about their adventure to halt the illegal felling of trees close to his community.

'When a tree is cut down, several animals lose their home and die. And because every animal is dependant on another to be able to live, this interferes with all the food chain,' Camila was explaining patiently. 'In the jungle there are many species we're still not aware of ; plants, animals, fungi! People don't know the true value of a standing forest!' she concluded, energetic and enthusiastic.

'I've studied the food chain at school,' remembered Gaby, feeling excited. She really loved all subjects related to animals!

Camila was researching the life span of trees. She even knew how trees communicated with other trees.

'Trees converse? Asked Gaby, amazed.

'We know, today, that some fungi transmit information to other trees, close by, through their roots. We are researching this communication network of the forest.

'Awesome! I already love trees. Now, knowing that they're smart as well , even more so' said Gaby.

The're many things that can be planted and made use of by men without chopping down the forest', said Edu.

'As for example?' Gaby wanted to know.

"Rubber from the rubber tree, cocoa beans, tucumã fruit' Camila replied.

"Let's imagine that many people will hear all about this and change their behaviour as a result!"

'How so', Gaby?

'It's simple. Shall we make a list?'

'What list?'

'Oh, of all the things we either buy or consume that come from the forest? Of all things we could do protect the standing forest?'

'Yes', explained Camila. 'Let's list all of the behaviours of city people which impact the forest negatively. That is really important.

'Do you think it'll be that simple?' Edu questioned.

'Knowledge is the first step, Edu: By having knowledge of this list, every person will be able to chose whether they'll help protect the forest or not: that they'll continue with deforestation. Taking action, effectively, depends on many other people. In any case, this has been the most amazing trip I've ever been on. The forest is beautiful! I've learnt that many people live in no conflict with the jungle. Everybody should be made aware of that, far away from here.' Gaby spoke full of enthusiasm.

They said farewell to Camila. The two then had lunch and later went to the Port of Manaus, where they would meet with Aunt Leia.

At the Port, Gaby tried some fried fish, skewered on wooden picks as if they were ice lollies! They saw many docked boats, apart from the busy commercial area. And, in the midst of it all, there was aunt Leia, waving at them with her hat.

'Did you enjoy your visit?' Look, let's walk to that barge. She pointed at a boatman, who soon enough was waving back at them.

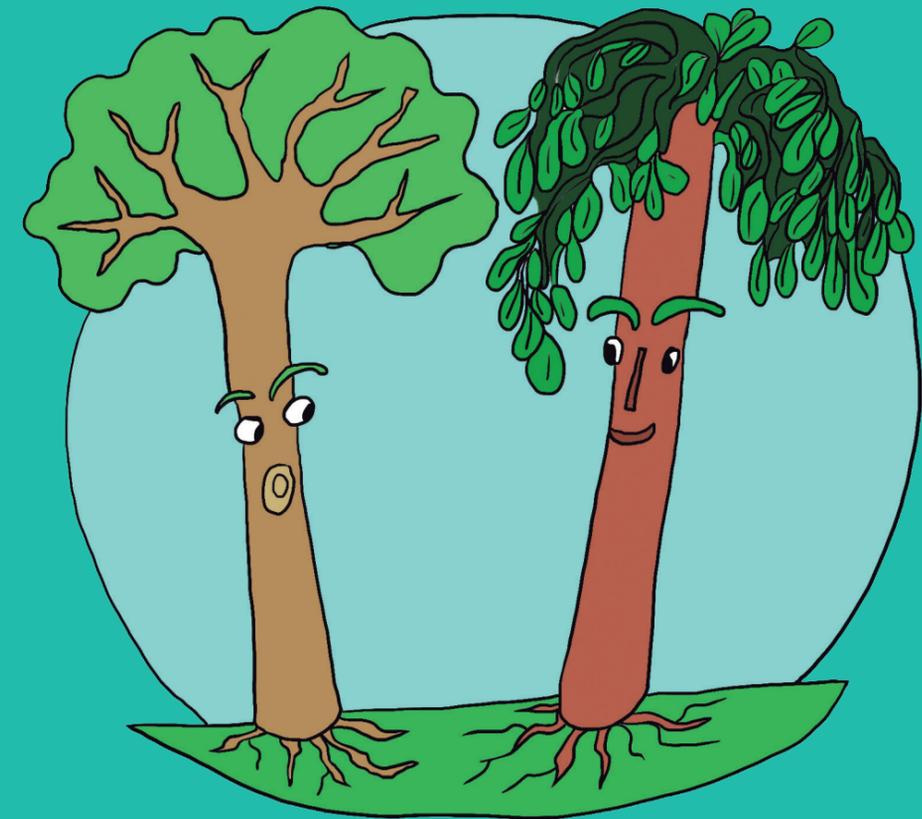
That was Master Jonas, a boatman and friend of uncle Miguel's, who took them out to the 'meeting of the waters'.

'Incredible! How is it that these waters don't mix? The most beautiful and unusual thing that I've seen here' said Gaby, happily.

'Let's get a picture of the two of you with the waters in the background' said Master Jonas, removing his mobile from his pocket.

Gaby and Edu embraced to pose for the photo when they saw, behind them, two different coloured waters. She thought about her girlfriends back at school "If they see this photo, they'll call us sweethearts, an item... whatever! But Edu is a friend of mine, a true friend, and I won't forget it."

The muddy brown water and the blackish dark water ran side by side on the river bed, but did not mix. The waters were like them both: two children from different parts of Brazil who were now friends living similar adventures.



THE END OF THE TRAVELS, A START TO WHAT?



Gaby woke early on the day she was travelling back home. She had her breakfast and returned to uncle Miguel's study room to make the bed for the last time, here in Manaus. She packed her rucksack, which was very full now with her own stuff, apart from the bag of gifts aunt Leia had insisted in sending the family back home. She felt lucky, happy and was still full from the excellent breakfast she'd had. She sat down and thought about the many different people she'd met in such a short time.

"So many different people living in the same country, the same Brazil: Camila, the indigenous women, Ms. Nelina, Ednei, Liziane and Edu", she thought, sighing, as Edu walked in.

'Hello? Are you all ready to leave?'

'Almost... I just need to pack some clothes, brush my teeth and

'This is for you', said Edu, handing her a parcel.

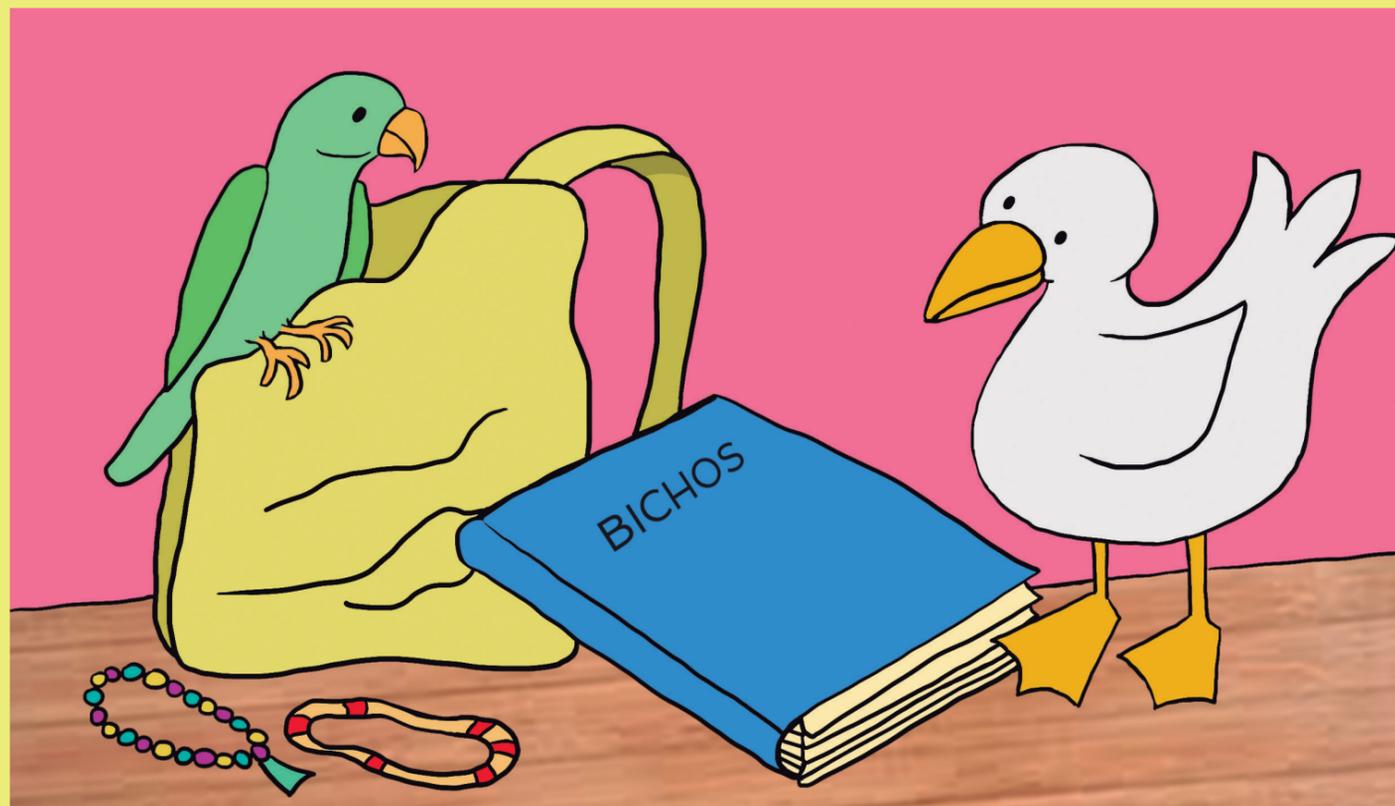
'For me?'

Gaby ripped open the package and, to her surprise, saw a wreath made from seeds with crocheted flowers and feathers, all arranged in an original and colourful manner, very different to any other handicraft she had seen. Edu smiled, gratified.

'It was my idea, but it was Ms. Nelina who made it. It's a jungle wreath, so you'll always remember the river, the forest and us.'

'It's beautiful, Edu! It's an indigenous headdress and a fairy wreath, all in one. Is it really a riverine idea of yours?'

Edu laughed, the two of them were happy. Gaby now knew that this present and all the seed necklaces she was taking back to her girlfriends had been lovingly made inside a community. Her backpack would be messy on



the way back home, with loads of dirty laundry, many presents, andiroba and copaíba essential oils which her aunt had insisted she take to her family. Apart from these, she was full of new stories and words she had learnt.

The sun had tanned her skin to a different shade. She wondered whether she could be, perhaps, a descendant of the indigenous people as well, just like Edu. He said:

'We'll still be friends, even from afar, right, city girl?'

'You're absolutely right, my amazonian friend! We'll be able to communicate instantly once we have mobile phones', said Gaby lighthearted, now that her argument with her mom was a thing of the past. After all, as aunt Leia had said, it was only a question of time, one or two years, before she owned a mobile of her very own, or new means of communication were invented! Aunt Leia had an artist's imagination.

'Yes, in the meanwhile, we can email each other send me some photos of your friends back home. And, if you find any strange critters in the city, add them to your notebook!' said Edu, pointing at her notebook, full of collages and drawings.

'I was almost forgetting it', Gaby exclaimed as she picked up the animal notebook. Thank you, Edu.'

'Don't forget to let all the children in Brazil know there are people here!'

Edu couldn't miss the chance of gently needling her. It was now fun for Gaby as well. Besides, apart from having met some of the inhabitants of the Amazon, her book now held more animal pictures than when she'd first arrived. She still needed to add the photos she'd taken throughout the trip and... even knowing that she'd seen so many different animals, others had remained in hiding, deep in the jungle where they'd wanted to be.

After all, the largest rain forest on earth still held treasures, fauna and flora, that were yet to be discovered.

Aunt Leia and uncle Miguel walked into the study room.

'All set?'

'Yes... the only thing missing is' and she embraced them tightly. 'Thank you.' It was amazing, awesome!'

'Well, you make sure you always come back. And bring your friends with you' said aunt Leia. We've room enough!'

Space was not an issue in this land where everything was huge: the river, the jungle, fish and snakes....

The duck waddled into the room. And of course, as soon as Edu whistled that weird sound, the parrot showed up at the window.

'Now our farewells are complete'.

The four of them climbed into the car. The pink house became smaller and smaller in the distance.

'Let's go, we could be caught in a traffic jam', said uncle Miguel.

Gaby remembered the smells from the forest. She put her hand into her pocket and there it was. the list she'd prepared with Edu.

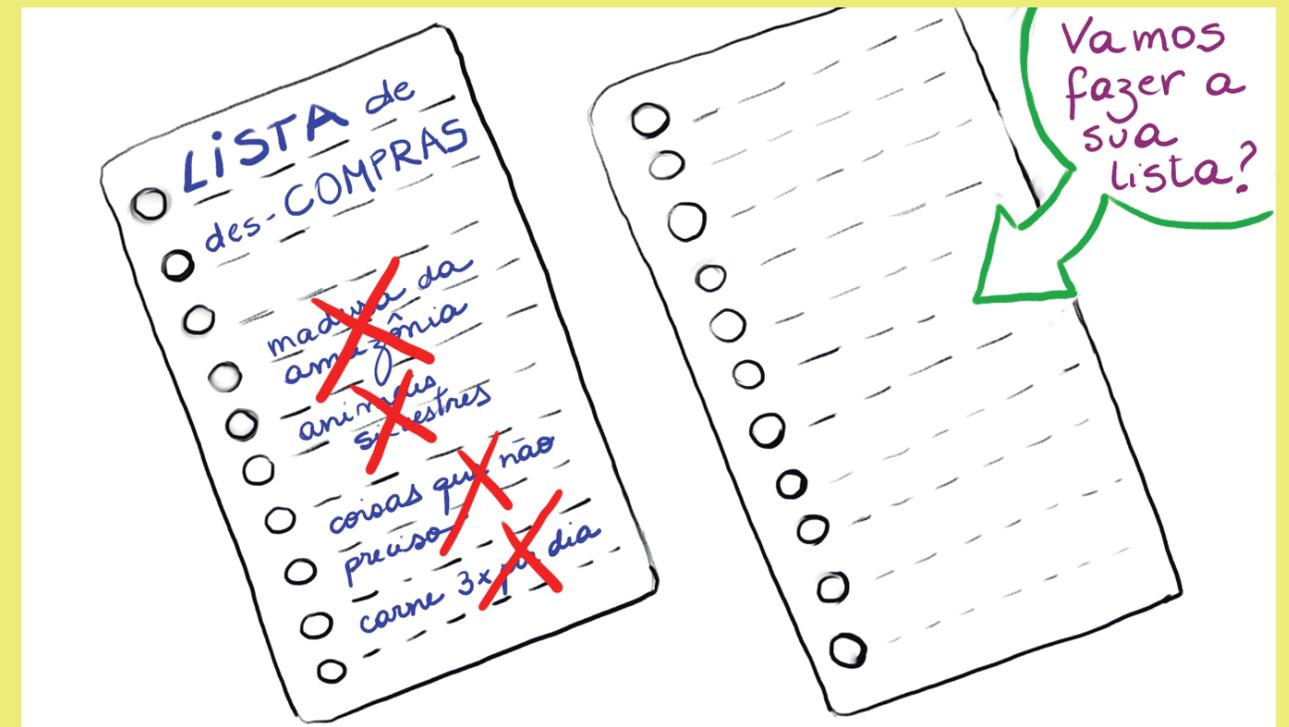
"Can I possibly help the Amazon rain forest? And what about the people who live in it? Will my friends help me? How many children can learn about the things I've now learnt?", thought Gaby.

Edu repeated the names: 'the blue gray tanager, so very blue; the scarlet macaw, a red so vivid the colour seemed to have been painted on it; the yellow kiskadee!'

A LIST OF THINGS TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE CONSERVATION OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST IS IMPORTANT.

1. Always be curious, ask and research about what's happening out there!
2. Find out where the things you buy come from.
3. Research how things have been made: manufactured or by hand? In a factory or in a co-op?
4. Choose respectfully sourced forest products such as Brazil nuts and açai, which are extracted without the felling of trees. Avoid palm hearts, "pupunha" and others which, when extracted, kill the trees.
5. Eat less red meat. The production of beef demands large pastures, which occupy land where originally the forest had been.
6. Use purpose grown wood, from reforestation projects. Be aware of the origin of the wood utilized in things around you.

7. Help preserve the environment with easy attitudes such as recycling, reducing consumption and not littering.
8. Research how deforestation and illegal forest fires are reported.
9. Be a creative child. If you grow up with curiosity and a will to learn, you'll positively contribute towards the environment and to society as a whole.
10. Be happy to live on such a beautiful planet. Always!



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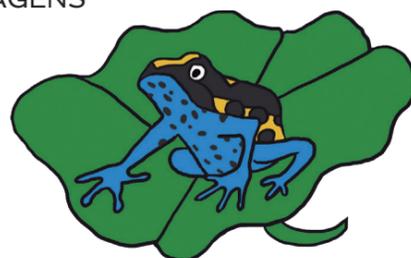
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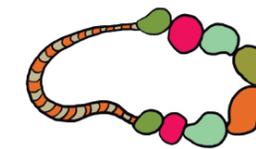
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SOBRE A AUTORA E ILUSTRADORA GABRIELA BRIOSCHI

Artista visual, arte-terapeuta, escritora e ilustradora, Gabriela Brioschi começou, como muitas crianças, a desenhar cedo. Teve oportunidade de visitar Bienais de Arte de São Paulo e outras exposições com sua família, estabelecendo um contrato rico e prazeroso com a arte.

Estudou na Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo e na Escola de Comunicação e Artes, ambas da USP. Em 1983, a artista se mudou para a cidade de Nova Iorque, nos Estados Unidos, onde fez suas primeiras ilustrações para publicações locais. Lá participou de cursos livres de desenhos, pintura e gravura na Art Students League of New York. Depois disso ela morou e trabalhou também na Grécia, na Alemanha e em Portugal.

“O desenho é meu amigo constante, assim como a escrita. Ando com cadernões e caderninhos sempre, por onde vou. Neles, a matéria-prima para pinturas, livros e ilustrações. Quando escrevo, vou pensando nas imagens. E quando faço as imagens, vou anotando textos, frases que vem vêm e vão, imagens que se formam e desaparecem.”

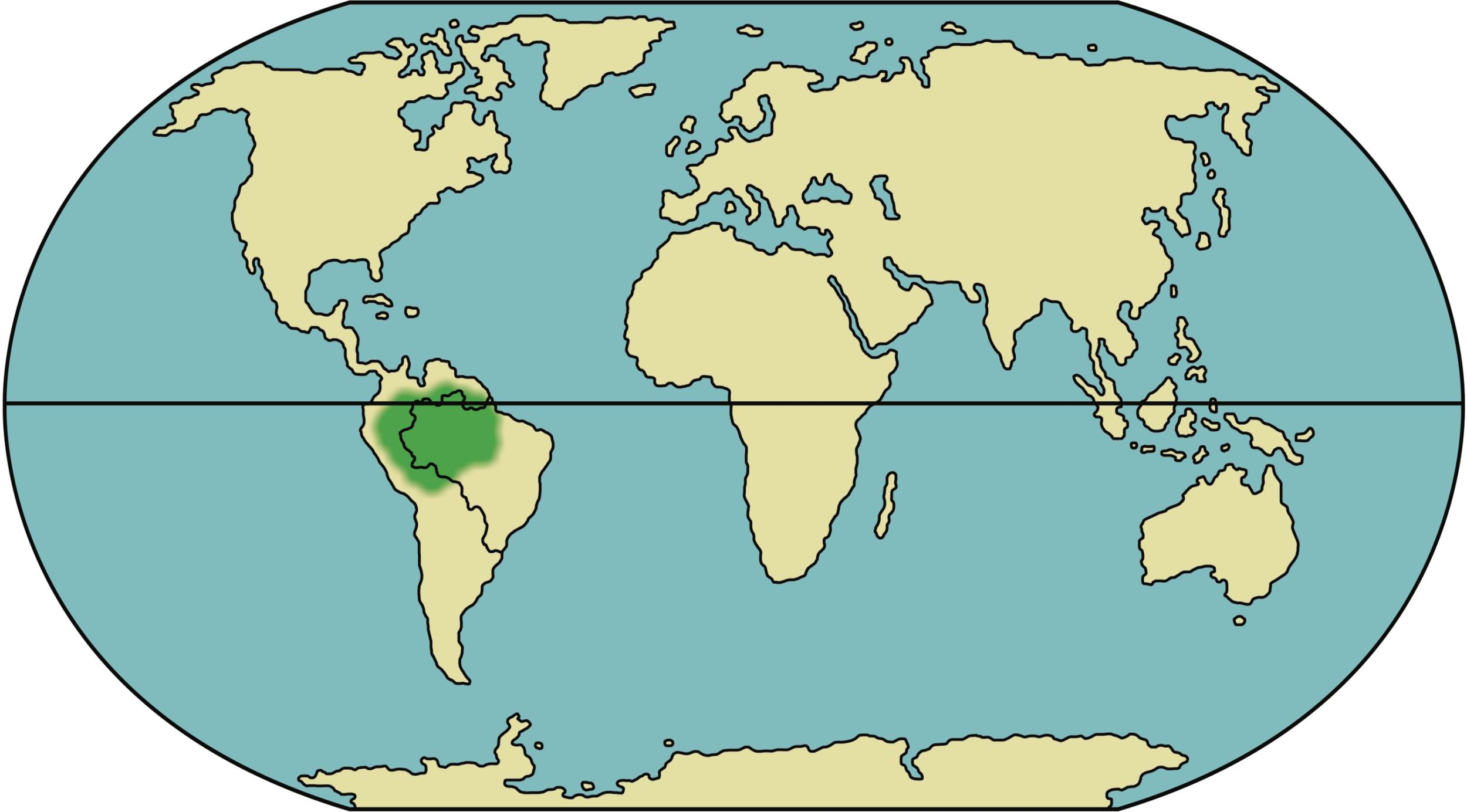
Gabriela acredita que a sua produção artística também se relaciona com a escolha de seu local de trabalho. Seu ateliê é organizado dentro de sua própria casa, e essa característica do espaço onde produz atribui um caráter mais subjetivo e pessoal à sua obra.

“Eu trabalho na minha casa! O artista não se separa do seu trabalho nunca, nem quando dorme... Aliás, até durante o sono, eu trabalho bastante. Trabalhar é um grande prazer para mim!”

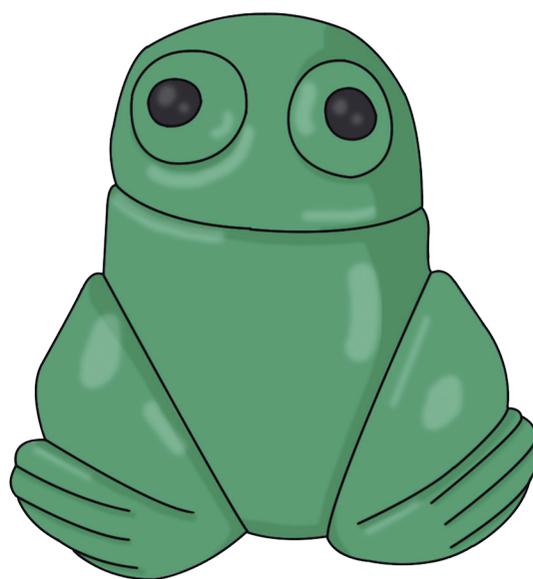
CONHEÇA MAIS SOBRE O PROJETO SUSTENTAMUNDO



AND, LAST BUT NOT LEAST, IS : WHERE IS THE AMAZON REGION LOCATED?



 Floresta Amazônica



Esta obra foi impressa
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