

A LAGAHOO IN THE LAGOON

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The lagahoo can change its shape to be half human and half anything it wants to be. It drags a coffin and heavy, clanking chains.

People say that Lagahoos like muddy, cold, misty swamps, and they move about under the light of the full moon, at midnight.

One dark night just before a full moon, four tourists from South America came to the Mayaro swamp because they had heard about a lagahoo in an area called Misty Lagoon and they wanted to take photographs.

A hermit named Man Jack lived in Misty Lagoon. Very few people had ever seen him because he never left the swamp, but those who had seen him said he hardly smiled and was frightening, because all his teeth were rotten.

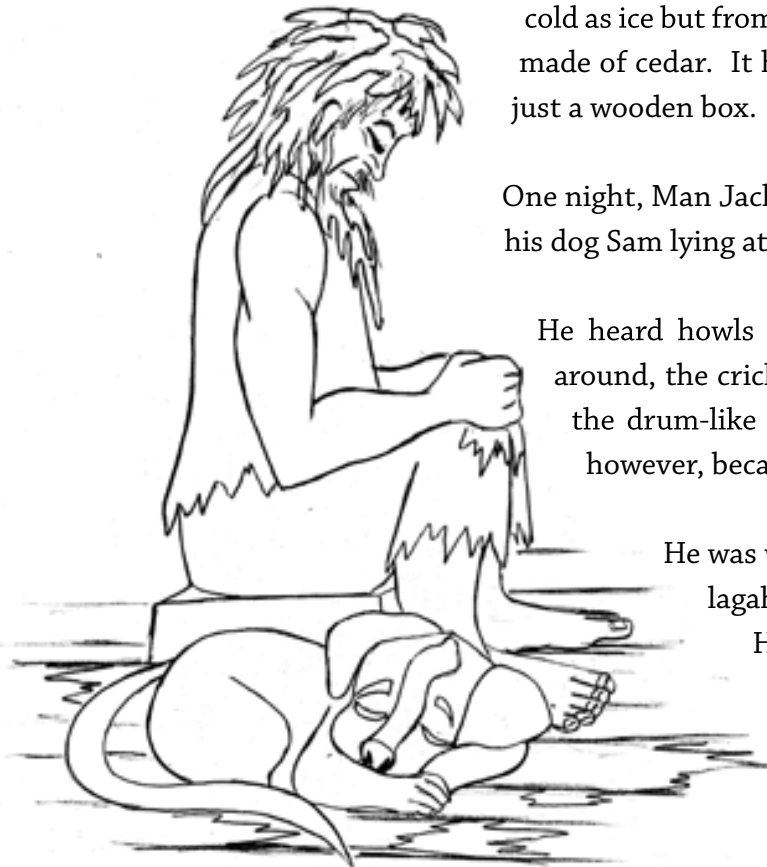
The story went around that the breath from his mouth was as cold as ice but from his nose it was hot as fire. His old house was made of cedar. It had no lights and very small windows. It was just a wooden box.

One night, Man Jack was at home sitting quietly in the dark with his dog Sam lying at his feet, listening to the sounds of the night.

He heard howls of wild animals, like lappe and bats flying around, the crick, crick of crickets, the croaking of frogs and the drum-like sounds of cicadas. This night was different, however, because he thought he also heard human voices.

He was worried since some hunters thought he was a lagahoo and threatened to burn down his home.

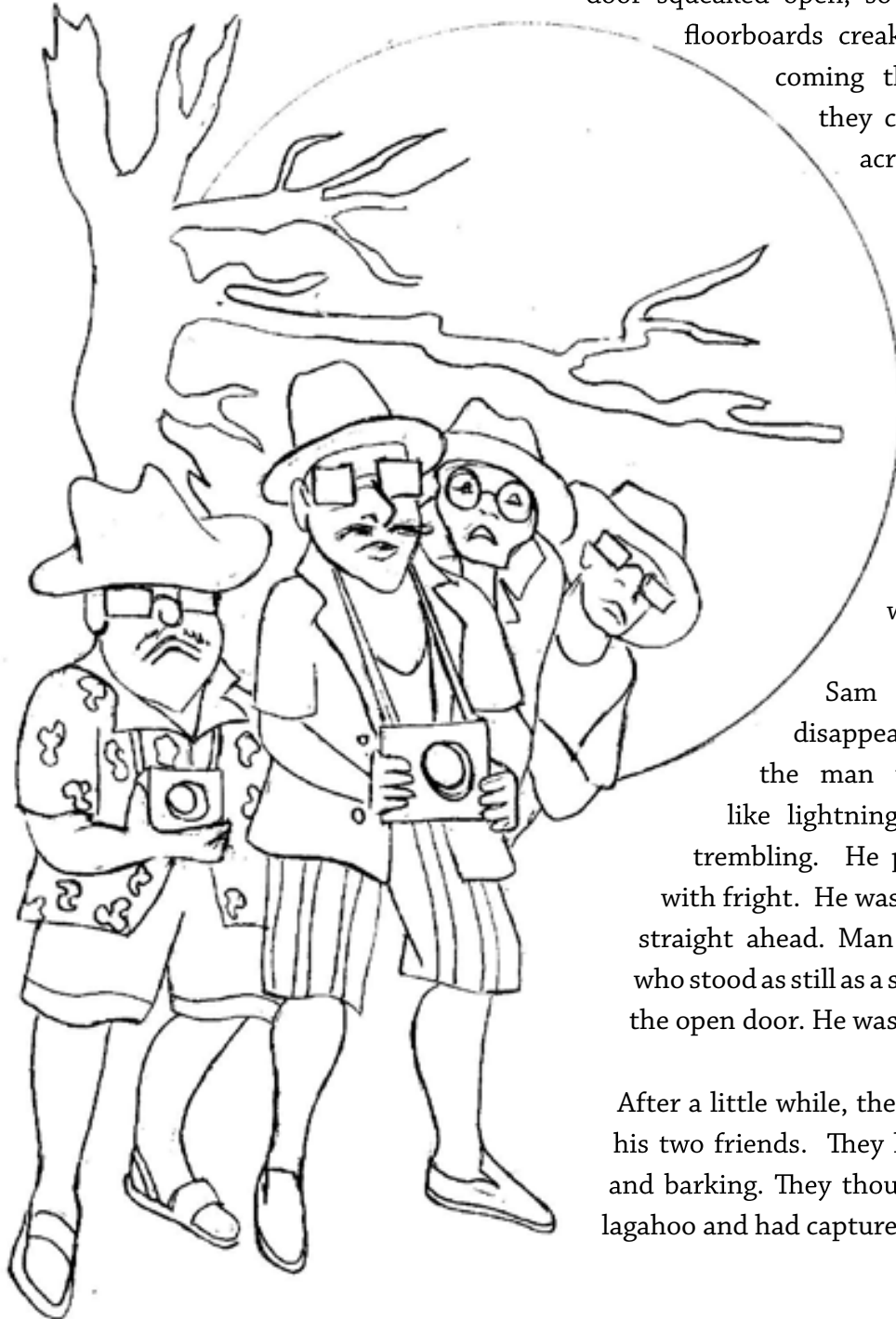
He knew that the sounds were human, but the voices did not sound like Trinis. He stood up quietly, opened his door a little, peeped out and then stood behind it.





He did not know that four tourists had come to Misty Lagoon and that two of them had gone back to their car to get replacement batteries for their torchlights and lost their way. By then the moon was bright and the men had stumbled upon Man Jack's house.

They knocked on the door. Nobody answered but the door squeaked open, so they entered. The cedar floorboards creaked and in a moonbeam coming through a small window they could see a snake moving across the floor.



One man let out a sudden high-pitch scream, "Ayieeee, Socorro!" and ran out of the open door. The other one turned around and in the light of a moonbeam he saw Man Jack standing there with a cutlass in his hand, with Sam at his side.

Sam bolted outside and disappeared in the dark, chasing the man who screamed and ran like lightning. The other tourist was trembling. He peed his pants and froze with fright. He was sweating. His eyes stared straight ahead. Man Jack passed the tourist, who stood as still as a statue, and walked through the open door. He was very angry.

After a little while, the other man returned with his two friends. They heard howling, screaming and barking. They thought that Man Jack was a lagahoo and had captured their friend.

They stopped when they saw a chain tied to a tree, which they thought was getting taller by each second, but realised that they were standing in quicksand and were sinking.

Man Jack suddenly appeared and they panicked, but he threw them the chain so that they could pull themselves out.

They greeted him, "Buenas noches. Gracias! Gracias! We were looking for the lagahoo, and got stuck in that mud."

Man Jack grinned his terrible teeth at them and they were almost convinced again that he was the lagahoo. He invited the tourists back to his house where their friend sat quietly in his wet pants.

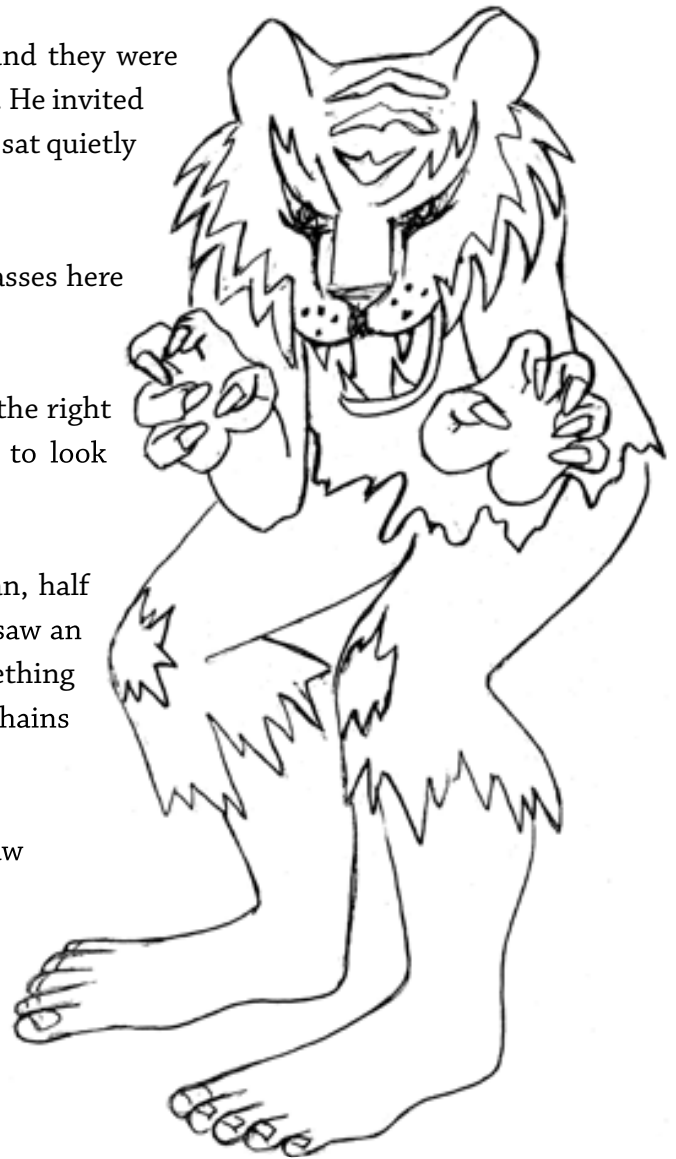
"I will show you how to see the lagahoo that passes here on nights like this," Man Jack said.

He told them to look through a special hole in the right side wall of the house. The four men rushed to look through the hole.

One saw half man, half wolf. One saw half man, half goat. One saw half man, half horse. The other saw an old man with a caiman head. All four saw something different, but each mysterious creature pulled chains tied to a coffin.

The men turned to tell Man Jack what they saw and faced a half human, half tiger.

They sped out the door and never stopped running until they got to their car.



THE END