

**Memories
from Brazilian Hell**

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The Saga of the Almeida Family
in the Garden of Eden

Valdeck Almeida de Jesus

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My nieces, Delma, Jéssica, Amanda, and Paula Fernanda.

My son, Valdeck Almeida de Jesus Junior, who always gives me reasons to evolve.

The friends who passed through my life, leaving great and indelible marks.

To all who, anonymously or not, have helped my family to survive in this hell called Brazil.

SUPPORT

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John Keene

(American writer)

“Valdeck, plenty of luck on your way.”

Jean Wyllys, April 18, 2005

(Inscription from the book “Aflitos” by Jean Wyllys, published by Fundação Casa de Jorge Amado, COPENE, Salvador, 2001).

“Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani”: That is, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:46

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Introduction

For a better understanding of the reference made to the Garden of Eden, further explanation is needed. For all intents and purposes, my family began with my mother and my father. I had no grandmothers or grandfathers, no cousins or uncles. Therefore, I have traced an imaginary parallel between my history and the mythological story told in the Bible.

This is an autobiographical book where I assume the role of narrator in order to tell the history of me and my family, which includes my parents and seven brothers and sisters. This saga tells of a low-income family that resides in a medium-sized city located in the countryside of Bahia. The tale exposes all the difficulties this family has faced: financial crisis and the lack of shelter and food, basic schooling, medical/dental care, and much more. Despite what usually happens to such people, this family made spectacular efforts in order to overcome the many obstacles imposed upon them. Without losing their faith in the future, despite uncertainty and doubt, the Almeida family managed, through their struggle, to achieve their goals and to make their mark.

These pages, which narrate this family's hard life day by day, have the purpose of encouraging other anguished Brazilians to believe in their country and to fight for their ideals.

Valdeck Almeida de Jesus