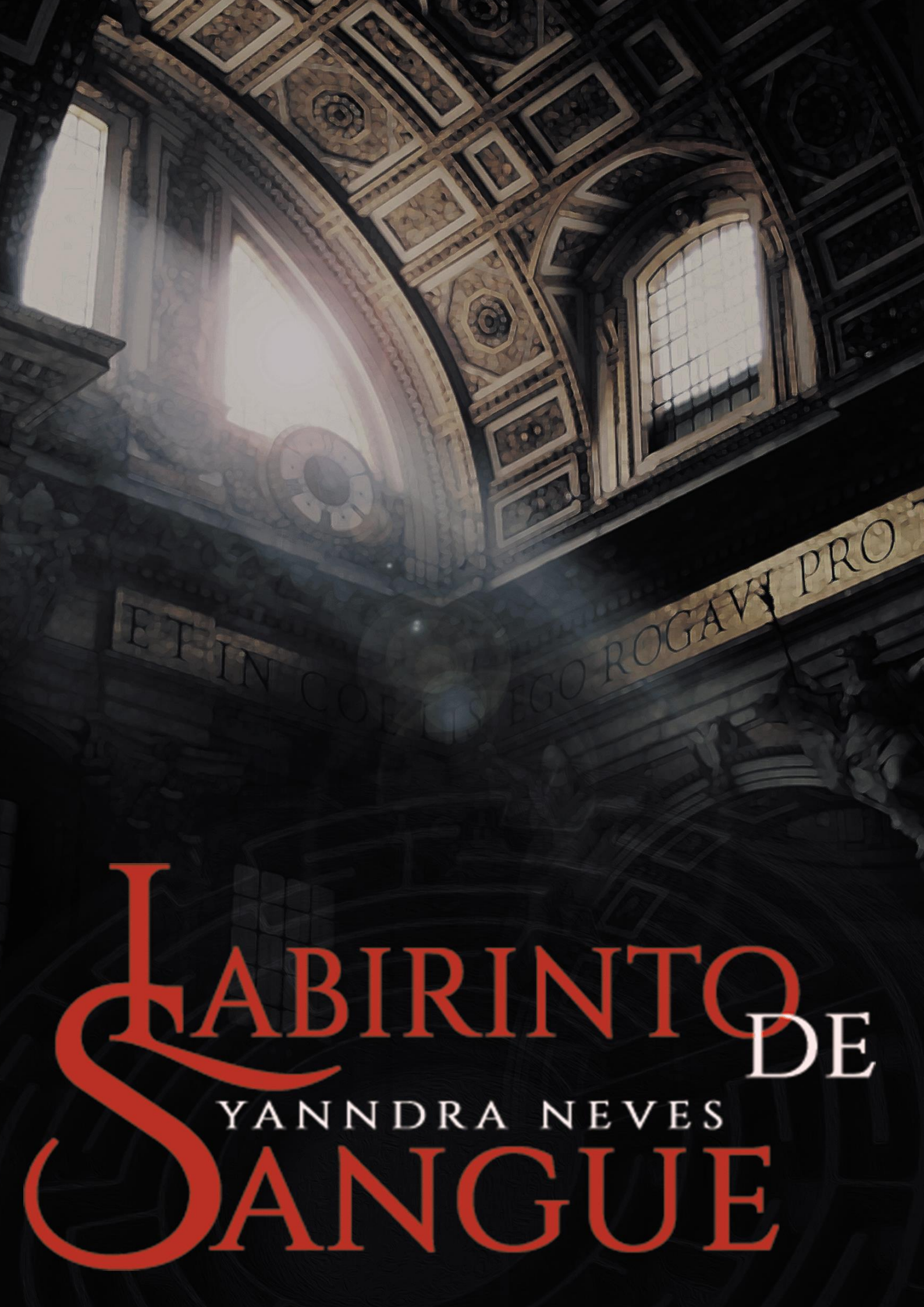
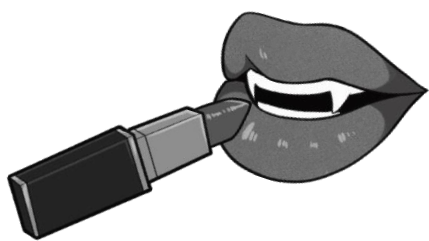




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# LABIRINTO DE YANNRA NEVES SANGUE



DADOS INTERNACIONAIS DE CATALOGAÇÃO NA PUBLICAÇÃO (CIP)

(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)

N518l

NEVES, Yanndra

Labirinto de Sangue/ Yanndra Neves. – 1. ed. – Rio de Janeiro : Grupo Editorial Quimera, 2021.

240p ; 16x23 cm // tipografia: Garamond, 12

ISBN 978 65 994685 4 4

1. Romance brasileiro

I. Título

21-57292

CDD-B869.3

**Índice para catálogo sistemático:**

1. Romance : Literatura brasileira B869.3

**NOTE: This is a piece of one of my original books, published in Brazil in 2021. The title translated is “Maze of Blood”.**

**The following content is Chapter 20.**

## Chapter 20

“Matteo, get down!”

The gas pipes exploded half a second later. The white room was now gray with thick smoke. He heard a chair breaking, and even though he wanted to breathe a sigh of relief, he couldn't.

The mission had to end. He didn't have time to feel anything, to deal with anything. His mind was forced to remain in limbo. Dante couldn't be distracted by the smell of his blood, nor by the pale complexion of his face. Nor by the screams that could be heard from all those people behind.

The signal he had activated in his car had worked, and he couldn't even give a grateful sigh. Axel had thrown a smoke bomb, just to distract, while with his infrared glasses, he saw through the curtain, taking them down one by one.

Dante had to stay still, or he would be neutralized too, so that's how he stayed. His legs planted against the smooth floor. His dress shoes were a ridiculous contrast to what he should really be wearing: combat boots. Not that the wardrobe made any difference now, or to his uncle.

No, he was just wandering, his head trying in vain to distract him from the deafening explosions. He couldn't even be deaf from the impact. He didn't have a single fucking option here.

One shot. Two. Three... Five, twelve. Each shot from a nine-millimeter was a body falling to the ground, making his objective increasingly clear.

His uncle was just a few meters ahead, lost, *poor thing*. He didn't know whether to duck, run, or stay still.

It didn't matter, it was already decided. Dante would neutralize him there. When the closest guard fell, he kicked his legs, jumping towards Darien, throwing him to the ground with all his body weight.

Which the bastard seemed to be expecting because he had adjusted his legs before feeling the impact and, forcing them forward, threw him backward. Dante growled, turning towards him, noticing that the smoke was beginning to dissipate, and his entire squad was coming down through the door, the sergeants running armed to take over the rest of the warehouse, searching every remaining hair of whoever was there.

He could smile at the competence of his companions, but his uncle was coming towards him, his fangs lowered, the eyes glowing with a genuine hatred for life and himself that he could almost sympathize with.

Almost, because he would never do half of what he did. His uncle was a *monster*. Without the slightest love for anything other than himself. He couldn't believe it, despite everything being right there in front of him, and the fact that he was sticking his hand in the pile of shit, that was the reality.

Still, a part of him liked to resist. Because if he didn't, he would break the thread that'd cut his blood ties, his childhood memories, everything. Cutting that was something that could never be undone.

He remembered being in Darien's arms, hugging him, laughing. Family lunches, growing up and looking at his uncle with admiration, despite the fear that he thought was due to the enormous respect he felt towards him.

How wrong he was... His instincts never failed, did they? He should have paid attention from the first time the idea crossed his mind. But that was the problem with feelings. You avoid it when you know it will hurt you. You pretend, even though the cold hard truth is being handed to you on a silver platter...

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw someone come to Matteo's aid, and the vision of his father's dead body came back to him like eternal photographs.

*Darien had done this.*

Without remorse.

He wasn't the same person he had in his memories. He wasn't the same man who had picked him up when he scraped his knee, or who had asked for help when he wanted to impress a woman.

He was his father's murderer. He was lying to the King. To the race. Using humans as his watering hole and covering it up with more crimes.

He was a fucking mistake.

And he wasn't getting out of here until he was over his dead body, or he was over his. That was for sure.

Dante lunged forward, applying a move called *hataki koni*, catching him from below, knocking him down immediately. He mounted him, and even though his body was smaller and thinner, his strength was the hatred he was feeling so deeply. It was in all his bones, coming from the core, brought by a grief, an anger, a regret greater than anything he had ever felt. It was revenge.

He poniards his face, punching him so hard that the floor cracked, his skull sinking in and finding the earth beneath the concrete. Darien seemed knocked out for a second, but then he opened his eyes, and the madness there was similar to what he had seen in the noble vampire, minutes before attacking his love partner.

Darien tried to get up, but he gave him another blow, this time right in the chin, breaking some teeth. Coughing, his uncle managed to push him away, but Dante thought quickly and pulled him by the lapel, bringing him down together.

They rolled on the ground for a while, until Darien managed to get on top.

The punch to his ribs made him lose his breath, but not his motivation. He took another one in the middle of the chest, and that made him lose strength in the entire upper part. He began to have his face beaten constantly, and everything else the bastard could reach.

"Give up, Dante," he spat, sucking in a breath of air.

Darien grabbed him by the neck, suffocating him while punching his face with his free hand. There was nothing he could do but take the blows. That's why he only felt them.

Every stab, every pinprick on his skin, every cut.

His uncle stopped again, breathing angrily.

Dante glared at him and smirked, his fangs exposed in hatred like the savage race they were.

"Do you really think you have the upper hand here?"

His right eye swelled up immediately, the raised skin making it impossible for him to see one hundred percent fine. But, well, he still had his left one.

Darien pushed him to the side and kicked him in the ribs just as he tried to get up, supporting his weight on his knees. He stepped on his tibia, and the pain made him scream out loud. The sound scratched his throat, as he tried not to succumb to his own mind filled in pain.

He turned onto his back, and he straddled his abdomen, but he didn't let him finish. Dante needed to take the reins again. He rolled with him, trying to hold him somewhere, but his agility was like a snake's.

Darien hit him again. In the face, in the chest, in the waist.

And even though each blow he received was hell and made him want to scream, or cry, he couldn't hesitate. He needed the perfect cue...

A loud crash came from the main staircase and a body rolled down it, causing enough of a scene for Darien to turn his face in that direction even for a slight second.

As if he had received an injection of adrenaline, Dante regained the sense of his muscles, and his arm went all the way forward, throwing him far away. He reached him a second later, stepping on his back, interrupting his attempt to get up.

He bent down, supporting his weight on one of his ribs, sinking the tip of his knee, while his hand went to his black hair and like roots, spread his fingers across his skull, pulling him up only to push him against the ground with all his strength.

The ground cracked again, and blood spread like puddles on a rainy day.

"What is this place for?" he asked angrily, saliva mixed with the iron taste of the red thing that ran through his veins just like the humans that were killed there.

Darien coughed, spitting out bits of tooth.

"What do you do with these women?"

“Thhhink.” The sound of the syllables dragged by his unprotected tongue almost made him laugh, he sounded exactly like a veil serpent.

He pushed his head down again, suffocating him in his own blood, on the earth. Then, pulled him out when he thought it was enough to make him speak.

“What is it for?!”

“The blood goes to the race, the organssss to the underworld.”

He thought about how many years of innocent life had been cut short in that locale, by those hands.

Dante pushed his head down *again*. And again.

And once more.

As Darien’s head shattered into pieces, brain matter, and blood gushed across the floor like an abstract painting.

He couldn’t feel anything: his hand moved, but it was as if he were an invisible weight. His muscles didn't burn from the intensity of his movements, his breathing hadn't even increased.

He was suspended, tearing everything he could from that empty body while every time he blinked the scenes replayed in his mind: his father purple, poisoned, his father crying, his father drowning in blood and fluids. Matteo screaming, Matteo turning pale, Matteo in agony...

He suffered for everyone. For each of the miserable fates, he couldn't avoid. For every evil that piece of trash had done, and yet, it felt incapable of reaching out near enough for all of them.

Pulled his hair again and brought his face into view. Half of his uncle’s face had disappeared, there was only bone and muscle remaining, and as for the other, it still seemed alive. The eye moved, staring at him in despair, as if death had never been an option.

He stared at him in disgust for what seemed like a lifetime and then let go of his limp body.

Turning back, conscience hit him, and Dante realized his entire squad was there, standing, watching him.

Axel took off his mask and his blond hair and clear, kind eyes met his.

It seemed that everyone understood very well what had happened.

And that they supported him.

Something ran down his cheek and he realized that he was crying. All the vampires, one by one, including Axel, placed their fists over their hearts, and when they gave a battle cry, he felt all the walls shake.