

THE JUMBIES

by Tracey Baptiste



BOOK TALK

Corinne La Mer isn't afraid of anything. Not scorpions, not the boys who tease her, and certainly not jumbies. They're just tricksters parents make up to frighten their children. Then one day Corinne chases an agouti all the way into the forbidden forest. Those shining yellow eyes that followed her to the edge of the trees—they couldn't belong to a jumbie. Or could they?

When Corinne spots a beautiful stranger speaking to the white witch at the market the next day, she knows something unexpected is about to happen. And when this same beauty, called Severine, turns up at Corinne's house, cooking dinner for Corinne's father, Corinne is sure that danger is in the air. She soon finds out that bewitching her father, Pierre, is only the first step in Severine's plan to claim the entire island for the jumbies. Corinne must call on her courage and her friends and learn to use ancient magic she didn't know she possessed to stop Severine and save her island home.

APRIL 2015

MIDDLE-GRADE FICTION

Ages 8-12, Grades 3-7

240 pages, 5½" x 8¼"

ISBN: 978-1-61620-414-3 • \$15.95 Hardcover

E-Book ISBN: 978-1-61620-488-4

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tracey Baptiste lived in Trinidad until she was fifteen; she grew up on jumbie stories and fairy tales. She is a former teacher who works as a writer and editor and lives in New Jersey. *The Jumbies* is her first middle-grade novel. Her website is traceybaptiste.com.



ERIK RYERSON

Praise for *The Jumbies*

"A well-written tale full of action with enough scary elements to satisfy fans of Adam Gidwitz's *A Tale Dark and Grimm*." —*School Library Journal*

"Endlessly addictive and hypnotic . . . Baptiste has a lot of fun remixing the classic Haitian folktale 'The Magic Orange Tree,' while adding her own original touches." —*Essence*

"A spine-tingling tale rooted in Caribbean folklore that will have readers holding their breath as they fly through its pages. With its able and gutsy heroine, lyrical narration, and inventive twist on the classic Haitian folktale 'The Magic Orange Tree,' *The Jumbies* will be a favorite of fans of *Breadcrumbs*, *A Tale Dark and Grimm*, and *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*." —*KidsReads.com*

THE JUMBIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Had you heard of any of the scary creatures that Tracey Baptiste describes in *The Jumbies* before reading the novel? If so, how did you first learn about the jumbie(s)? If not, which type of jumbie will you remember most?
2. In what ways is *The Jumbies* like folktales and fairy tales you've read? What makes it different?
3. What does Pierre mean when he says on page 19, "You know how the sea is. Nothing stays at the bottom forever"? After reading the story, does this meaning change?
4. On page 70, Corinne detects something wrong with the food Severine is cooking; her father doesn't. Describe a time when you knew something was not quite right even though it seemed to others that everything was okay.
5. If Corinne's mother were still alive, how might she have changed Corinne's belief that "stories about jumbies are just things that grown people say when they make up stories at night"? Do you think Corinne's mother would have told Corinne that jumbies were real? Why or why not?
6. Malik and Bouki are loyal friends who remind Corinne that sometimes everyone needs help. When has a friend helped you through something that was too big to handle on your own? Do you think the story would have ended as it did if Corinne hadn't had the help of her friends along the way? How would the ending have been different?
7. Dru is timid and shy when she first meets Corinne, while Corinne is a risk taker. How do the girls change or grow over the course of their friendship? Why are the girls such good friends? On page 92, Corinne has an experience that makes her believe that jumbies are real. How does this revelation change Corinne?
8. On page 27, the white witch says, "If I help one, I have to help the other. For balance." Over the course of *The Jumbies*, the white witch does provide each side with some help, but ultimately, does she stay true to her vow to keep things balanced? Did she make the right choices, such as giving Severine magic that would help her live among humans, and saving Corinne, Dru, Malik, and Bouki from drowning? How would *The Jumbies* have been different without the white witch?
9. Who has more right to live on the island, jumbies or humans? Why?
10. On page 164, the white witch says, "Everybody thinks they need magic. Everybody wants answers . . . They want a bottle. Instant success! Something to drink, or sprinkle, or spill on the ground. They want magic from nothing. Magic doesn't come from nothing. It comes from somewhere. And it isn't so extraordinary. It's just work. It's just using your head and your heart." Is there an example in the story that supports or disproves what the witch says? Explain.
11. How will Corinne's life be different after *The Jumbies* ends? How might the discoveries about her family history change how the community treats Pierre and Corinne?

Reader's Guide by Emily Parlman

 ALGONQUIN YOUNG READERS

A division of Workman Publishing
AlgonquinYoungReaders.com