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The Jumbies



Synopsis

Corinne La Mer claims she isn't afraid of anything. Not scorpions, not the boys who tease her, and certainly not jumbies. They're just tricksters made up by parents to frighten their children. Then one night Corinne chases an agouti all the way into the forbidden forest, and shining yellow eyes follow her to the edge of the trees. They couldn't belong to a jumbie. Or could they? When Corinne spots a beautiful stranger at the market the very next day, she knows something extraordinary is about to happen. When this same beauty, called Severine, turns up at Corinne's house, danger is in the air. Severine plans 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 to save her island home.

Book Information

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

“All great literature is one of two stories; a man goes on a journey or a stranger comes to town.” • So sayeth Leo Tolstoy (at least in theory). Regardless of whether or not it's actually true, it is fun to slot books into the different categories. And if I were to take Tracey Baptiste's middle grade novel “The Jumbies” with the intention of designating it one type of story or another, I think I'd have to go with the latter definition. A stranger comes to town. Not quite true though, is it? For you see, in this particular book the stranger isn't coming to town so much as

infesting it. And does she still count as a stranger when she, technically was there first? It sounds a bit weird to say, "All great literature is one of two stories; a man goes on a journey or a creature comes to a village where it is the people who are the strangers" but you could make a case for that being the tale "The Jumbies" brings to light. Far more than just your average spooky supernatural story, Baptiste uses the underpinnings of a classic folktale to take a closer look at colonization, rebellion, and what it truly takes to share the burden of tolerating the "other". Plus there are monsters. Gotta love the monsters. Corinne La Mer isn't what you might call a superstitious sort. Even when she chases an agouti into a forbidden forest she's able to justify to herself why it looked as though a pair of yellow eyes followed her out. If she told other people about those eyes they'd say she ran across a jumbie, one of the original spooky denizens of her Caribbean island. Corinne's a realist, though, so surely there's another answer. And she probably would have put the whole incident out of her mind anyway, had Severine not appeared in her hut one day. Severine is beautiful and cunning.

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