

Rise of the Jumbies

Tracey Baptiste

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Based on the myths of West Africa and the Caribbean, Tracey Baptiste's *Rise of the Jumbies* is an engaging story full of danger and discovery.

When children begin to disappear from their island home in the Caribbean, Corrine's friends and neighbors are quick to suspect her. They all know that her mother was a Jumbie. To prove her innocence and save the children, Corrine contacts Mama D'Leau, queen of the ocean Jumbies, and asks for help to find them.

Mama D'Leau agrees to help, but only if Corrine and three of her close friends will travel across the ocean with four mermaids to retrieve her opal.

This highly enjoyable story captures the culture and the atmosphere of the small island community with beautiful descriptions and natural, flowing dialogue.

Family themes tie in. Corrine must face her Jumbie aunt, and her friends Bouki and Malik come to understand that Corrine's uncle is their father, though they are not biologically related to him. Prejudice is another very important theme, as Corrine faces the mistrust and hostility of her community based entirely on who her mother was.

The Jumbies are a welcome addition to the juvenile menagerie of mythological creatures, lit with the culture and stories of the Caribbean.

CATHERINE THURESON (September/October 2017)

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