

TEACHING NOTES AND RESOURCES KS2 AND KS3

Caribbean Folklore



About the Book and Author



When her island home is overrun by evil spirits, Evie is saved only by the powerful gemstone her parents entrusted to her. Her best friend Arthur is not so lucky - caught in the magical crossfire, he finds himself in the body of a cat.

On a mission to return him to his body and defeat the ghouls, Evie and Arthur team up with Cai, a trainee shaman, who helps them discover the truth. The terrifying Blackheart Man is plotting to steal the island's four magical gemstones and use their power to destroy the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead. It will take all of Evie's magic, Cai's bravery and Arthur's talent for thievery to stop him.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley is an author and editor living in Manchester with his partner and a greedy cat. His fantasy adventures *The Boy to Beat the Gods* and *Spirit Warriors* put a compelling spin on West African and Caribbean mythology and folklore. When he isn't reading or writing stories, Ashley enjoys making music, gaming, anime, and being out in nature.

Folklore Inspiration

- **Spirit Warriors** is somewhat inspired by old Caribbean ghost stories of lore.
- In Jamaica evil spirits are known as 'duppies'. This is derived from the Akan (an ethnic group of present-day Ghana) word 'adope'.
- On other islands such as Barbados, the term 'jumbie' is used.
- Often these duppy stories were cautionary tales for young and old people alike.
- A number of well-known duppies and jumbies make an appearance in **Spirit Warriors**. But critically, two of the most infamous duppies have been reimagined as monstrous humans: Blackheart Man and La Diablesse.

Folklore Inspiration

- Called Blackheart Man in Jamaica and Heartman on other islands.
- In the real ghost stories/folklore, children are urged not to take sweets or gifts from strange men they meet in rural Jamaica.
- Blackheart Man lured children away and quite literally ate their hearts to sustain himself.
- In my story Blackheart Man takes people's hearts and minds in a metaphorical sense. He's charismatic, powerful, and promises to give them what they most desire, if they give themselves to him and his ambitions.

Blackheart Man
(aka Heart Man)



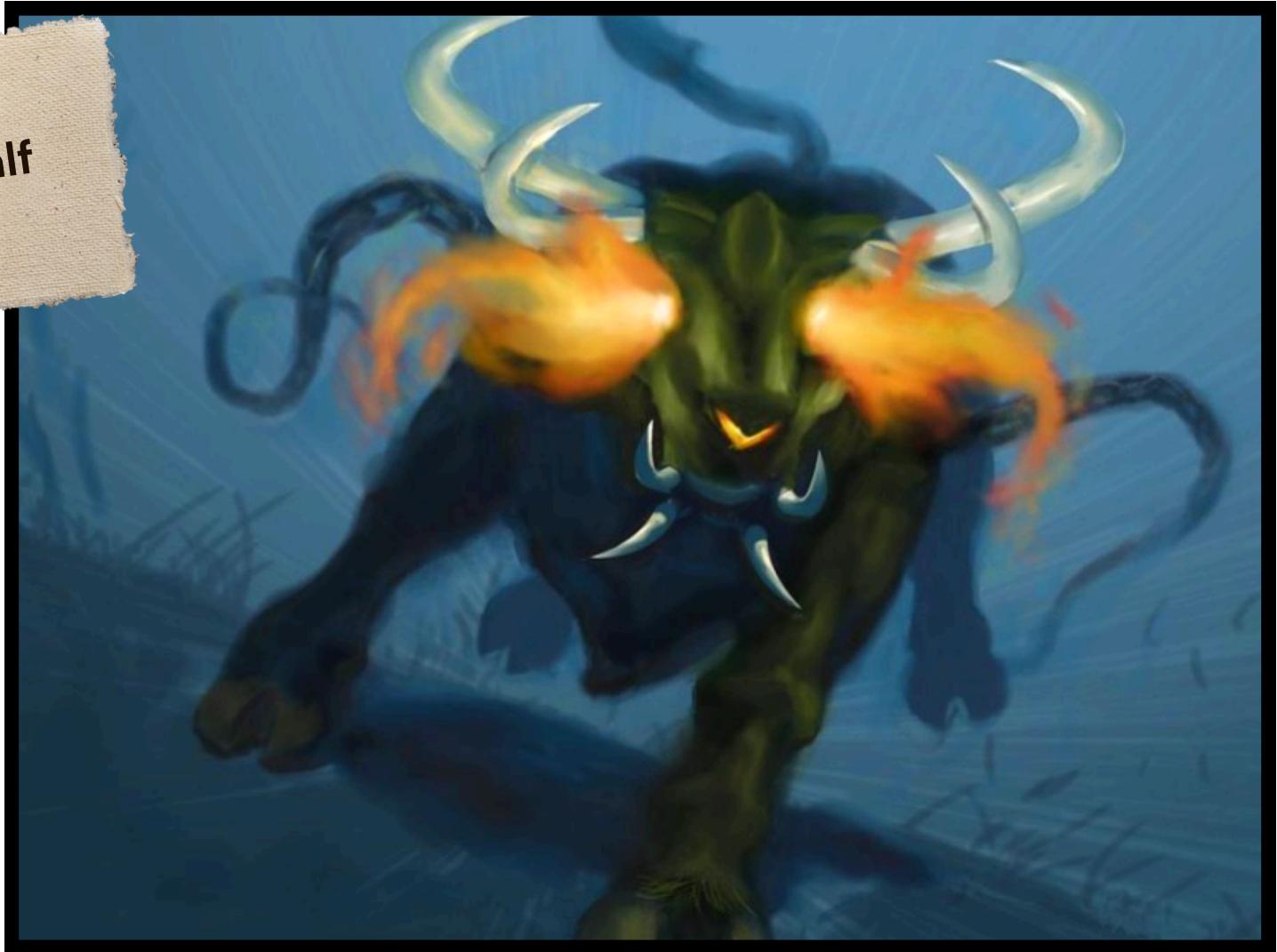
Folklore Inspiration

- Jumbie story originated in Trinidad.
- In the real ghost stories/folklore, La Diablesse is always disguised as a beautiful woman luring children, and often men, to their deaths.
- Hidden under her dress is one cow's leg with a cloven foot. In many of the tales, her large brimmed hat also covers a ghostly face.
- In *Spirit Warriors* I decided to create an origin story to explore how she became a monster. What could have happened in her life to make her so desperate to sell her soul for demonic powers?

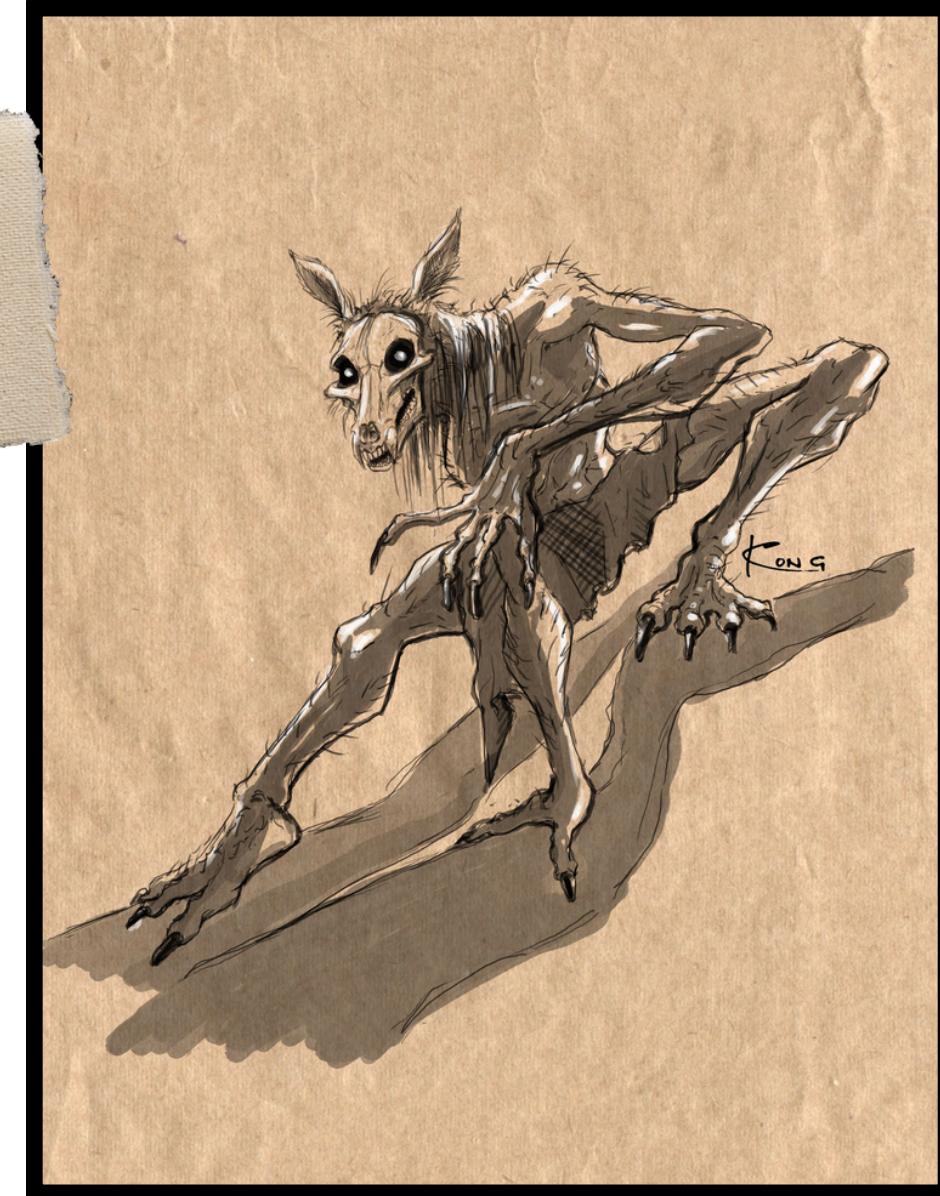


La Diablesse

Folklore Inspiration



- Jamaican origin. These fiery, evil bull-looking spirits are the restless ghosts of wicked men and women. They roam at night to torment the living.



- Trinidad and Tobago origin. Derived from the French 'loup-garou'. In the real folklore, lagahoos are shapeshifters, though often they take the form of wolf-man type beings. They are very much related to European werewolf mythology.

Folklore Inspiration

- Anansi the spider is one of the most famous trickster figures in world mythology.
- Anansi originates from Akan folklore (an ethnic group from present-day Ghana).
- As well as being a trickster he is a master storyteller, and this always fascinated me as a lover of tales.
- In several stories Anansi is able to outsmart far larger, more powerful foes. This relates to the history of resistance and survival of the Jamaican Maroons.
- This energy runs through *Spirit Warriors* where Evie, Cai and Arthur are massively outmatched by The Heartless, and the history of resistance and courage is celebrated.
- There is an easter egg tribute to Anansi in *Spirit Warriors*. Eagle-eyed readers might figure it out!



Activities

1. See if you can find out about more duppies and jumbies from Caribbean folklore.
2. Which Caribbean daddy or jumbie do you find most interesting? Write a report about why.
3. Write your own short story featuring one of the duppies or jumbies you've learned about.
4. As a class, seek out Anansi stories for a classroom read, and discuss the message or moral afterwards.
5. Discussion: Why do you think ghost stories are so prevalent in the Caribbean?