

## **A Compilation of Tobago Superstition and Folklore**

Tobago is an island rich in superstition and folklore.

These tales were handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth or through dance, song, drama and music.

Tobago Folklore is predominantly of African origin, flavoured with French and to a lesser degree, Spanish and English influences. Predominantly these tales are African influenced, with many of them brought to the island by Tobago's slave population, but other nations who once ruled the island also left behind their oral traditions.<sup>[9]</sup>

In keeping with well-recognized African traits, the picture is full of colour and decorated with a wealth of detail. Religious or semi-religious cults of African origin have undoubtedly contributed much to the Island's folklore; many of the supernatural folklore figures possess characteristics which are identical with those of African deities. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to draw a dividing line between the strictly religious elements and what may be described as "legendary traditions".<sup>[2]</sup>

Superstition is also expressed through food, craft, traditional medicine and games. Many of these beliefs and folklore were used by Tobago's African ancestors to come to terms with the harsh reality of living in a new place under the yoke of slavery.

Nearly every village has a performing or cultural arts group where these traditions are kept alive throughout the year. Speech bands are the keepers of Tobago's oral traditions, dancing and performing songs which focus on issues of political and social importance, often with a humorous or satirical twist. Every year Tobago's rich oral tradition is celebrated during the island's heritage festival in July. [9]

Superstitions and Folklore Characters in Trinidad & Tobago will be similar to other Caribbean countries with slight variations in name of the character. <sup>[4]</sup>

Many elements of Caribbean folklore (the orally-transmitted beliefs, myths, tales, and practices of a people) are African in origin, given that Slaves brought from Africa's West (or Gold) Coast made up a large majority of those brought to the region.

Very popular in terms of Caribbean story-telling, and a direct transfer from West Africa to the Caribbean are the Anancy Stories (Nancy Stories) told throughout the region. Ananse is the Ashanti word for spider, and the trickster Anancy (also known as Ananci, Ananse, Anansi, Ananci Krokoko, and Brer Nancy), with his quick-witted intelligence and his knack for surviving the odds, often through trickery, is the most popular of this genre of African-Caribbean folk-tale characters, although there are other West African influences, in folk story characters, including the hare (chief character in the Yoruba folktales) and the tortoise, which features in the stories of the Ibo people.

In addition to these stories, African religious figures also comprise a significant part of Caribbean folklore, many of the supernatural folklore figures possessing characteristics which are identical with those of African deities.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Trinidad & Tobago, the roots of many of the folklore legends can be found in the animist traditions of West Africa, from where thousands of slaves came during the colonial era. Other ethnic groups, such as the Europeans, Hindu and Muslim East Indians, brought their religions but, for the most part, left their folklore behind. In Africa, where animist beliefs imbued trees, wildlife and the forces of nature with supernatural significance, religion and superstition were, to a large extent, synonymous and thus, both were transported effortlessly across the Atlantic into the New World.

The folklore of Trinidad & Tobago, therefore, is one rich in colour, humour and grotesquerie. The best concoctions from the most imaginative would find significant difficulty in trying to beat it.

Couched in the terms of the French-Creole (Patois), for most slaves arrived with the French planters and were therefore french-speaking, the characters that inhabit these darker reaches of our collective imagination run the gamut from seductive to surreal.<sup>[6]</sup>

Trinidad and Tobago, with its diverse cultures, is also rich with folklore stories and superstitions that have been passed on from generation to generation. However, some stories are not unique to one island, such myths as the soucouyants or the art of stick fighting is equally shared by Tobago as well.

Folklore is intertwined with everyday life and entertainment, as seen in the "Best Village" competition, where folklore truly comes alive in the theater productions. Since the "stories" are passed on from generations, sometimes true experiences become myth and myth becomes legend with possibly a stretch of the truth here and there for added effect.

Some are remnants of a time where there were no street lights, houses were far apart, the forest was your backyard and darkness was everywhere. Of course, where there is darkness, evil lurks and some people read "bad" books. To travel at night you would chance to meet one and it was up to the person to know what to do for protection, be it a prayer or a particular action etc.

“From personal experience I haven't had much encounters, probably because there were lots of street lights and I never hunted. But my father, uncles and older cousins who hunted, had lots of experiences. Were they stories they made up? Well in my opinion no one would go in the forest to hunt to make up a "story" to come back and tell with such clarity, that it remains in the mind, years afterwards not forgotten and clear as day.

However, I must mention the unique stories that Tobago heralds and yearly appears in the forefront of the Heritage Day Festival. Tobago has its own: legendary persons, such as Sandy (the slave revolutionist), Fisherman Brush, and Gang Gang Sara (an African witch); myths (such as Soucouyants or Old Hags); superstitions (such as fairy-maids); and folk tales that are based on hunting experiences that developed into stories, such as Brer Nancy and Brer Goat. Tobago also has its own share of ghost stories. These stories lead many to believe in the superstitious world and its fair amount of solutions to guard or protect a person such as: “If you encounter a spirit, especially a Douen, turn your clothes wrong side”.

In Trinidad the popular folklore characters are: the Soucouyant, Mama Dglo, La Diabliesse, Papa Bois, Douen, Gumbo Glisse<sup>[10]</sup> and the Lagahoo or Loup Garou. These folklore stories help shape the unique culture of Trinidad and Tobago.”<sup>[8]</sup>

## **The Characters:**

### **Buck**

A Buck is a term used to refer to a member of a fictitious tribe of people from the rain forests of Guyana. They are described as very short people who are believed to have magical powers. It is rumored that superstitious people from all over the world try to obtain them so that they can bring them wealth. The person aspiring to attain riches usually would have to feed him milk and allow him to live in his attic. If the wealth searcher ever stops providing the food and shelter for the Buck all sorts of bad things will start happening to the family.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **Churile (pronounced Choo-ryle)**

A churile is the spirit of a pregnant woman who died during childbirth, or committed suicide during pregnancy. She is depicted by long, unbound, disheveled hair streaming over her face. Dressed in white, she carries her fetus in her arms. In the dead of the night, she wails sorrowfully as her unborn child cries for milk like a cat.

A churile is in eternal grief since she lost her child. A churile's victim is a pregnant woman, who she follows and possesses out of envy. Her attacks on women take the form of miscarriages, even among those in her former household. A churile also attacks her former husband through the onset of sickness. She would seek revenge if he had abused her during their marriage, and if he had neglected or neglected the children she had borne for him when she was human.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Dee Baba (pronounced Dee Bah-bah)**

Dee Baba is perceived as the protector of the land from dangerous forces. Some sources state that he takes the form of a white man on a black horse. This man resembles a colonial slave master who rides on a horse through a sugarcane plantation. He has a whip in one hand and a chain in the other. Other sources claim that Dee Baba takes the form of either a black rooster or a black dog.

The spirit of Dee Baba is fed once a year (usually in January) or periodically. He is given biscuits (salted crackers), salted butter, white rum, lit cigarettes and a burning deya (clay lamp) or candle on a sohari leaf (similar to a banana leaf) in the bushes. This type of offering is called sadaa (vegetarian). Non-vegetarian devotees offer canned sardines or a black cock (rooster), or a goat or a hog (pig). This type of offering is called satwick (non-vegetarian).

These offerings are made mainly by farmers who would pray to reap an abundant harvest and prevent thieves from stealing their crops. Property owners also make offerings to Dee Baba to protect their house and land from envious neighbours and competing relatives. Others make sacrifices to Dee Baba to obtain health and happiness.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Duennes, Douens or Dwens**

"Duennes" are spirits of children who died before they were baptized and as such, they are fated to roam the forests of Trinidad, practising their wide repertoire of pranks, mostly on living children who are enticed away into the forest and are then left abandoned. Duennes are sexless, their feet are turned

backwards and they have no faces (although they do have small round mouths). On their rather large heads they wear huge mushroom-shaped straw hats.<sup>[2]</sup>

Douens are doomed to roam the earth forever. Old people talk: To prevent the Douens from calling your children into the forest at dusk, never shout their names in open places, as the Duennes will take their names, call them and lure them away.<sup>[4]</sup>

A story is told of a man called Lastique who was riding home one night, as he passed the big silk cotton tree at the corner of Belmont Circular Road and the Savannah, he heard a baby crying, so he stopped and picked it up, thinking he would take it home for the night and carry it to the orphanage in the morning. Cycling along, he was reduced to a state of absolute terror by the time he reached the hospital, when he realized that the child was getting bigger and heavier. Suddenly the child said in a man's voice, "You'd better take me back were you found me", which the terrified Lastique did at once. As he drew nearer the tree, the 'child' shrank steadily back to its original size and was deposited, once more, a bawling baby at the foot of the giant tree. The moon, a silent witness, hid its face in a cloud as a chill wind blew and an owl flew out of the tree.<sup>[2]</sup>

They roam through the forests and secluded areas, playing pranks upon unsuspecting passersby. They were huge straw hats upon their heads, have a long braid and their feet are turned backwards. They are sexless and without features, except for a small, gaping mouth. Always be careful of calling your child's name out loud, for Duennes are known to call their names, luring them from their homes forever. [3]

Duennes take the form of naked children, never growing in excess of two or three feet in height. Their faces, which are featureless with the exception of a small mouth, are hidden behind a large, floppy, straw hat but, you can identify a Douen by his feet, which are turned backward, heels facing forward. Malicious little creatures, Douens take pleasure in luring normal children away from their homes and deep into the woods until they become lost. However mischievous they may be, Douens do have a good natured side. They have been know to aid Papa Bois in the forest by leading him to injured or trapped animals and imitating animal calls to throw hunters off track.<sup>[6]</sup>

To prevent the Duennes from calling your children into the forest at dusk, never shout their names in open places, as the Duennes will take their names, call them and lure them away.<sup>[2]</sup>

see also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douen>

## **Duppies**

Duppies are ghosts that roam the earth at night. It is said that to keep duppies out of your house you must either sprinkle salt or rice grains all around the house; as the duppy must first count each individual grain before entering. By which time the sun will have arisen and they must then return to the spirit world.<sup>[4]</sup>

## **Fisherman Brush and Sandy the Slave Revolutionary:**

These two men have become legends in Tobago. Sandy the Slave Revolutionary led the first major slave revolt in Tobago in 1770. Sandy, from all indications was a perfectly built African slave who despised the cruel slave system, where his people suffered all unimaginable forms of brutality. He organised a number

of meetings with fellow slaves to plan the revolt before leading his fighters in launching an attack on the British at Fort James in Plymouth to capture arms and ammunition. He then moved his fighters to the great house on Mount Irvine's sugar plantation. The revolt spread to different parts of Tobago and forced the British authorities on the island to call in battleships from Grenada to quell the revolt. It is said that Sandy and some of his followers escaped to the Toco/Matelot area of Trinidad from what is now called Sandy Point at Crown Point.

Less is known about Fisherman Brush. He is remembered for claiming to have gone to jail 99 times for stick fighting.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **Gang Gang Sara, the African witch of Golden Lane also known as old "Sarie"**

The legend of Gang Gang Sara has its origins in the latter half of the 18th century. On a stormy night she



Gang Gang Sara, as portrayed at  
Tobago Heritage Festival

was blown from her home in Africa across the sea to Tobago and landed quite safely at the village of Les Coteaux. From there she journeyed to Golden Lane in search of her family who had long ago been transported there. She lived to a great age and is remembered for her wisdom and kindness. She became the trusted housekeeper of "Grandfather Peter", a plantation owner [7], and she became the loving wife of Tom, whom legend says she had known as a child in her native Africa. She lived to a great age and is remembered for her wisdom. After her Tom had died, wishing to return to her native land, she climbed a great silk cotton tree and tried to fly, not knowing that she had lost the art of flight as a result of having eaten salt. To this day the names of Tom and Sara can be seen inscribed upon the head stones of their graves where they have lain side by side for close upon two hundred years. [2]

The legend of old "Sarie" has its origins in the latter half of the 18th century. One that tells how one very stormy night she was blown from her home in Africa across the sea to Tobago, and landed quite safely at the village of Les Coteaux. From there she went in search of her family who had long ago been transported to Golden Lane. married Tom, whom legend says she had known as a child in her native Africa. She lived to a great age and is remembered for her wisdom and kindness. After her Tom had died, wishing to return to her native land, she climbed a great silk cotton tree and tried to fly, not knowing that she had lost the art of flight as a result of having eaten salt.

### **Jacakalantan**

The Jacakalantan is said to be a mysterious light that appears and attracts people, misleading the unwary into desolate areas far away from their intended destinations. And then vanishes. [4]

## **Jumbies (Jumbee/Ghosts/Phantoms or Moko Jumbies)**

Jumbies are mischievous or malevolent spirits or creatures. [4]

A generic name given to ghosts, spirits and anything else that might be wandering about in the ether; The local version of the Bogey-man.[6]

“Jumbee, Jumbie or Mendo is a type of mythological spirit or demon. Jumbies are said to possess humans during ceremonies called jumbie dances, which are accompanied by jumbie drums. Jumbies receive numerous small offerings from Montserratians, such as a few drops of rum or food; they are also the subject of numerous superstitions. The spirit separates from the body three days after death, and so the havoc begins. Jumbies can shape-shift, usually taking the form of a dog, pig or more likely a cat. So heed warnings about playing with random animals. There are many recommended ways to avoid or escape jumbie encounter. Examples: Leaving a pair of shoes outside your door; jumbies don't have feet and would spend the entire night trying on the shoes to get them to fit before moving onto you. When coming home late at night, walk backwards so that the jumbie would be unable to follow you inside.”

When you heard these stories growing up, it provoked all kind of fear in you. You did not want to walk the streets late at night by yourself. I'm sure some even walked in the house backwards to prevent any evil spirits from following you. Douens was by far the scariest of them all for me, imagine getting swept away and never to be seen again. Also God forbid you woke up and saw a red mark on your body you were so scared because you thought it was a “soucouyant” bite, when it could have simply been a mosquito bite. I remembered it had one particular house I was so scared to pass by it because I thought a “buck” lived in it. It's funny how we don't hear or believe in these stories anymore back then you could not tell me they weren't real. Is it because we don't live in the Caribbean anymore or did we just outgrow the stories? [5]

Also known as Phantoms, this spectre stands at the crossroads, with his immense height and long legs wide apart, straddling the road. As a victim approaches him, he slaps his legs shut, squeezing him to death like an anaconda. His only warning is a shrill, a spine-tingling whistle which the Phantome emits prior to his assault. It is difficult to escape an attack from a Phantome as potential victims encounter grave difficulties with outrunning his enormous strides. When he disappears, a thick vapour lingers on the spot where he last stood. [6]

Moko is a derivation of the god "Moko", coming straight out of West African tradition. Moko is a “diviner” in the Congo language. The term "jumbie" or ghost was added by the freed slaves. It was believed that the height of the stilts was associated with the ability to foresee evil faster than ordinary men. The Moko Jumbie was felt to be a protector of the village.



Moko Jumbies from the Keylemanjahro School of Arts and Culture enjoy themselves as they parade through the streets of Port-of-Spain. Photo: Trinidad and Tobago Newsday

This mas is well-known throughout the Caribbean. It is an authentic African masquerade mounted on sticks. The stilt walker plays on stilts 10 to 12 feet high. His costume consists of a brightly coloured skirt or pants, jacket and elaborate hat. He would dance through the streets all day, and collect money from people on the upper floors and balconies. His dance was similar to a jig, and he was often accompanied by a drum, flute and triangle. <sup>[12]</sup> Moko Jumbie is one of the characters portrayed in the annual Carnival.

### **La Diabliesse (Lajables), the Devil Woman**

The devil woman of Trinidad and Tobago folklore, is sometimes personified as an old crone, who steps forth with her cloven hoof from behind a tree on a lonely road, the sound of chains mingling with the rustle of her petticoat. Sometimes she takes the form of a beautiful woman, to lure some unsuspecting passerby to his death or perhaps to madness. Sometimes she appears as a tall, handsome creole woman who with swinging gait and erect stature, passes through a cane or cocoa field at noon and catches the eye of a man who then proceeds to follow her, and, never being able to catch up with her - her feet hardly touch the ground - finds himself lost, bewildered, far from home and he is never himself again.

She has one cloven foot, which she tries to hide under her long skirts.



La Diabliesse by Sadida [14]

She may have a bag of bones, grave yard dirt and shells, she may cast a spell and be perceived as young and desirable, her rich perfume blending with the smell of damp and decaying things. Although she may appear young, she will be dressed in the ancient costume of these islands: a brilliant madras turban, chemise with half sleeves and much embroidery and lace, "zepingue tremblant" (trembling pins of gold), and all the finery of the by-gone days.

If you feel you may encounter a La Diabliesse on your way home, take off all your clothes, turn them inside out and put them on again, and this will surely protect you from a La Diabliesse.<sup>[2]</sup>

Old people talk: If you feel you may encounter a La Diabliesse on your way home, take off all your clothes, turn them inside out and put them on again, and this will surely protect you from a La Diabliesse.<sup>[4]</sup>

La Diabliesse or "Devil Woman" roams at night. She has eyes like burning coals and a face resembling that of a corpse, which she hides under a beautiful wide-brimmed hat and a veil over her face. She is dressed exquisitely in a blouse with puffy sleeves and long, petticoated skirts, which she uses to conceal her cloven foot. She lingers on dark, lonely roads and occasionally turns up at village dances, where she is immediately disliked by the women present. She utterly charms the men and asks one of them to take her home. She leads him deep into the woods and then suddenly she disappears. He follows her, totally under her spell, deep into the woods. [6] Unable to find his way home, the poor fellow stumbles around in the dark wood until he either falls into a ravine or a river to his death or gets attacked by wild hogs." [5] To discourage the attentions of the La Diabliesse, the potential victim should wear his garments inside out. The reasons for this are believed to be a result of her being such a stylish dresser, that she will lose all interest and seek her victim elsewhere. [6]

### **Loup Garou (Lugarhoo, Lagahoo or La Gahou)**

The La Gahou's name comes from the french "Loup Garou", which means werewolf. Like the Soucouyant, he is a shape-changer as well as a blood-sucker, although he is less particular about his source of food, being quite content with the blood of a goat or cow if a human supply is unavailable. This shape-shifting ability is usually passed down through the generations of old Creole families and, again, like the Soucouyant, he takes the form of an old village man - a wizard or witch-doctor who instills both fear and respect, not only for his facility to change his form to that of a vicious animal, but also for his power over nature. He can lay curses and extended protection and from him, charms and bush medicine





are also readily available. Villagers can protect themselves from the La Gahou by carrying crucifixes on their person as well as reciting the special prayer, or L'Oraison, used to ward off evil. A pair of scissors, open in the shape of a cross, placed on top of an open bible at the head of a bed can be used to trap a La Gahou, as it forces him, with a howl of pain, to revert to his human form on the spot. [6]

The "Ligahoo" or "Loup Garou" is the shape changer of Trinidad's folklore. An ability which is handed down in some old creole families, this phenomenon is usually associated with an old magic-dealing man of a district who is both feared and respected, not only for his facility to change his form to that of a vicious animal, but also for his power over nature. He can lay curses and extended protection; from him, charms and bush medicine are also readily available.<sup>[2]</sup>

A Lugarhoo (Lagahoo or Loup Garou) is a person who can change themselves into a half animal from the torso down; and can also alter its size from tiny to very large in an instant. This is done at night as it rattles and drags chains and carries in its hand a whip-like bunch of dried sticks and reeds.

Old people talk: If you want to see a lugarhoo and not be seen by it, take some yampee from the corner of a dog's eye, put it in your eye and peep out of a key hole at 12 midnight.<sup>[4]</sup>

At times the apparition may take the form of a coffin being carried through the streets and the clank of chains is distinctly heard. A single man may bear it on his head, protected by a giant "phantome". If by chance, the coffin and its gruesome attendant were to be used to facilitate the uninterrupted transportation of Bush Rum, this effect would virtually ensure its safe passage. If you want to see a Ligahoo and not be seen by it, take some yampee from the corner of a dog's eye, put it in your eye and peep out of a key hole at 12 midnight.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **Mama Glow or Mama Dlo or Mama Dglo**

"Mama Glow" or "Mama Dlo" or "Mama Dglo" is one of the lesser known personalities of Trinidad and Tobago folklore. A half woman, half snake with long flowing hair which she combs constantly. Her upper torso is a naked, beautiful woman, the lower part coils into a large form of an anaconda snake that is hidden beneath the water. She is sometimes thought to be the lover of Papa Bois, and old hunters tell stories of coming upon them in the 'High Woods'. They also tell of hearing a loud, cracking sound which is said to be the sound made by her tail as she snaps it on the surface of a mountain pool or a still lagoon. Sometimes she takes the form of a beautiful woman 'singing silent songs on still afternoons, sitting at the water's edge in the sunlight, lingering for a golden moment, a flash of green - gone. Nothing but a big Morte Bleu, rising in the sun beams.

Old people talk: "Did you see a fish jump?" "Yes, but it did not go back in again!" If you were to meet Mama Dlo in the forest and wish to escape her, take off your left shoe, turn it upside down and immediately leave the scene, walking backwards until you reach home.<sup>[4]</sup>

She is sometimes thought to be the lover of Papa Bois, and old hunters tell stories of coming upon them in the 'High Woods'. They also tell of hearing a loud, cracking sound which is said to be the sound made by her tail as she snaps it on the surface of a mountain pool or a still lagoon.

Sometimes she takes the form of a beautiful woman 'singing silent songs on still afternoons, sitting at the water's edge in the sunlight, lingering for a golden moment, a flash of green - gone. Nothing but a big Morte Bleu, rising in the sun beams.<sup>[2]</sup>

Mama Dlo, also known as "Mama D'Leau" or "Mama Glo", whose name is derived from the French "Maman de L'eau" which translates roughly into "Mother of the Water", is to the rivers and lakes what Papa Bois is to the woodlands. A hideous creature with the torso of a woman and her lower half being that of an anaconda. Careless or mean-spirited men who commit crimes against nature (such as starting a forest fire, polluting the waters, poaching, or needlessly putting a significant number of animals to death) could be taken by Mama Dlo, who will claim them as one of her husbands for two of their lifetimes. These men are forbidden to leave her realm and can take no other mate but her for the duration of their "marriage". The only hope for a man who finds himself in the presence of Mama Dlo is to remove his left shoe, place it upside-down on the ground and leave the scene with haste, walking backwards the entire way home so as not to turn his back upon her.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Papa Bois



Papa Bois

"Papa Bois" is the most widely known of all our folklore characters. He is the old man of the forest and is known by many names, including "Maître Bois" (master of the woods) and "Daddy Bouchon" (hairy man).

Papa Bois appears in many different forms, sometimes as a deer, or in old ragged clothes, sometimes hairy and though very old, extremely strong and muscular, with cloven hoofs and leaves growing out of his beard. As the guardian of the animals and the custodian of the trees, he is known to sound a cow's horn to warn his friends of the approach of hunters. He doesn't tolerate killing for killing's sake, and the wanton destruction of the forest.

There are many stories of Papa Bois appearing to hunters. Sometimes he turns into a deer that would lead the men into the deep forest and then he would suddenly resume his true shape, to issue a stern warning and then to vanish, leaving the hunters lost or perhaps compelling them to pay a fine of some sort, such as to marry "Mama Dlo".

"Papa Bois", also known as "Daddy Bouchon" or "Maître Bois", is, according to local folklore, the Master of the Woods. Usually he manifests himself as an old man with long hair growing from his short, muscular body; he has a cloven hoof and leaves growing out of his fulsome beard. Papa Bois is the great

protector of the woods, caring for all the animals. As the guardian of the forest, Papa Bois has been known to punish perpetrators of crimes against plants and animals by leading them deep into the forest and leaving them there. Upon meeting Papa Bois, just stay calm and always be utterly courteous by greeting him with "Bonjour, vieux Papa" or "Bon matin, Maître". [3] If you should meet with Papa Bois be very polite. If he pauses to pass the time with you, stay cool, and do not look at his feet.[2]

Papa Bois, also called Maitre Bois, lives in the forest and he is the father or protector of the animals that live there. He is often seen by hunters and other people who live near the forest. He gets animals out of snares and treats sick animals at his dwelling. He is an old man who is very hairy, like an animal and usually is only dressed in a pair of ragged trousers with a bamboo horn hanging from his belt. He can turn himself into the form of a large stag or any other animal as well to be able to observe the hunters unnoticed. He is usually very kind, but can be dangerous when crossed. He might even cast a spell on a bad hunter and turn him into a wild hog.[4]

Offenders beware! Papa Bois has been know to lead hunters deep into the forest, leaving them lost or

### **Silk Cotton Trees**



Silk Cotton Tree at Runnemedede

Silk Cotton trees are regarded with a kind of awed reverence and fear. These are huge trees. It is reported to be very difficult to be able to find someone who will cut down a silk cotton tree as they are said to be the home of spirits and duppies. To cut it down is to free them to roam the earth. [4] To demonstrate how deep these myths can go, "the Works Ministry diverted an entire Ciperro river around a feared Silk Cotton tree.[11]

This is the legendary silk cotton tree, easily among the most feared and notorious symbols of the spirit world in the West Indies.

The reverence attached to these trees goes all the way back to the slave days, a product of ancient belief systems practiced throughout Western Africa, native home to a great many slaves, as well as the silk cotton trees themselves.

According to folklore, the silk cotton is one of the best places to find spirits, duppies, and other supernatural beings. They live inside the trees, which presents a bit of a problem if you're ever trying to build something where these bad boys are found.

Tales of folks refusing to cut down silk cotton trees for fear of releasing the spirits inside are not uncommon across the Caribbean. One of the more notable ones I've heard concerns the construction of the East Coast Highway in Guyana some years ago.

Near the village of Mahaicony, there apparently once grew a rather large silk cotton tree right smack dab in the middle of the route where the new highway was planned. Naturally, highway planners sought to cut it down.

Bad idea.

It's said that engineers who dared try remove the tree were struck dead!

Eventually, the highway was completed. However, at Mahaicony, it was split into two lanes, allowing the silk cotton to continue growing (and providing shelter to its spirits) in peace, in the the middle of the road.

Hmmm... I don't know about you, but if I'm ever lucky enough to be building a house anywhere in the Caribbean and I happen to encounter one of these trees on my property, you can be sure I won't be disturbing it one bit!<sup>[15]</sup>

Sadly, the Silk Cotton Tree at Runnemedede was taken down by a violent storm in 2020. See: [Ancestors weep: lessons from silk cotton tree](#)

## **Soucouyant**

The Soucouyant (Sukuya), also called Old Hag, is a supernatural being who has made a pact with the devil to be able to change herself into all kinds of different forms. At night she sheds her human skin and changes into a ball of fire or any kind of animal and casts spells on people to turn them into animals also, but she has to slip back into that skin before dawn breaks and the cock crows, otherwise she will not be able to get back into it. So it may happen, that, when people suspect that an old woman neighbour of theirs is, in fact, a soucouyant, they may trick her by going to her house at night and destroying the skin she left behind by putting salt on it so that it will shrink and she will not be able to get back into it and thus die. In Trinidad, if somebody walks around with a "hicky" (soukie) on his neck, he may get remarks from his friends like: " Eh, Eh, Soucouyant suck yuh or wha ? "

Old people talk: If you wish to discover who the Soucouyant in your village is empty 100 lbs of rice at the village crossroads where she will be compelled to pick them up, one grain at a time - that is how you'll know the Soucouyant.<sup>[4]</sup>

"A ball of flame, along she came flying without a wind" was how the Soucouyant of Saint D'eau island was described.

She is the old woman who lives alone at the end of the village road, seldom seen, her house always closed up as she sleeps away the day. As evening draws near, she stirs and sheds her old and wrinkled skin, which she deposits into a mortar that she hides carefully away. Now, as a glowing ball of flame, she rises up through the roof and with a shrill cry that sets the village dogs to howling, she flies through the night in search of a victim and she would suck his 'life-blood' from him clean.

As the blessed day dawns, she makes a beeline through the forest for her home, finds the mortar with her wretched skin and proceeds to put it on, - but something's wrong, it burns like fire, it seems to shrink and slide away, "skin, kin, kin, you na no me, you na no me", she sings, crooning softly, pleading to the wrinkled, dreadful thing. "You na no me, old skin." Then, with horror, she realizes the dreadful thing



that has been done: The village boys and men have filled her skin with coarse salt and pepper and will soon come and get her, with a drum of boiling tar, the priest and his silver cross, the church bells - and then, the end. If you wish to discover who the Soucouyant in your village is empty 100 lbs of rice at the village crossroads where she will be compelled to pick them up, one grain at a time - that is how you'll know the Soucouyant.<sup>[2]</sup>

Le Soucouyant by Luise Kimme

“The soucouyant or souciant in Caribbean and specifically

Dominican, Trinidadian and Guadeloupean folklore, and also known as Ole-Higue or Loogaroo in other Caribbean folklore, is a creature equivalent of a vampire that lives by day as an old woman at the end of the village. By night, however, she strips off her wrinkled skin, puts it in a mortar, and flies in the shape of a fireball through the darkness, looking for a victim. Still in the shape of a fireball, the soucouyant enters the home of her victim through the keyhole or any crack or crevice. Soucouyants suck the blood of people from their arms, legs and other soft parts while they sleep. If the soucouyant draws out too much blood from her victim, it is believed that the victim will die and become a soucouyant herself, or else perish entirely, leaving her killer to assume her skin.”<sup>[5]</sup>

Essentially a merging of the witch and vampire, the Soucouyant, or "Old Hag", is usually a lonely, anti-social old woman living on the outskirts of a village. At night, she sheds her skin and transforms into an animal, bird or her customary form - a ball of fire - and flies through the night in search of a victim's blood, which she needs to refresh her spirit for the following day. She has to return to her skin, which usually she hides in bushes, trees or inside an overturned mortar, before the sun rises or she shall be trapped in her transformed state, without the benefit of her powers, until the sun goes down again. Filling the shed skin of a Soucouyant with salt causes it to shrink, thus impeding her return to her skin as it can no longer fit, or inflicts severe pain unto the Soucouyant, consistent with that of salt on an open wound. To expose a Soucouyant, one should pile heaps of rice or sugar about the house or at the village crossroads, where she will be compelled to pick them up one grain at a time, an impossible task to complete before the rise of the sun.<sup>[6]</sup>

These creatures practice witchcraft and are believed to have traded their victims' blood for evil powers with Bazil, the demon who lives in the silk cotton tree. To expose a Soucouyant, legend dictates that

heaps of rice should be placed around the house or at the village crossroad. The Soucouyant will then be obliged to pick up every grain of rice, thus allowing her to be caught. She can be destroyed by placing coarse salt in the mortar which contains her skin, leaving her unable to put it back on.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **The Mayaro Soucouyant**

The old house on Abercromby Street has long ago become a parking lot. But as a boy, I was taken there to meet Madame Juillet. My aunt Ameline had said to me, as we climbed the creaky, dimly lit stairs:

"Be careful what you are thinking. She will read your thoughts."

Have you ever tried to think of nothing?

We met her at the top of the stairs. She had been expecting us. They spoke quickly in Patois. The sitting room was almost bare. A large rocker and old couch, a low bench and a small wooden chest. Mlle. Barth sat on the rocker. Madame Juillet reclined on the couch. My aunt and I sat on the small wooden chest. They were both very old and smelled of vertivert and "Evening in Paris".

Mlle Barth, with Madame Juillet's murmured encouraging, seemed to fall asleep. The other rocked herself gently. I thought of nothing. My aunt had gone there to inquire about Maxim Arneaud with whom she was in love, and had been for years. As it turned out, she married Charles Loshon and as Ameline Loshon lived a very happy life.

During the 1940s and 1950s, these two old ladies of Abercromby Street were well known as mediums, voyagers into the spirit world, who were able to solve love triangles, cure maljoe, and were credited in aiding the authorities in finding the remains of Mikey Cipriani in the high mountains of Trinidad's north coast.

It was while on one of these spiritualistic missions, that Mlle Barth in fact met her death. It was well known that old Mrs. Molay of Mayaro was a soucouyant. She didn't trouble the village, and the village didn't trouble her. The problem arose, if you pardon the expression, with her homeward bound flights. As she grew into her nineties, her sense of direction began to fail. There was, for example, that embarrassing morning when she was discovered naked on top of the water tank in the police station compound. She had put her skin in its protective mortar on the tank. Now her problem was to get down!

The ladies Barth and Juillet were called in to exorcise her soucouyant personality, and that was when the trouble started. Although Mrs. Molay was old and frail, the soucouyant was strong. In the end, Mlle. Barth was savaged and subsequently died. She had been bitten and sucked by the creature in the sole of her foot.

It was said, long ago, that certain French families brought the vampire tradition to Trinidad. These European vampires intermingled with their enslaved African counterparts, and out of this the soucouyant emerged. The soucouyant makes a pact with the devil, and as such can assume any form. Her first undertaking is to go to a cemetery and dig up a freshly buried corpse and cut out the liver. From this, an oil is made. When this oil is rubbed all over, she can then slip out of her skin. The skin is kept in a mortar or hollowed-out trunk of a tree, used to parch coffee or ferment cocoa beans.

The soucouyant of St. Eau Island off the north coast, is described as a "ball of flame, along she came, flying without a wind". One Monsieur Didier had this to relate:

"One night I was fishing. Suddenly, I saw a globe of fire which appeared far away at the very extremity of the beach where I was and which approached me slowly. I remained absolutely quiet. The globe of fire passed by a few steps away from me, some meters in the air. In the middle of this globe, I saw the face of a woman whom I recognised as a negress from the neighbouring village. When it had passed by, I asked my comrades if they had seen anything. They said they had seen the ball of fire and the face of the woman which it surrounded."

Old people in Paramin could tell you about a soucouyant called Désirée, who on a bet flew to London to steal one of Queen Victoria's gold spoons. However, on her way back with the spoon she "catch a malcadie" over Dent Ma Teteron in the First Bocas, and the spoon fell from her. The large gold spoon to this day lies on that rock in the middle of the First Bocas.

A soucouyant doesn't always suck you. She could pinch you too, or cuff you, and in the morning you would have large black and blues that turn a little greenish. After a while, you could begin to feel bad, weak, thin, frail, mager. By that time, your eye sockets are sinking in your head, and you are only staring all the time. Then, you die.

Sometimes, she is a bat. Sometimes, a hog. There was a soucouyant who used to live at the top of Henry Street. She caused a lot of problems with people coming home late. Ripper Qui Tang's father had a shop. He emptied a 100 lb bag of rice in front of Rosary Church. The next morning, they saw three big hogs eating the rice. There was another soucouyant who used to live under the washhouse bridge, near to Sony parlour. She was bad. She used to work the mortuary.

Soucouyants come and look for people whose hands are dirty. They can pass through a keyhole or under the crack in the door. The soucouyant would live on the edge of the village. Her old house was surrounded by tall forest trees. As night came, she would shed her skin to rise as a ball of flame and go streaking through the sky. By morning, she would drop through the mists and set the dogs to howling, and as a green and glowing vapour enter her old room.

There, before the mortar, she would sing: "Skin, skin, skin, come to me!" - The skin would jump and twinge and wrinkle to her voice. In a leap, it would drop upon her. "leeee!" she shrieked, and flung away her skin that lay upon the ground, a wretched thing. "Skin, skin, skin, you na no me, you na no me old skin." But a dreadful thing had happened. Coarse salt had been put upon her skin. In the distance, she could hear the tinkle of the bell. Oh, dreadful thing. The priests, the men of the village, would find her. She could smell the boiling pitch into which they would throw her. Her end would come at last, to rest in peace. She was old - she had lived in Maraval for 132 years.

A note on witch tales:

The "old woman of the village" is a traditional evil character in the folklore of many cultures. Where does it come from? A socio-historical explanation may be ventured here.

Women naturally live longer than men, and more often than not a woman lived to great age whereas her husband would die younger, in war, because of sickness or through an accident. Old people were more often than not women, not men.

Furthermore, in traditional cultures, women did not enjoy the same rights as men. There are many accounts of widows being total outcasts in village life - the people of the village coveted her land and her possessions for themselves, especially if the woman had no sons of her own to protect her.

So, the ugly, wrinkled and lonesome old woman was a burden to village life, just another mouth to feed. Because she was a woman, nobody was interested in her personal life experience and wisdom. When she had no protectors, people invented witch stories around her, and in the end killed her, sharing her possessions, her land, her house and her livestock amongst themselves.

So take the soucouyant story with a grain of - coarse - salt!<sup>[2]</sup>

### **Mermaids and Fairmaids (Tobago Folklore)**

There be mermaids here and Leviathan, great denizens of the deep. Amongst the swirling currents and white capped blue-green waters, just where the Caribbean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean, close by St. Giles and near to Misty Marble Island, past Anse Gouleme and Anse Brisant, towards the Bird of Paradise Island and down the coast past Speyside to Fat Hog Bay, it is remembered from long ago that this was where the mermaids came to play.

These Fairmaids, river spirits, were drawn by Stuart Hahn for Paria Publishing.

Tobago mermaids are male and live in the deep, deep sea. They mate with the fairy maids of the rivers and the secret mountain pools. Riding upon the crest of waves, they are handsome men like kings of old or warriors of long ago, beplumed and richly garbed. They may grant a wish, transform mediocrity into genius and confer wealth and power.

Sometimes the water people seek relationships with mortals. Some men are particularly attractive to the fairy maids, especially men with smooth skin.





Fairymaids are said to be beautiful with long lush hair and one tiny foot in the shape of a deer's hoof, she may use her power to "turn" a man's head. She may steal his shadow and leave him quite demented. In which case, accompanied by friends and family and with the help of a "workman", he must go to the river and address the water pleading for the restoration of his lost shadow. This done, he must leave the water's edge and not look back.

To discontinue a relationship with a fairy queen, offerings of two pairs of shoes must be made. The first must be burnt on the beach, the fairymaid will then rise out of the water and ask if she is to be paid for past services. The answer must be "nothing but this pair of shoes". The second must then be thrown into the waves.<sup>[2]</sup>

Sometimes the water people seek relationships with mortals. Some men are particularly attractive to the fairy maids, especially men with smooth skin.

Fairymaids may be found in caves behind waterfalls or beneath certain bridges where the river runs deep and swift. In days gone by, they were seen near certain water wheels.(Mermaids and Fairymaids - the Water Gods and Goddesses of Tobago by H.B. Meikle, Caribbean Quarterly 5, 1957)<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Wawa Douglas**

A Tobago folklore legend is 'believed to possess supernatural powers'<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Witchdoctors**

Witchdoctors, or as they are known in Trinidad, Obeah men, are said to abound. It is said that you can visit one to have any manner of spell performed to grant your desires. It is thought that curses are powerful and can be cast by anyone. Even your neighbour may put the evil eye or MalYeux(Maljo) on you. Any discomfort, hardship or illness may be attributed to this. It can supposedly be warded off by

placing blue bottles around your property and by wearing bracelets or anklets made of Jumbie beads.(a little black and red bead found growing on certain bushes.)<sup>[4]</sup>

#### Further Reading:

Dictionary of the English/Creole of Trinidad & Tobago: On Historical Principles By Lise Winer, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009

Folklore and Legends of Trinidad and Tobago by Gérard A. Besson, © Paria Publishing Company Limited, 2001

Legends: True Stories and Old Sayings from Trinidad and Tobago by Carlton Robert Ottley, 1962

- - - -

#### References:

[1] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean\\_folklore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean_folklore)

[2] <http://www.triniview.com>

[3] From map of Tobago by Gérard Besson and drawn by Peter Shim, © Paria Publishing Company Limited, 2001. Found at: <http://pariapublishing.com/the-publisher/>

[4] Page maintained by Roger James [www.tntisland.com](http://www.tntisland.com) Copyright © 1996-2014 Last Revised: 12/01/2014

[5] <http://caribism.wordpress.com/2011/01/21/souccouant-la-diabliesse-buck-and-jumbee-caribbean-folklore-at-its-best/>

[6] <http://www.africaspeaks.com/reasoning/index.php?topic=2230.0>

[7] Tobago Legends and West Indian Folklore, C. Ottley, 1950.

[8] <http://www.simplytrinicooking.com/2008/08/folklore-of-trinidad-tobago.html> (Posted by Felix)

[9] [caribbeannewsnow.com](http://caribbeannewsnow.com), Jan 13, 2014

[10] Gumbo Glissé: A night-time thief who strips off his clothes and puts grease or oil all over his body in order to prevent anyone from catching and holding him. Greasy Burglar. Two men described as mechanics were arrested for going about exhibiting "Gombo Glissé in a closed box and charging a few cents to anyone who looked in the box. One of the men was in the box and it was alleged that those who looked in the box witnessed a very indecent spectacle. The case was dismissed for want of evidence to identify the prisoners. (POSG 13 Mar, 1886:4) [Dictionary of the English/Creole of Trinidad & Tobago: On Historical Principles By Lise Winer]

[11] A trip to the obeahman, Trinidad Express, February 6, 2011, found at:

[http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/A\\_trip\\_to\\_the\\_obeahman-115419624.html](http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/A_trip_to_the_obeahman-115419624.html)

[12] <http://www.nalis.gov.tt/Research/SubjectGuide/Carnival/tabid/105/Default.aspx?PageContentID=81>

[13] images: <http://www.tobagohotel tourism.com/news/>

<http://www.socawarriors.net/forum/index.php?topic=21794.0;nowap> <http://guides.wikinut.com/Folklore-in-Trinidad-and-Tobago/2.mywmu/>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/marshaoz/trinidad-and-tobago-folklore/>

[14] <http://sadida25.deviantart.com/art/La-Diabliesse-177535584>

[15] <http://www.uncommoncaribbean.com/2013/10/23/haunted-caribbean-beware-the-mystical-silk-cotton-tree/>

see also: <http://www.islandmix.com/backchat/f6/caribbean-folklores-i-loved-hearing-these-stories-234841/>

- - - -

### **A trip to the obeahman by Carolyn Kissoon**

It's time to admit it. Most of us believe in the monster under the bed.

Not some bug-eyed hairy thing with banana-sized teeth, but something that's in the mind's eye, that we all see differently.

And it's all pervading—the politicians consulting spiritual advisers to choose the election date or cast out bad from the official residence or to order that the weather-vane snake be removed from the Red House and replaced with a dove, to the farmer with his blue "blight" bottle among the crop and a bloodletting sacrifice to ensure a good harvest.

The Works Ministry diverting an entire Ciperio river around a feared Silk Cotton tree.

The parents believe their belly-aching child got "bad eye" because some jealous person "put something on them".

The wife of a politician visiting a shaman in Marabella (only last week) hoping for the spell that could defeat his enemies.

Don't point at the cemetery. Don't look back after the symbolic "feeding" of the dead at the prayer service.

Walk backwards through the door after attending the funeral because you may invite the dead back home. Or worse, invite one of the virtual X-men army of local supernatural things—Socouyant, La Diablesse, Papa Bois, Douen, Lagahoo, Gumbo Glisse.

For to be possessed by one of these other worldly creatures is to be forced to have to visit an equally scary being with the power to undo the evil or make it worse—The Obeahman (or woman).

Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall they are not. But the sorcery—magic both good and bad—for which they are credited— could have come from the pages of the Harry Potter books.

Not that you will find any local obeahman living in anything resembling a castle, but judging from the number of classified advertisements in the newspapers, (curiously most appear in the Express) the practitioners of the darks arts are doing good business. Lovers need uniting? Call Madame Theresa.

Want to pass that exam? Prof Ali for immediate results.

Sickness? Court cases? Casting out evil spirits?—There is a St Flemin Healing School.

Of course, there is an origin to all of this. The old religion of the Africans brought to the West Indies in the hearts and minds of slaves and kept alive, in different forms, in Jamaica and Guyana and Haiti and elsewhere.

In Trinidad, it was famed Obeahman Papa Neza (Samuel Ebenezer Elliot (1901-1969) who made witchcraft feared and Moruga its home to this day.

Born of African American descent, he attended the village primary school to seventh standard. His forefathers came to Moruga as free slaves from America.

They arrived in Trinidad in 1812 as "merikins" immigrants who fought as soldiers on the side of the British during the war of American Independence.

Papa Neza was 32-years-old when his alleged powers were revealed.

He had four children - two boys and two girls - and every year he would host four feasts—June, August, September and from Old Years' to New Years'. It is said that people travelled from as far as Venezuela to attend the St Michael's feast (St Michael was known for driving out evil spirits) which was celebrated in September.

Papa Neza and his many followers would sacrifice goats, fowl and someone might bring a cow. The meat would then be cooked and distributed to the villagers.

Many feared the man, who could get a woman married and pregnant in days. But sometimes hundreds would line the street outside his home to get a dose of his infamous bush medicine.

And Papa Neza, they say, never took money as payment.

Whatever money was left behind by "a satisfied client" was used to buy things for the next feast.

Papa Neza fell ill and had one of his legs amputated. He died at the San Fernando General Hospital on January 8, 1969. He was buried at the Third Company Baptist Church cemetery in Lengua.

Long after his death historians discovered a turine (a large jar for mixing concoctions), morocoy shell, flambeaux, various sizes of clay bottles, a large black Bible, a cornmill and several items that can be found in an alchemist shop.

There are hundreds of people, men and women, who claim to have the "gift". A good 70 per cent are bogus, say obeah experts.

His legacy lives large—the big towns nearest Moruga, Princes Town and Rio Claro both have pharmacies that contain the usual drugs, but also a shelf upon which all manner of powder and grains and liquids can be found.

Source: [http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/A\\_trip\\_to\\_the\\_obeahman-115419624.html](http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/A_trip_to_the_obeahman-115419624.html)

-----

## **Tobago Folklore**

Tobago folklore relates to mythical beings, events and seemingly common things that constitute the traditional culture of our people. Though being predominantly African influenced it was also influenced by the French and other nations who once ruled the island.

Traditional lore, most often handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth or via performances using music, dance and drama, is generally acknowledged as declining in importance, however there are still areas where superstitions play a very important part of one's daily life. Folklore is also communicated between the generations via art, rituals, crafts, cookery and games. In this way the expression of beliefs becomes ingrained in the artistic expressions of the people.

There are also traditional practices that add relief with regard to the supernatural phenomena like medicine, witchcraft and predictions. Through exchanges of various languages they have myths related to characters like Congo Brown, Congo Ellis, Congo Betsy, Soucouyant and Fairy maids.

Folktales are also based on hunting experiences, animal stories, devil stories or ghost stories. Riddles and proverbs play an important role in the development of folklore often being used to support the moral of the lore.

Traditional characters, practices and beliefs include jumbies (demons that can either be mild or very malignant), old hag, La Diabliesse, maljo (bad eye, or evil eye), devil-dealing, obeah and witchcraft.

The legendary Papa Bois, the father of the forest, casts his protective eye on all the animals of the forest. Hunters who experience misfortune while in the forest are often regarded as having felt the wrath of Papa Bois, who reputedly turns into a deer in some accounts, to lead hunters to their peril. Hunters found dead at the bottom of crevasses are often attributed to this myth.

The forest is also home to a number of other supernatural beings such as the Jack O'Lantern, the male equivalent of the La Diabliesse. The Jack O'Lantern entices susceptible women away from the safety of their surroundings to certain doom.

Superstitions were often characterized and enhanced by predictions. For example, if one heard a howling dog or saw the 'dead bird' passing certain dark predictions were attached to these happenings.

Customs practiced include 'Wakes' for the dead, a pre-wedding dance for the bridegroom, annual reel dances, memorials for the dead and thanksgiving or special ceremonies for other diverse occasions.

All in all superstitions, beliefs and folklore enabled our people pioneering a new existence in a new land to come to terms with the harsh reality of life. Many of these so called superstitions were direct transplants from their former societies and as such for present day peoples whose consciousness is based on Judaeo-Christian ideals they may seem to be a bit mysterious.

#### Tobago Folklore: Superstitions in Agriculture

The sociologist will tell you that "superstitions are beliefs which are handed down from generation to generation" and therefore they are traditions which will always influence people's behavior.

Listed are some of the superstitions which guide the agriculturists of Tobago:-

When there is a funeral in the village you must not go into your garden to plant.

Yams, especially lbo yams, are very sensitive plants and correspondingly require special treatment:

Both men and women must bathe well before entering a yam plot.

Women who are flowering (having their monthly periods) must never enter a yam plot while that condition exists.

When attending to all yam plots it is advisable to abstain from sexual intercourse as long as that exercise is in progress

Never sell or give away your planting material before you have completed your own planting.

Sweet potatoes should not be planted during the month of August because the tubers produce close to the surface regardless of soil conditions and depth of planting. Many tubers will emerge from the soil, dry-up and spoil before maturity.

If two coconut seedlings are planted the final height can be determined at planting. A seedling that is planted while the planter is seated and during the full and last quarter moon phases will be considerably shorter at fruiting than another plant which was planted with the planter standing and during the new moon and first quarter moon phases.

Farmers must never plant corn on a hungry belly. They must always plant on a full stomach.

Farmers should never employ people with whom there was never an association previously. Persons who work in your garden must be productive, people whose reputations are known to keep out barren unproductive influences.

For year round fruiting orchards, plants should be planted on either St. John's Day or Corpus Christi.

Plant chives deep, one-half day before the full moon to obtain full powerful chives.

French thyme and chive are very sensitive plants. The person who does the actual planting must also do the caring and harvesting. Should another person enter your plot it is possible that those plants could wither in seven (7) days.

Gravel Fish is a poisonous fish. Should this fish be buried in your garden it will prevent any crop from thriving there.

Some individuals, because of the planet under which they are governed, when they take female livestock to be mated by the male, they tend to influence the sex of the offspring. This explains why some farmers allow their female animals (cows, ewes, does, sows) to skip a "heat period" if the member of the family or the villager who will influence the desired result is absent.

Tobago Folklore: Lore of The Sea

Tobago has been fortunate in that it has rich forestry, agricultural and marine resources. Many of Tobago's villages, and even the principal town Scarborough, are located very close to the sea Castara, Charlotteville, Speyside, to name a few.

Many Tobagonians have an intimate relationship with the sea, often earning their living by fishing. The sea is therefore both the work place and the playground, it is therefore not surprising that the lore of the sea occupies a significant place in the lives of citizens.

Over the years, there has evolved among the fisherfolk, numerous superstitions. These vary in some respects from beach to beach. Many of these superstitions are based on things which may bring either good or bad luck to the fishermen's fishing activities. An attempt will be made to give a general overview of these piscatory superstitions, and some of the reasons for these beliefs. Some of the beliefs have no explanations. The superstitions beliefs below are among the common ones encountered.

A fisherman should not wash his hands with soap before going to sea. It is thought that by washing his hands his luck would be washed away.

A fisherman should not play with animals such as goats, sheep, pigs, dogs, donkeys, or cows before going to sea. Doing this is supposed to cause the fisherman ill luck during his fishing trip.

Intercourse before going to sea is supposed to bring bad luck.

Touching chive before going to sea is held to bring bad luck.

Some fishermen believe that spraying their boats with oils and ointments will bring them good luck when they go to sea.

Other fishermen believe in using bushes and lime to 'bathe' their boats and their bodies. This is supposed to remove any bad luck attached to their boats or their persons.

Some fishermen carry bushes and lime hidden away in their boat. This is supposed to keep away bad luck.

Many fishermen believe that one's luck for the day depends on the person you first see when you awake. If that person is industrious you are supposed to be lucky catching fish that day. If the person is lazy then your luck will not be good.

Among fishermen one of the worst pieces of bad luck is for a person to go fishing with his clothes put on "wrong-side" out.

One belief is that bad luck can be prevented from entering a fisherman's boat if he spins around on shore before entering his boat when going on a fishing trip.

It is said to be a bad thing to whistle while fishing at sea. Many fishermen claim when this happens the sea becomes very rough.

If the fisherman has a bailer in his boat turned down, it is said, that he will not catch fish. Turning down the bailer is equated to "covering his luck"

Straddling the seat of a fishing boat is also supposed to inhibit a fisherman's luck.

When banking it is considered bad luck for a fisherman to sit on his banking lines. It has been suggested that he is suppressing his luck by sitting on the lines

Some fishermen feel that on a Friday morning, three (3) days after the Full Moon is the best time for them to be lucky in catching fish. They feel quite strongly that fish 'beat' according to the moon.

Cursing at sea is also supposed to bring bad luck to fishermen.

Besides the above beliefs there are other superstitions existing around fishing beaches in Tobago. In Castara, some seine fishermen talk about cooking freshly caught fish on the beach where the fish is caught. Banana branches are spread on the bunt of the seine and the cooked fish is placed on the leaves. The fishermen then eat with their bare hands and also give food to any dogs which come around. The belief is that the dogs may contain the spirits of their ancestors. It is also thought that eating food on the beach together with any spirits on the beach, would give them continued good luck in fishing.

Seine fishermen are very strong in their beliefs that there are persons who can "tie" their boats and seine. When a boat and seine are "tied" it is not possible for the boat or seine to catch any fish. The only way for these fishermen to catch any fish is to take action to have their boats "untied". In the same way that your boat or seine can be "tied", it is believed that a person could be "put" to drift away at sea and be lost forever.

There is a superstition in Plymouth that there is a cock with fire in its head on Courland beach. The cock is said to be the spirit of old soldiers who were killed and buried along with treasure. These spirits are supposed to be guarding the buried treasures.

Again, in Castara there is the belief that when the sea smells rank (off colour smell, usually described as being a pungent or sharp smell) it is bad to say so. It was explained that the sea is the 'mother' and the river is the 'father' therefore any comments on the rank smell of the sea would be bad luck for the fishermen unfortunate enough to have spoken of the rank smell.

During that preparation of this paper it was found that many of the younger fishermen were unaware of many of the previously mentioned superstitious beliefs of fishermen. Much of the information gathered was obtained from old fishermen. As one young fisherman put it, "if you are lucky, you are lucky."

source: [http://www.discover-tt.net/travel\\_and\\_tourism/tobago\\_folklore.html](http://www.discover-tt.net/travel_and_tourism/tobago_folklore.html)

- - - -

### **Soca Warriors Discussion Forum > General > General Discussion:**

TNT Superstitions. ... what has replaced them?

Note: This is a transcription of an actual discussion that took place on the Soca Warriors forum in 2006, here is the [original discussion](#):

Discussion has been edited to make it easier to read.

AB.Trini:

There was a time when folktales, sayings and stories from parents, grandparents or older relatives for that fact was so inherent to our thinking, that the mere knowledge of these would control our behaviour and guide our actions.



Each of the following tales, characters were very much part of my belief system. Growing up coming home at nights from boy scouts in Sando, was a sprint over a particular bridge. It was said that a man used to change forms under that bridge. Going to visit relatives in Moruga in the days before electricity; when you had candles and lamp; you eh play it had stories about all kinds of jumbies nah? look ah tell you dem days the innocence of youth was controlled by intense obedience to the elders. No guns; no gangs; no fear of people; your house was in lockdown mode. Lawd what has replaced superstitions in our society today?

Why is it that today's generation seems oblivious to these tales or beliefs? Why are these tales and sayings no longer apparent today as it was before? What are your personal stories or associations with these sayings, tales, or superstitions?

### Superstitions

Superstitions and Folklore Characters in Trinidad & Tobago will be similar to other Caribbean countries with slight variations in name of the character.

Don't put goat mout' on something - meaning don't speak of anything negative that has not happened as yet, because it might come true.

If done by a barber/hairdresser with straight hair - the child's hair will end up being straight (considered to be "good" hair) - If done by one with "hard" hair (curly hair) - considered to be "bad" hair, the child's hair will turn out curly.

When pregnant - drinking a lot of chocolate milk will make the baby dark skinned - drinking milk instead, will make the baby looking fair.

Whatever food the mother is craving at a given moment, she should be given it immediately, otherwise the baby will have a mark on his/her body which will resemble the food.

Don't bathe in the sea on Good Friday - you will turn into a fish.

If you put your handbag on the floor/ground you will never have money.

If your second toe is bigger than your big toe then you are going to beat or rule your husband.

When you comb your hair and what is left on the comb is thrown outside, if a bird gets it and makes a nest, then you will get a headache.

- submitted by Claudette Matthews

Never take out the trash after 6, your taking the wealth out of your house.

Never give someone a lamp that you have used, it brings bad luck.

Don't sew on yourself (like a button), it makes people talk bad of you.

Do not sweep over someone's feet, they will never marry.

Do not cut your hair on odd days, like Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, same for trimming your nails, this is also leading the way for bad luck.

Don't cross over someone, especially if it is a female over a male or vice versa, it is possible for them to take your illnesses, or misfortunes that way.

Always put a hot pepper in food that will be travelling at night, that way you ward off the spirits from entering your home.

Always turn your back to the inside of the house when opening the door at night, that way the spirits that have followed you home, will see your face and will not enter.

- submitted by Helen Houle

It is believed that if anyone eats the Cascadoux fish, regardless of where they may move in the world they will return to Trinidad to end their days.

It is also believed that to bury the navel string of a child at the foot of a prolific fruit tree, this will ensure the fertility of the child as an adult.

Silk Cotton trees are regarded with a kind of awed reverence and fear. These are huge trees. It is reported to be very difficult to be able to find someone who will cut down a silk cotton tree as they are said to be the home of spirits and duppies. To cut it down is to free them to roam the earth.

Horse whip snakes are said to whip pregnant woman. 24 hour lizards (ordinary garden lizards) are said to stick to your skin for 24 hours if you come into contact with one.

New Year folklore:

According to folklore, events that occur on this day set a pattern of what will occur for the rest of the year.

Many people make resolutions on the first day of the year. They attend church service on Old Year's night and look forward to a holy passage therefore.

Some people say the weather pattern for the year is determined by the early hours of New Year's Day. Others believe that the first 12 days in January determine the weather patterns for the rest of the year.

- courtesy of Caldeo Sookram, Trinidad Express Saturday, January 1st 2005

New Year superstitions:

According to tradition the entire house should be cleaned before New Year's Day and all brooms, brushes, dusters, dust pans and other cleaning material put away.

Sweeping should not be done on New Year's Day for fear that good fortune be swept away.

if you sweep dirt over the threshold, you'll sweep one family member away.

To sweep the dust of your house by the front entrance is to sweep away good fortune.

The old people say that if you have a visitor who is reluctant to leave when it's time for him to leave, then you turn a broom upside down and place it in a corner of the house. In that way the visitor will take his immediate exit.

On the stroke of midnight it's traditional to leave doors and windows open to allow the Old Year to go out.

There is another tradition that whatever you do on New Year's Day, there will be a continuity on that action throughout the year. ex. If you cry on New Year's Day then you'll cry for the rest of the year. If you drink rum, then know what to expect .

Red clothing is preferred during the festive season since red is considered a happy colour and is sure to attract for the wearer a brighter future. New clothes should be worn for it means receiving more new garments during the year.

For the New Year it is important for one to refrain from using foul language and speaking in negative terms. Ghost stories are taboo and conversations on death should be avoided.

It is important to choose the most auspicious time to visit others on New Year's Day. The first person one meets and the first words heard are significant as to what the fortunes could be for the rest of the year.

It is considered unlucky to greet anyone in their bedroom, even the sick should get dressed and made to sit in the living room.

The New Year must not be met with an empty cupboard, for that's the way things will be throughout the year.

Keep plenty of money in a wallet to guarantee a prosperous year.

The New Year also should not begin with unpaid bills and personal debts should be taken care of.

There is a common tradition that eating of black-eye peas on New Year's Day will attract good luck and money in particular. So when dining make sure black-eye peas are on the menu.

Make sure you do some work on the first day of the year. It is not prudent to do laundry on the first day of the year for a member of the family could be washed away (die).

Avoid breaking items on New Year's Day since "wreckage" might follow you.

Making loud noises, as is customary in this country, at midnight is not only a celebration; it's a means of scaring away evil spirits, according to folklore.

- courtesy of Caldeo Sookram, Trinidad Express Saturday, January 1st 2005

AB.Trini:

Soucouyant ( also known in Jamaica as Ol' Higue )

This is our vampire. She is generally an old woman who travels by night in a ball of fire, leaving her skin behind her, to suck the blood of her sleeping victims. You can tell you've been bitten by a soucouyant if you see two little bite marks side by side, anywhere on your body in the morning. Of course it could just have been two mosquitoes biting you in tandem. And doing so again the next night. Believe what you wish. I am not sure how one becomes a soucouyant, but I do remember tales of a midnight ritual around a silk cotton tree that scared the living daylights out of me when I was little.

#### Ways to kill a Soucouyant

Traditionally, you must throw a handful of salt or rice or other small grains by your door or window. That way she won't be able to leave until she has counted every last grain. Hopefully, you can keep there until the sun comes up and she's caught without her skin.

Or you can beat her with a big stick when you encounter the ball of fire. The next day the bruised and battered old lady down the road is revealed as the local soucouyant.

Of course if you already know who she is, the task is simpler. After she leaves her house on her nightly outings, you take her skin and rub the inside liberally with salt and pepper. Then when she returns and dons her skin, she'll die writhing in agony.

---

Ah remember meh grandfather one day telling meh mother that he know who the soucouyant was in the village and that he go say he prays and put the salt by the window and meh mother eh go have no strange marks on she body again. Look nah yuh know when the prophecy come true ah start looking at everybody in that village differently yes.

#### AB.Trini:

La Diablesse ( la jah-bless ) from the French - female devil

She roams the night, waiting to lead men astray. She appears in all white with a long flowing dress to hide her cloven foot or hoof (the other foot is perfectly normal). Beware any man who encounters this "beautiful" lady on a lonely night. She spells grave trouble for him. People have been found the next morning, usually naked in a graveyard or up some thorny tree, dead.

Some say she wears a big white hat, you know the kind. Perhaps it covers part of her face lending to the mystery that makes the male half of our species think she's worth following to who knows where. I wouldn't be surprised.

#### Papa Bois

As his name implies, he is the father or protector of the forest and its inhabitants. While more recent folk tales depict him as a fairly benevolent figure, the old stories reveal a being whose vengeance is a thing to be dreaded by hunters. He is sometimes described as a faun-like creature, sometimes as a man, but he roams the forests of Trinidad and Tobago in the form of a large stag (yes, for all who wondered, there are deer on this island that are native to our forests). He protects those in his care from wanton

destruction and has been known to take forceful steps to evict, harm, perhaps kill a hunter who had incurred his wrath.

Douen

Douens are supposed to be the evil spirits of children who died before they were baptised. They trap children and lead them away from safety, sometimes to their deaths. They look like ordinary children, but wear hats that cover their faces and are barefoot. Their feet are turned backwards. Children who play with douens, thinking perhaps that they are ordinary children, are gradually lead further and further astray and may be found the next morning in a precarious position, if at all...

To believe that douens are the "lost" souls of children who died before they were baptised, you must believe that people need to be baptised or christened to save their souls. If you, like me, believe that all children are inherently innocent in this sense, then the spirit known in Trinidad and Tobago as the Douen may be something even more evil

Cascadura ( or "Cascadoo" )

"Those who eat the cascadura will,  
the native legend says,  
wheresoever they may wander  
end in Trinidad their days."\*

Samuel Selvon,"Johnson and the Cascadura"

AB.Trini:

wha happen allyuh fraid 'jumbie' talk?

fari:

hm, i know most of those u out there. my wife is puerto rican and on old year's night she does throw a bucket of water over her shoulder i believe, i guess to wash away all the bad luck. i must ask her again exactly what it means.

Qmire:

Doh let yah children jump tru yah window ,they go turn to thifs.

Never use out all your sugar salt or any other food container go totally empty.or wallet

When you hear somebody calling your name after midnight ,never go out or let them in until the forth call,it could be spirit.

Don't comb your hair in the nite ,it is fall out.

Don pick fruit in the nite ,the tree sleeping ,atleast shake it first ;D

Don swim in ocean late at nite ,the big fishes come een <from daddy>

Don hit somebody hard on the soul of there feet ,when sleeping it could kill them.

from meh old mammy :beermug:

Touches:

It is because people become "modernised"

TT now is not like TT of old with plenty bush, dark areas, country ting etc.

Also people just doe pass on the stories because they too busy with life and other things...telling stories is not part of the entertainment at night.

People have cable, internet computer and children these days does tell you straight up if yuh talking shit and dey doe believe yuh.

I cant say that we don't have books and other things on this subject.....because it is available.

But Harry Potter, Lord of the RIngs and other mainstream movies have replaced folklore amongst children today.

Its a generational thing.....honestly none of my friends who have children read or talk to them about douen, papbois, soucouyant etc.

These days they have too much Danger in society to have your child frighten at something else.

Jah Gol:

My mother used to read Anasi stories and stories by Paul Keens Douglas to us. I used to enjoy the imagery and comedy of it all but always thought that superstitions were complete an utter non-sense. All the talk about duen and soucouyant was rumshop/highman/bushman talk. I would rebuke anybody, young or old who would try to convince me of their existence or try to tell me some jackass reason for doing something weird.

In school I had a partna from Siparia was telling me that he saw a man at the top of tree with some thin thin branches looking down at him an then man just disappear.

He was always smoking and drinking so I could have easily shut him down.

But having a conversation with my Grandmother and Grandaunt both of whom spent the majority of their lives in the Biche/Rio Claro area, changed my perspective a bit. My grandmother who is totally coherent and has very vivid memory swore to me that in her youth she had seen a man turn into a cow. I didn't know how to respond. She told me that these people dealt in obeah and we involved with all kinds of spirits.

I still don't belive in soucouyant and duen and those things but I think witchcraft is real. The older folks just took it more seriously.

Qmire:

Jah gol ah beleive that the ting your gran was talking about is ah lagahoo ,that is a shapeshift person that creature is known tru out the world .Soucouyant is real jed ,i 've seen the marks ,I've seen the lady with she big lips and the cotton tree she plant opposite she house .Me ein't know about duen but ah use to come home before 12 noon if ah playing in the old woods back my me.

TriniCana:

Gosh all dem August err I mean summer vacations in La Lune, Moruga and all dem ting runnin in dey forest.

Jah seriously man dem ting exist.

I dey one Cana run from ah oman with ah hoff already...well me and meh brudda

ah give allyuh dat story already.

Numerous times I stand up and sleep in dey night cause ah dem stories.

When ah reach home ah go give allyuh another story :devil:

Organic:

yuh must not bath in de beach on ash wensday yuh go turn fish! i think dais hwo it does go

pecan:

i tink good friday too

pecan:

Jah Gol ... listen to the "well versed in lore" Sista Cana. She know wat she talking bout. I from Moruga too and ah tell yuh, soucouyant bite meh sista good. Ah tell, dem real like.. like ... like ...TI and TT like to debate.

TriniCana:

Alberta jus to answer ya question. MTV did it all

well ah kinda feelin odd saying dis one but.... :-\

\*When ya seeing your monthlys doh climb any tree, ya go umm rotten dey tree and fruits.

\*After ya come home from ah funeral...leave ya shoes by dey front door and hang ya clothes outside dey house.

\*When ya coming home from wake, walk in ya house backwards so dey deceased spirit ain' go come in ya house.

pecan ah forget to tell ya this.....Teddy and Vena Ocho. If dem names doh ring any bells den you ain't know people in Lu Lune. Dem is dey Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip ah Lu Lune Moruga.

Jah Gol:

I've heard endless stories. I like to give sober people the benefit of the doubt. The thing is I hate the bush so much I really don't want to spend a night in any of those villages where they're seen. I really can't stand mosquitoes biting me and the sound of frogs making love in the night.

Anyway as I said I think witchcraft is real and some of these strange things really do occur. But it still kinda hard for me to believe.

TriniCana:

Jah ya see witchcraft/obeah/voodoo -call it whatever ya want, but at dey end of dey day which ever word dem nasty people go use, somebody ass in grass by dey next morning.

Just go in any cemetary anytime after 7 pm. Who head tie up with white veil digging up whoever grave and tieffin dey skull or drinkin rum from it ....Dey do some seemedemee and den next ting ya know some body in dey village have 3 legs or dead jus so.

I have only seen in meh lifetime La Diabliesse, dey old lady and she hoof. My sister well she say she saw ah ball ah fire already.

My fadda born and raised in Lu Lune seen everything, maybe datz why I come out so blasted bad and whaless :-\ (no comment)

I don't know if you all remember around the southern side of Trinidad about 10 years ago, children were disappearing like crazy. None have been found alive to this day. But was it last year or the year before hunters were discovering human bones deep in the forest and mostly everybody assuming most likely a kidnapped victim or drugs related, so dat was dey end of dat story. But I KNOW DIFFERENTLY. :devil:

For the older heads...allyuh remember Juliet Tam ???

What allyuh tink really happen to she or dey little boy standing up outside he house, mother turn her head to look at something else, next ting you know ah Datsun 120Y pass and chile disappear to this day.

Jah if ah make it to Trinidad next year...ah takin ya little ass to Lu Lune in or by any coco house and leave ya for one night with ah candle, matches and a bottle ah water.

Ah sure as god make moses, dey next morning ya go tell meh is dey bottle ah water dat fall on ya pants...and not pee

Organic:

i tink good friday too

yuh right is good friday not ash wensday



Grande:

i want to know...so much curry duck cookout I went in Manzan on Ash Wednesday and I eh turn fish

Qmire:

lol what i understand is that your skin turns scaly and rough ,u don't turn into an actual fish ;D

Jah Gol:

Ah waiting for that.

WestCoast:

I recently purchased a cd that has Shango, Obeah and Shouter Calypsos and some of the things that they sing about are just amazing. :devil: :devil: :devil: :devil:

things like giving ah "Parch de sanhome" (magic potion), to doping the Talkaree (first meal after matrimony was talked about), sweat rice and using Crab Calaloo to "hold ah man" does come from Obeah :D

People said that Iona and Leihu (women who performed on the street) during the 1930's on George street were Socuyen and Loup-garou (were wolf).

when i lived up in de end of Maraval i used to go in de bush where the golf course is now and look for Douen, Phantom (locals said that he straddled de road right where the road splits to go Moka and the Saddle), and all the others...but with no luck nothing ;)

mind you that was ONLY during day light hours ;D ;D

TriniCana:

Now serious ting here

Shango Baptiste woman name Mudda Garthtar living in Curepe or St Joseph, always in either white or black. From what we dey youngas in dey area was told...whenever ya see she in Black..DUST IT. Doh even look at she cause ya go go crazy or even dead just so. Mudda Garthtar bout I'm sure hitting mid 100s now and still alive turday, still looking young, walking strong, and never smile. De story bout she is.

Dis happen way when meh mudda was ah teenager. Somebody murder Garthtar husband ah day. Dey day before dey funeral she come out in black from head to toe infront she house...walk ah little distance with red paint, and draw 2 setah parallel lines on different sides of she house do some seemedemee and walk back in she yard. Now allyuh hafta remember it didn't have fence in dem days...was one big yard with no boundaries. She stand up by she door with a big bell and shout out and ah quoting from what meh mudda say, "Show ya face or ya eat ua own dust in dey morning"

Now it go sound hard to believe...but meh grandmother and mother and old neighbours had no reason to lie tur we...so I believe this story.

Anyways dey morning ah dey funeral people coming outside to do whatever chores dey hadda do and see dis stanger man curl up on Garthtar door step and one seta cacalling laughter inside she house. Ya know dey man dead and den dey realized is he dat kill Garthtar husband. Of course no way to prove dat...so case close.

So from dat day, when ever you see she coming down dey road from ah distance ya have 3 choices

Run inside somebody yard and wait for she to pass

Cross dey road and go in another direction

Go Brave and doh make eye contact.

dey end :beermug:

Jumbie:

boy you bring back some memories dey!

meh dad is one ah dem bad pyol from Tabaquite and he lived in the depts of the bush as a child (they had estate and ting)... I recall growing up (this is before we got that massive black & white tv... the one we put the colour tv on afta :) ) in the evening/night, especially when we had people visiting, it was real jumbie talk. I remember falling asleep listening to them, but too fraid to go to bed. Then when I hit the bed.. no arm or leg eh dare to venture off that sponge nah... as if something go grab it 4 sure.

Looking back, some things are still hard to believe and even harder to tell others, but we did have some experience where it sent chills through meh body. I remember wearing clothes inside out and garlic and hing in meh pocket when I'd go hunting up in biche, rio claro, guaya (pas mayaro way) as a youth with my dad.

But the wuss was when I went to visit relatives in Siparia.. dem people dong dey had real stories boy.

BTW.. ah accused meh grandmother of being ah socuyant (ah take the licks).. ah notice the motar and pestle in she back yard afta the licks ah tell she ah have ah pound ah salt for she to count.

Touches:

Alyuh really serious????

I cyar believe dis...even doe one of my co workers swear she see a man turn into a dog.

I sorry, I cyar believe these tings.

Even doe in the express and guardian a few years ago...there was a mysterious light red light that used to be seen in the moruga forest.

honestly I feel it must be the first time some country folk must be see a signal flare but small ting.

TriniCana:

Touches believe it sar believe it

anyways ya sound like cityish....

is we country nock nock know dem ting....

wait i does only be country nock nock during august holidays.

but i know what ah saw on dat horrible night and mey mother does still get little shaken up when Mudda Garthtar walkin dey streets.

pecan:

we serious .. de reason why dese supernatural fols dying out is dat de world no longer believe in dem. When the belief dies, the magic will go away and dey will no longer exist.

If yuh take a look at the folklore around de worl, therre are many similarities .. yuh ever wonder why?

WestCoast:

maybe this Lady was ah negromancer

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=negromancer>

which the calypsonians sing about in many songs on that cd of mines.

Madd Ras#13:

Always turn your back to the inside of the house when opening the door at night, that way the sprits that have followed you home, will see your face and will not enter.

- submitted by Helen Houle

once it's before 12midnight den u can walk in yuh house normal but once it's after midnight den dats wen u have tuh walk in backwards so de spirits dem wont follow yuh in

AB.Trini:

Ah learn form the limers at the street corner in the 60's : "no matter of how beat ah cat yuh cyar kill dat; it have nine lives."

lickslikefire:

I doh believe in dem folk tales at all....but black magic/voodoo or whatever yuh call it real scary dred.....my girlfriend made me a believer...the stories she told me/experienced is ridiculous, and she's the most straight-arrow/modernized person I know....

anytime i go by my woman house her mom is put a "blessing" on me to protect me from black magic.....scary shit dred....

ricky:

aye boy you datin a Haitian? :devil:

Qmire:

Talking bout haitians ,ah see a documentary bout this ,young girl down dey .She good but een deep with her family ,the spirits come een her and talk ,laugh eat there favorite foods drink and cigars .And they bless the family and village .Now this girl decide she wanted out to pursue some dream she had ,the spirits told her if she stop they will distroy haiti ! ,she was talking in the show and crying over this but still deterime to quit .I saw this show on the CBC a few months before that hurricane distrot haiti .....coincidence ,or them ppl have the power to distroy countries ???

lickslikefire:

nah dred worse...de island smaller and nobody know about it....mauritius ;D....

dey have nice beaches though ;D

End