

Haunted Birmingham

Duppy worksheet

In Caribbean folklore, a 'duppy', 'duppeh', or 'jumbie' is a ghost, spirit or demonic being. This work booklet helps you to consider adding a duppy to your 'Haunted Birmingham' submission, of a spooky story set in Birmingham.

Task one: Read the below blog, which describes duppies.

Recently I've been thinking about connections, to places and to people.

Exploring duppy stories has been something that encompasses both my need and want to learn about my family's and my own culture as well as my love of folklore. And it's interesting because as you begin to study folklore, you begin to notice the similarities and the differences between stories from different parts of the world.

Growing up, the term 'duppy' was very familiar and even now, I can hear my dad exclaim 'the duppy ah come' whenever we watched a horror film or something even remotely spooky. [...]

So what is a duppy you might well be thinking. The word itself is from West Africa and found its way into the Caribbean by way of the slave trade and it is used in many of the islands to refer, generally speaking, to a ghost, spirit or demonic being.

Within Obeah [an Afro-Caribbean spiritual tradition], it is generally believed the soul has two parts, the good soul and the earthly soul. The good soul is the part that passes on to the afterlife when a person dies. The earthly soul however resides in the body for up to 9 days after death and if proper funerary rights are not followed, then there is a chance the spirit might escape and exist thereafter as a duppy.

Duppies then, are usually malevolent and might sometimes be referred to as jumbies.

Today I am going to share with you some of the most common and frightening duppy stories I have gathered from my father, my aunts and from my own research. Some of them, as you will see are demonic beings, others the spirits of the deceased, but all scary and something you wouldn't want to encounter anywhere, never mind the deep dark jungle of the Jamaican mountains.



Adapted from: *Caribbean Folklore: The Duppy Ah Come* by Emma Kathryn

Read the full blog here:

abeautifulresistance.org/site/2021/5/14/caribbean-folklore-the-duppy-ah-come

The rolling calf

Name meaning	'Rolling' here means 'roaming', like someone who 'rolls through town'. This monster 'rolls' through abandoned places in the Jamaican countryside.
Appearance	<p>It often appears as a hornless white goat, and while its back legs might be that of a goat, its front legs are that of a human and a horse, a monstrous sight indeed!</p> <p>Its eyes glow red like fire and flames come from its nostrils. The rolling calf wears a collar from which a chain hangs and it clatters and clangs as it rolls around the roads and lonely places, looking for its next victim.</p>
Where is it found?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lonely roads and pathways• Woods• Caves• Abandoned buildings
The story goes...	The rolling calf is pure evil and if it so much as breathes on you with its hot breath then all sorts of wickedness is sure to befall you!
How does it come to be?	It is believed that those people who were most wicked and dishonest in life return as the rolling calf after their death.
How can I avoid or fight this duppy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can be kept at bay by lashing out with a tarred whip held in your left hand.• It is also said that getting to a junction or crossroad before the rolling calf catches up with you is another way of thwarting its evil intent for it cannot pass by.• Some say that you can also make an escape by casting rice upon the ground or striking three matches. The first two matches keep the rolling calf mesmerised so if you keep hold of the third match, the rolling calf will search all about for it, but whatever you do, do not let it find all three matches! <p>But the best thing to do is just to leave at once, to avoid attracting the attention of the rolling calf!</p>

The River Mumma

Name meaning	The mother of the river
Appearance	A mermaid-like figure (there are lots of these in Caribbean folklore)
Where is it found?	The River Mumma is associated with Jamaica's rivers, and in particular the Rio Cobre River.
The story goes...	<p>It is said she appears sitting on a rock in the middle of the flowing water, combing her locks with a golden comb. When she has finished, she disappears back into the water, leaving the golden comb on the rock. If any person, overcome with greed and want for the golden comb, enters the water with the view to claiming it for themselves, then the River Mumma appears and drags them down to their watery death. If, however, the individual leaves the comb and goes on their way, then great fortune and luck will come to them</p> <p>And one should avoid fishing in the rivers where she appears, for the fishes are her children and she will protect them as such.</p>
How can I avoid or fight this duppy?	Sometimes evoking love and adoration and other times fear, the River Mumma is one of those figures that might act as a test for people and how they act they might earn her favour or her wrath.



The three-foot horse and the whooping boy

Name meaning	A horse with only three legs ('foot') and a boy calling ('whooping')
Appearance	The three-foot horse is a duppy and as the name suggests is a horse with only three legs, but don't let that fool you for nothing can outrun it. Like the rolling calf, it has fire red eyes and hot fiery breath. But perhaps the most terrifying aspect of this duppy is its rider, the whooping boy.
Where is it found?	Empty spaces in the night-time
The story goes...	<p>It is said that should you be out on a dark night, perhaps in the bush or in the mountains, you might hear the 'yip - yip!' call of the whooping boy.</p> <p>Imagine yourself in the dark of night with only the moon and stars for brightness, heading along a lonely road with the deep and dark jungle pressing in close.</p> <p>If you've ever been out in the woods or a rural setting alone at night then you might just get an idea of the terror the landscape might hold all on its own, but imagine being in the Jamaican bush with the night noises all around and no streetlights to cast away the shadows.</p>
How does it come to be?	This duppy does have roots in history, for the whooping boy is said to be the spirit of a slave boy and it's not too hard to imagine what the horrors of slavery might do to the human psyche, damaging it so much that the spirit is damaged, made evil by the horrors endured during a short lifetime.
How can I avoid or fight this duppy?	What would you do, if you heard the three foot horse galloping near you?

Task two: Fill in your ideas.

In a story, where might you find a duppy in Birmingham?

Idea 1 _____

Idea 2 _____

Which duppy might you find there? (e.g. rolling calf, river mumma, three-foot horse and whooping boy?)

What Birmingham residents might come upon this duppy?

Idea 1 _____

Idea 2 _____

Idea 3 _____

What would the duppy look like? _____

How might the human escape the duppy? _____

How might they anger the duppy? _____

You could add your ideas about Birmingham duppies in your Haunted Birmingham story submission.

Visit literacytrust.org.uk/Birmingham to find out more.

