



RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

TRISTAN STRONG

PUNCHES A HOLE
IN THE SKY



KWAME MBALIA

ACTIVITY KIT

Disney • HYPERION

GETTING READY TO CELEBRATE

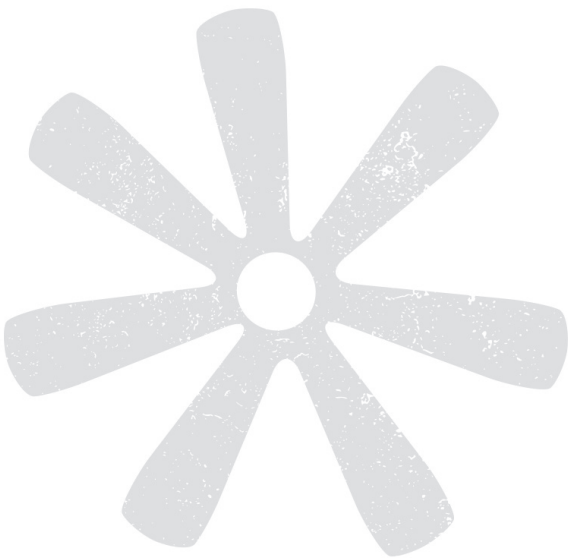
TRISTAN STRONG PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE SKY

DECOR

To prepare for your event celebrating the arrival of *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, fill your space with imagery plucked from Tristan's grand adventures. Use the book jacket and scenes from this epic adventure as inspiration. Backdrops of the groves of trees, which include the Bottle Tree forest, or the hill-covered landscapes surrounded by butterflies visited by Tristan and John Henry will get attendees into the spirit of the journey Tristan takes. Use ready-made ornamental tree cutouts or create your own scenes with butcher paper. Adorn your trees with printed images of colorful bottles and outlines of some of the other important characters such as Brer Fox, Brer Rabbit, Gum Baby, and Chestnutt.

TRISTAN EATS AND TREATS!

Helping to save MidPass, Nyame's palace, and Isihlangu is hard work for Tristan, Ayanna, Gum Baby, Chestnutt, and the rest of their collaborators and is also an occasion worthy of celebration and festivities. Remember, no party is complete without snacks, and your guests are sure to be hungry after going on a grand reading adventure with Tristan through exciting parallel worlds, so be sure to offer refreshments inspired by *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*. Consider serving traditional Southern sweets and other Southern-inspired food, or give readers an opportunity to celebrate this fantastical reading experience with bowls of Smarties to encourage their storytelling skills or gummy treats inspired by the scene-stealing and precocious but oh-so-lovable Gum Baby.



ACTIVITIES AND CRAFTS TO GET THE PARTY STARTED!

Start your *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* event by using the following activities and crafts to get your partygoers into the spirit of this epic fantasy.

GUM BABY GUMMY GUESSERS GIVEAWAY

Fill various lidded jars with sticky gummy candies of different shapes and sizes and set them around your party space. As event attendees arrive, urge them to circulate and guess the number of gummies in each container. Throughout the event, select a jar

and look at the guesses. The reader who estimates the closest to the actual number of gummy items contained in the jar wins. If the winner has previously won a gummy jar, the jar prize goes to the next closest guesser. Gummy prizes are perfect for readers to enjoy or use for a personal sap attack!

ICE BREAKER: MEET, MINGLE, AND GUESS—WHAT'S THE TWISTED TRUTH?

Beyond his appearance in *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, Anansi is one of the best known tricksters throughout West African and African American folklore. In African American lore, Brer Rabbit is also often described as a clever trickster that uses his wits to achieve his goals.

For an ice breaker, have attendees write out three statements about themselves on large index cards. Two of the statements should be facts (for example, “I like to eat broccoli,” “red is my favorite color,” etc.), and the third statement should be a “twisted truth” (for example, saying “I am a great ballerina” when the attendee is actually a great tap dancer). But all three statements need to be plausible. After everyone has had a chance to write their three statements, have attendees walk around the room and introduce themselves to one another. Then ask them to read other players’ statements and try to guess which one is the twisted truth. Give each player stickers they can offer to other players whenever a player guesses the correct “twisted truth” statement. At the end of the round, the player who discovers the most “twisted truths” wins a prize of your choosing.

STORY STARTERS: A RECIPE FOR THE ORAL TRADITION OF STORYTELLING

The oral tradition of storytelling and the discovery of variations in well-known tales is a rich part of West African culture, as well as a staple of African American communities and families such as Tristan’s.

In a variation of the traditional telephone game, divide attendees into evenly numbered large groups. Have group members position themselves in a straight row (either front to back or side to side). Give the first person in each group the same story starter and instruct them to share their story while adding new characters, events, and colorful details as they pass their story along. Each player should do the same. As the communal storytelling reaches the end, have each group circle up and share the finished version of its story to the entire assemblage.

Or, especially for events with fewer attendees, divide participants and offer each group three- or four-character profiles from *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* in a presorted bag. In small groups, using what they learn about these particular characters (which might not be much if they haven’t read the book yet), have them create an original story that they will later share with the other groups.



GETTING CRAFTY

To get readers excited about their epic introduction to West African mythology and African American folk heroes, consider including the following craft projects or DIY stations at your event.

BOTTLING UP THE GOOD AND BAD: CRAFTING BOTTLE-TREE BOTTLES

Today, while the African tradition of creating bottle trees to ward off evil spirits can be routinely found throughout the American South, sightings of bottle trees have been recorded in places all over the country. In *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, Tristan's nana tells him, "Slaves carried the practice over with them from Africa as a way to capture and dispose of any haints wandering around." Lead a discussion with attendees about the tradition of bottle trees and what other things or feelings a bottle might be used to keep away. After giving readers time to reflect, have them each create their own bottle-tree bottle using recycled and dried-out small water bottles. While blue is the most commonly used color, have attendees adorn their bottles with colors of their choosing. As a personal touch, offer attendees a chance to "capture" something inside their bottle (this could be something they fear or, alternatively, something they love or are striving to accomplish).

COLLECTING OUR STORIES: JOURNAL MAKING

After Eddie passes, his journal becomes Tristan's most prized possession, and its loss and the fight to get it back take Tristan on the most epic adventure, in which he travels beyond our world to reclaim it. Offer attendees a chance to create their own journals by setting up stations filled with journal-making supplies such as paper for covers, binding materials, additional paper for collecting stories, and stickers, paints, and markers to personalize their work.

Once the attendees have completed their journals, lead a group discussion about why our stories matter. Encourage attendees to capture and collect all kinds of stories, especially those of family and friends.

COLLECTING OUR STORIES: CREATE A PERSONAL STORY BOX

In *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, Tristan learns he has been gifted with the task and responsibility to be a collector, keeper, and teller of stories for his people. As he journeys to find, keep, and protect the story box, readers discover the importance of valuing our own stories and those of others.

First, have readers reflect on their personal memories. Is there a particular memory or experience that they feel is worth saving? After providing time for them to capture this memory on paper, allow them to "contain" their stories. Using either small premade boxes purchased online or at a party supply shop, have party participants select a box to adorn. Ideas for materials to use are almost limitless, but be sure to have markers, paint, glue, jewels, and colorful papers handy.



REPRODUCIBLE FORMS *(see following pages for forms)*

WARREN SOCIETY BRAVERY CERTIFICATE

Throughout *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, Chestnutt dreams of becoming a member of the Warren Society and hopes her acts of courage and bravery will ultimately make her meritorious enough to be deemed worthy of this honor. Ask your attendees to consider for a moment what it means to be brave. Does bravery always require witnesses, or can acts of bravery occur in those moments when you attempt to do the things you fear even when no one is watching? Knowing the Warren Society is still recruiting new members, have them reflect, within the space provided on the certificate, on their personal acts of courage and bravery. Ask them to share a time when, despite the obstacles in their way, they believed they rose to the challenge and are worthy of being inducted along with Chestnutt into the Warren Society. Alternatively, have them use the certificate to nominate another character from *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* to be considered for membership in the Warren Society. Remind them to explain their rationale fully.



FACT OR FICTION: *TRISTAN STRONG PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE SKY* *(answers below)*

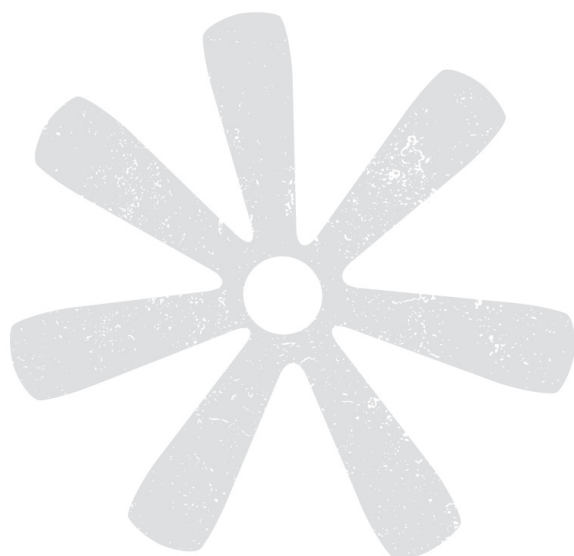
1. John Henry is an American folk legend who, the story goes, used his hammer in a contest to beat a newly invented steel drill to create a mountain pass for the railroad. **(TRUE)**
2. Gum Baby is believed to be made of bubble gum.
(FALSE: Depending on the version of the story, Gum Baby is described as being a sticky substance like honey or tar, but not bubble gum.)
3. Haints are evil or restless spirits that often harass or terrify the living. **(TRUE)**
4. In American folklore and the tales of Uncle Remus, Brer Fox is often believed to have created Gum Baby to trick or capture a rascal. **(TRUE)**
5. Anansi trickster stories are shared throughout the world. **(TRUE)**
6. Bottle trees are used as a way to catch fresh rain or as a creative way to recycle.
(FALSE: Bottle trees are used to capture haints or evil spirits and are hung with the bottle opening facing downward.)
7. Adinkra symbols represent or symbolize a variety of concepts and evocative meanings. **(TRUE)**
8. In Africa, before the horror of slavery, people believed that by whispering powerful words that were dipped in old magic, they could fly. **(TRUE)**
9. Nyame is believed to be the African god of the sea. **(FALSE: Nyame is god of the sky.)**
10. An imbongi is typically a male member of a community who performs ceremonial activities, sings, and recites poetry at important community events. **(TRUE)**

ADINKRA SYMBOLS—WISDOM WITHOUT WORDS

Adinkra symbols are symbols or representations of concepts and evocative meanings that were originally used in West Africa by the Ashantis, and these symbols still adorn fabrics, home decor, pottery, and a variety of other materials today.

Throughout *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, Tristan is gifted a number of charms by gods to add to a bracelet that provides him guidance, clarity, and protection as he battles the fetterlings, iron monsters, and the evil haint spirit inflicting misery on the people of MidPass and beyond.

Using the adinkra symbols as inspiration, think about what messages or symbols make you feel empowered and willing to fight against the things that frighten you. Use this space to design your own symbol and explain what it stands for: Why is this symbol meaningful to you, and how do you think it will inspire you as you move forward to face life's challenges?



WARREN SOCIETY

CERTIFICATE

OF RECOGNITION

THIS CERTIFICATE IS PRESENTED TO

(NAME OF RECIPIENT)

— ACT OF BRAVERY —

(DATE)



(SIGNATURE)

FACT OR FICTION

TRISTAN STRONG PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE SKY

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