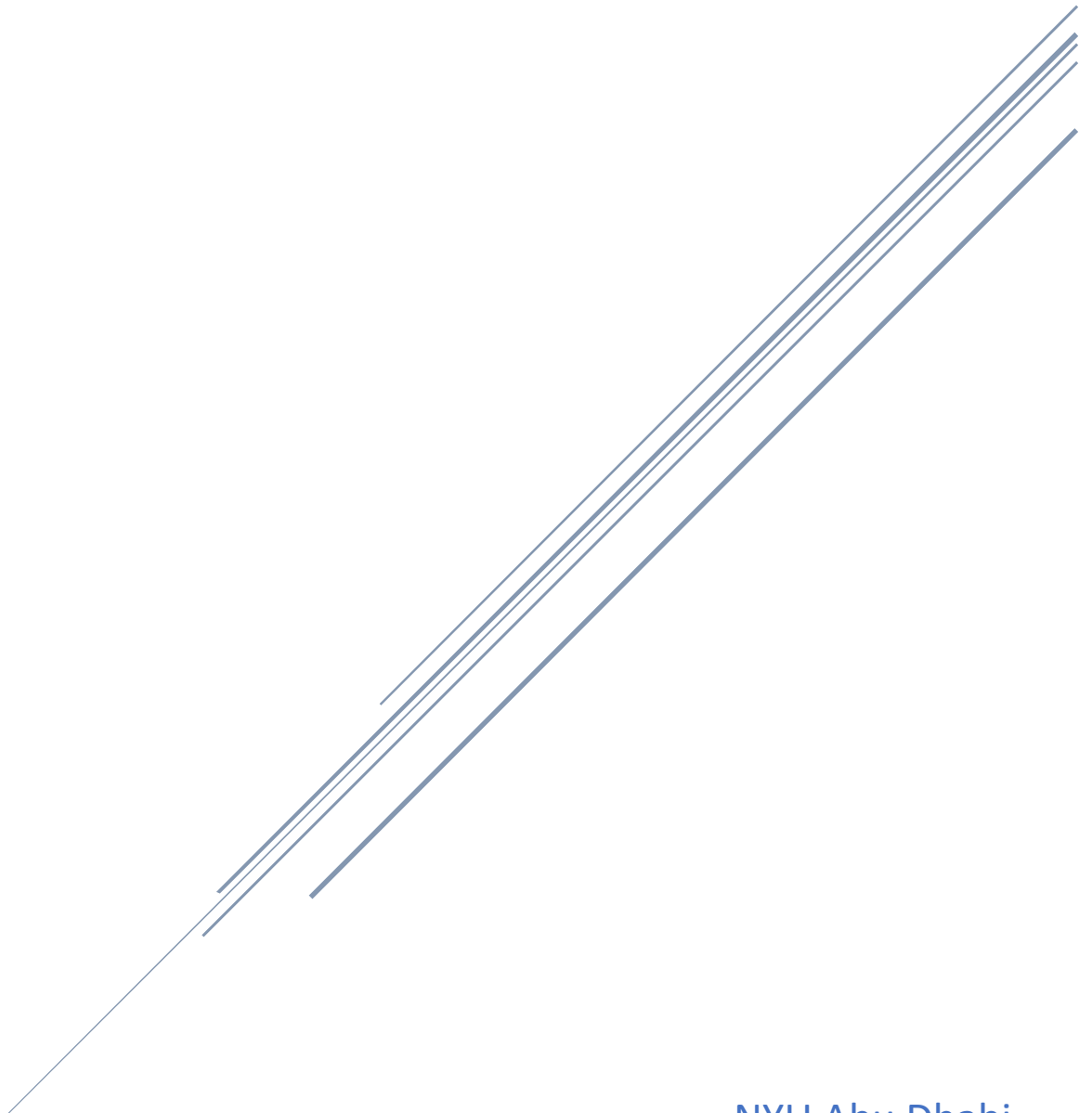


# SOUCOUYANT STORIES

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# Characters

**Granny Joseph:** An elderly woman (above 60). She is loud but endearing. She has seen much in life and is the matriarch of the neighborhood. People always drop into her house to say hello. She herself does not really move from her rocking chair to host her guests but everyone leaves her home well fed and entertained. The children particularly enjoying visiting her to hear her elaborate stories. In her eyes... everyone in the village is her child and she treats them as such.

**Soucouyant:** The Soucouyant is a woman. In the day she is a grumpy old woman. She is the opposite of Granny Joseph, unwelcoming and snappy. The children fear her, and no one really knows how she spends her time. At night she transforms into a ball of fire and sucks the blood of animals and babies. She cannot control her urges no matter how she tries. It is almost as if when she becomes the Soucouyant at night she has lost all control. She is in fact fed up with this life and just wants to be released of her fate. This shines through in her movement.

**Douens:** The douens are playful and mischievous children. They have a flare for the absurd. Their faces are almost never seen and their feet are on 'backwards'. They do not walk in profile. They were lost before they could be christened and therefore have no names. It is very difficult to tell them apart. Something about their childish insanity makes them even more unsettling than the fearsome Soucouyant.

**Papa Bois:** Papa Bois is the protector of the forest. He is half man and half goat - similarly to a satyr. He walks around with a cane and has horns in his head. He has an easy gait and a natural confidence that just exudes authority. He is caring and composed lest his woodland creatures are hurt in which case he is extremely aggressive and has a speed and agility that is well beyond the abilities an old man should possess. He can switch from passive to protector in seconds.

## Scene 1: (Granny Joseph)

**Setting:** *Granny is seated in a rocking chair in a corner. She is slightly elevated as if on a porch looking down on the children in her front yard. There is a spotlight on her chair that slowly fades up as people start entering.*

**Alternative Setting:** *she could have a bookshelf behind her or any item that shows she is inside her house.*

*[Granny has a rosary in her hand and is murmuring as if she is praying. When people start entering, she looks up as if disturbed by the noise]*

Oh hello Dears! Come to pay Ol' Granny Joseph a visit eh?  
Well have a seat, have a seat.  
What's your name? Go on, go on...

*[Audience responds name]*

Ahh! What a nice name! Your fadda name you that ent! Yes yes!  
And you?

*[Granny continues to ad lib asking for names for all 3-5 audience members]*

Well good man... thank you for coming to see an old dry up woman like me...  
How about I tell you a couple of stories eh... you'd like that?  
But hold on....

*(Yelling to the side)*

Nailah! Bring something for these children to eat! And pour out some lime juice too eh! I don't want them choking!

*(Enter 'Nailah'<sup>1</sup> with snacks...possibly banana bread)*

Anyway... where was I?  
Yes yes...lemme tell you about the time they found a Soucouyant in the village...

***One morning at about 2 o'clock a farmer got up when he heard a strange noise from his yard. He went to see what was wrong and saw blood dripping down from one of his cow's neck. As he walked closer, he saw a ball of fire flying away. He realise it was Soucouyant coming for his cows.***

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<sup>1</sup> Either a helper/intern on one of the douens

*Now every couple month they would find a Soucouyant coming to suck the blood of animals and people. Some people also call her the Ol Higue. But the people of the village would always catch her before she could do more damage.*

*This time the villages hid at night and when the ball of fire flew in the air, they followed it all the way to the old shack at the edge of the village where a wicked old woman lived.*

*The saw the old lady pitting on her skin... cause that's what the Soucouyant did... they would take of their skin and turn into a ball of fire before looking for food.*

*The next night when the old woman was flying about... the villages went and rub salt and pepper inside her skin. When the Soucouyant came back and put on her skin, it burns so much she started to hop and sing: Kin Kin you don't know me! Kin Kin you don't know me!*

*The villages push her into a barrel and rolled it into the pond and from then on nobody see a Soucouyant in years.*

Hahaha... what you think? Oh gosh don't be frighten... that was year and years ago...Hahaha

You want to hear another one? Don't worry... this one not so scary. In fact, it actually very nice.

It hadda a time Papa Bois saved a deer...

*Yes yes... one day deep in the forest, Papa Bois was cooking his dinner in front of his little hut. All kinds of animals was playing around him. They were happy because they were safe.*

*You see Papa Bois was the protector of the forest. He was very funny looking... he had to short horns, bright eyes and a gentle manner. His feet were like the hooves of a deer so he could run very very fast indeed.*

*Anyway, while Papa Bois was making his dinner, he heard a gun shot in the distance. There was a hunter in the forest. All the animals stop playing and on Papa Bois' signal, they all went and hide among the branches and holes. He blew his horn to warn the animals far away too.*

*Suddenly he saw a little deer limping and panting in his direction. He could hear a dog barking in the distance. Papa Bois hid the deer and made a new trail in an opposite direction to mislead to hunter and his dog. The dog picked up the false sent and very soon he and his master were very very lost.*

***Three days later a village search party found the hunter wandering around the forest hungry and tired. They realized Papa Bois had saved the deer and condemn the hunter. They left the forest and went back to the village***

***As for the deer... he lived happily with Papa Bois and the other animals for years and years.***

You see! A happy ending...so the hunter got a lil roughing up. He know better than to be going after animals before they fully grown.

But it getting late...is best you be off now before the douens come for you...

What's that look you giving me there? You don't know what a douen in?

***Well you see a douen is a little child who does lure other little children into the forest. They does be naked except for a big straw hat that does cover their hair. The strangest part is that their feet turn backwards so that from their footprints they look like if they walking in one direction when they really going in the opposite direction.***

***Now if a douen hears a child's name especially if they not christened the will try to steal them away to turn them into a douens. So I hope allyuh christened cause you don't want no douens coming after you.***

Anyway children... my old bones need to go in meh bed and allyuh should be going to sleep anyway. Run along now... and I hope your dreams as exciting as my little stories Hahahaha!

*[Spotlight fades as Granny is laughing. A light slowly grows at the entrance to the next scene. Granny has moved from her chair and is using her cane to prop open the curtain, gesturing to the audience to enter. Once they enter, she closes the curtain behind them.]*

***[VO: and so, they were]***

## Scene 2: (The Soucouyant)

**Setting:** *There is a silk cotton tree base nestled in the corner of the room in the area where the projections will display. Only the trunk of the tree is visible, and the roots of the trees spread across the floor. There is a little rabbit at the base of the tree. The projections will display over the tree and the area around it.*

**Initial Stage Directions:** *There is a spotlight on the opposite corner that fades in as the audience enters. The Soucouyant is hunched over walking very slowly and taking deep breaths. Slowly she walks to the edge of the projection frame. She then takes off her cape to reveal a bright red suit.*

*As she steps into the projection frame flames engulf her. They grow bigger as she moves closer to the tree. At the base of the tree, she leans over the rabbit. She is interrupted by a baby screaming in the distance. She looks up.*

*Up until this point she is not aware of the audience's presence. But quickly her gaze shifts to the audience. At this point the dance begins.*

**Technological Directions:** *1 to 2 projectors set up to span a large portion of the room. A Kinect is set up in order get more depth of the dancer. As the Kinect tracks the dancer's movement a projection of a ball of fire surrounds the dancer and follows her. As she gets closer to the Soucouyant tree the flame gets bigger and as she goes further away from it, the flame gets a little smaller (she draws her power from the tree)*

*\*NB: This scene is does not have dialogue and is only dance, but the backing track would be the Ol' Higue Poem*

*Ol' Higue*

- *Mark McWatt*

You think I like all this stupidity  
gallivanting all night without skin  
burning myself out like cane -fire  
To frighten the foolish?  
And for what? A few drops of baby blood?  
You think I wouldn't rather  
take my blood seasoned in fat  
black-pudding, like everyone else?  
And don't even talk 'bout the pain of salt  
And having to bend these old bones down  
To count a thousand grains of rice!

If only babies didn't smell so nice!  
And if I could only stop  
Hearing the soft, soft call  
Of that pure blood running in new veins,  
Singing the sweet song of life  
Tempting an old, dry-up woman who been  
Holding her final note for years,  
Afraid of the dying hum...

Then again, if I didn't fly and come  
to that fresh pulse in the middle of the night,  
how would you, mother,  
name your ancient dread,  
And who to blame  
for the murder inside your head...?  
Believe me -  
As long as it have women giving birth  
A poor ol' higue like me can never dead.

*[At the end of the dance, a knock can be heard from the other side of the door. You can vaguely hear childlike voices chanting 'come outside']*



## Scene 3: (Douens)

**Setting:** *It is evening time. There is a picket fence running from both sides of the doorway from the Soucouyant scene that runs to the other side of the room to the room with Papa Bois (scene 4). The fence is like a pathway from the house to the outdoors (the woods).*

*On either side of the fence in the 'yard', outdoor items are strewn (could range from gardening items to children's items). Some of the items should be big enough for the douens to crouch behind. Muffled recording of the interaction between granny and the audience should be played overhead.*

**Initial Stage Directions:** *One dim spotlight appears on the side of one fence and Douen 1 can be spotted popping up as if spying on the audience. Another dim spotlight does the same thing on the other side on Douen 2. This happens 2-3 times while the recording is playing.*

*Finally, the Douens appear and the lights brighten. Douens work as a call and response, gradually getting more and more excited in each line.*

**Technological Directions:** *In scene 1, record the interaction between Granny and the audience. Edit this recording in so that it is distorted and has an eerie feel. Playback the edited track overhead. This action can be completed in Sox. The names of the audience should stand out so that the Douens can extract their names for the piece.*

Douen 1: Hello  
Douen 2: Come and Play  
Douen 1: Come and Stay  
Douen 2: Not too far away  
  
Together: Come (Insert name 1) Come!  
Together: Come (Insert name 2) Come!  
  
Douen 1: Come (Insert name 3) Come!  
Douen 2: Come (Insert name 4) Come!  
  
Together (Overlapping): Come, Play, Stay, Away  
  
Together (different names): Don't be scared (names)!!  
  
Douen 2: The forest is very pretty  
Douen 1: Yes very very pretty  
  
Douen 1: Hello

(both douens start laughing gradually building to hysteria)

Douen 2:                   Let's play a game!  
Douen 1:                   Ring around a roses a pocket full of poses... ashes  
ashes  
Douen 2 (stopping):           No no no, they don't want to play that...  
Douen 2:                   Trinidad numbers here we go:

(both douens start the clapping game individually)

Douen 1:                   Let's play police and thief. We'll be the cops,  
you (pointing at audience) will be the thief.

(the douens start chasing each other and the audience)

Douen 1:                   Freeeze!!  
I know the perfect game... let's play.... Red Over  
Douen 2:                   Yes Yes Yes

(both douens start laughing gradually building to hysteria)

Douen 2:                   Red Over, red over send Douen 1 right over  
Douen 1:                   Red Over, red over send Douen 2 right over

Together:                  Red Over, red over send [insert name] right over

Douen 1:                   Well go on... yes go go go

(Pointing in the direction of the next room)

Douen 2:                   Go Go Go... into the forest you go

Douen 1:                   All of you must go.. quick quick

(Douen 2 joins in)

Together:                  Go Go into the forest you go go  
Go Go into the forest you go go

(Both douens laugh hysterically cornering the audience into the entrance  
to the next scene.

## Scene 4: (Papa Bois)

**Setting:** *There are plants all around. The room is lined with mirrors to give an infinite feel. There is soft green light to give the feel of deep forest. You can hear sound playing like birds chirping and other sounds of the woods.*

*The LED trees are a soft green. However, when ever an audience member gets close to the tree it changes color becoming more brownish/purple.*

**Initial Stage Directions:** *Papa Bois can be seen lounging on a nearby tree seemingly asleep. Every now and then he would twitch or bleat like a goat. Suddenly, the sounds of gun shots can be heard.. the trees begin the turn a deep purplish red.*

*Papa Bois' eyes fling open and he focuses on the audience. He walks slowly up to them and examines them. He walks past them and bangs his can on the ground. The music begins and the dance begins.*

**Technological Directions:** *Integrate LED trees among the real and fake trees. These trees are lined with Neopixel strips that are programmed to change color in line with the gun shots. (These lights should be prerecorded).*

*There should also be an ultrasonic distance sensor hidden at the base of the trees that trigger a change in the lights depending on how far the audience is from the trees. This can be another set of neopixels or coded in tandem with the prerecorded lights.*

**\*NB:** *This scene is does not have dialogue and is only dance. The backing track would be Papa Bois by Asheba*

## Scene 5: (Gallery)

*This scene will be a self-exploration room. After 10 minutes the audience would be asked to exit.*

*At the exit there will be a QR code that will lead to a short form to get feedback on their experience and which part of the performance resonated with them the most.*