



GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

DRAMA

Written Paper Option A

1916/02/T/PRE

**Tuesday 22 June 2010
Morning**

Duration: 2 hours



INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This booklet contains a script extract from 'Anansi', and a stimulus item, 'The Slave Trade'.
- This is a clean copy of the pre-release material which you should have already seen.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- You should refer to it when answering the examination questions which are printed in a separate booklet.
- You may **not** take your previous copy of the pre-released material into the examination.
- You may **not** take notes into the examination.
- Answers must **only** be written on the examination paper and any additional answer paper you may need.
- This document consists of **24** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

GUIDANCE TO CANDIDATES

- You have from January until the written paper on 22 June to explore the script extract and the stimulus item with your teacher.
- Divide your time equally between working on the script extract and the stimulus item.
- Try a variety of approaches to the material, experimenting with how each can be turned into practical drama.
- You should turn at least one of your ideas for the stimulus item into a polished improvisation.
- You will be well prepared for the paper if you are aware of the two modes you will be working in.
 1. Planning and exploring
 2. Performing what you select from the planning and exploration.

Text Extract 'Anansi'

The play was originally a piece of Theatre in Education and was produced to tour primary schools in Berkshire.

'Like all good pieces of TIE, it aimed to help the young audience think about things in new ways. The company were faced with a problem, though: how do you get children as young as six or seven to realise what it would be like to be taken as a slave without terrifying them or just making them feel very sorry for the victims?' (From the plays introduction written by Andy Kempe).

The author of the play Alistair Campbell, had worked with traditional performers in Africa, he included the elements of oral storytelling, which is still a strong form in Africa. Again quoting Andy Kempe talking about the original production:

'The company realised the traditional stories people tell are a sort of coded history. They discovered that the lively stories of the West Indies and the old colonial states of the USA had been carried across the Atlantic by people who had been taken from their homes as slaves.'

Anansi is a cunning character, full of resourcefulness, someone who always manages to survive whatever life throws at her/him. Anansi has this in common with that classic figure from Western theatre Brecht's Mother Courage.

The play raises consciousness about the slave trade, but also makes use of stories to help us cope with the harsh experiences life can sometimes throw at individuals or whole groups of people. The Old Woman in the play refers directly to this:

'I will teach you stories. They are a treasure no-one can steal, even if they have stolen your body'.

Echoes of the play 'Bent' by Martin Sherman where the two prisoners in the concentration camp are brutalised physically, but preserve their sanity through the power of imagination, in a triumph of love over oppression.

A final comment on 'Anansi' from Andy Kempe:

'By using traditional stories, Alistair (Campbell) manages what may seem impossible: to write a play about cruelty and ignorance which is funny, full of hope, and celebrates people's resilience and capacity to learn from their past'

Andy Kempe is a lecturer of Drama at the University of Reading, training Drama teachers.

Note: For teachers looking to engage students in background research 'International Slavery Museum' in Liverpool makes an excellent visit or resource. www.liverpoolmuseum.org.uk/ism/

Stimulus Item 'The Slave Trade'

The trade in slaves is not something that belongs to history it still exist today. Here are some of the types of slavery that exist around the world. now.

Bonded labour which affects millions of people around the world. People are lured into becoming bonded labourers by taking or being tricked into taking a loan for as little as the cost of medicine for a sick child. Then to repay the debt, they may be forced to work long hours, seven days a week, up to 365 days a year. Just as with slaves in the past they receive basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work. Some will never pay off the loan, so it can be passed on for generations.

Early and forced marriage affects women and girls who are married without choice. They are forced into a life of servitude. They can often be badly treated even being subjected to physical violence.

Forced labour where people are illegally recruited by individuals, governments or political parties and forced to work or even fight as child soldiers. This is usually under threat of violence or other penalties.

Slavery by descent is where people are either born into a slave class or are from a 'group' that their society views as being lower status and therefore destined to being used as slave labour.

Trafficking involves the transport and/or trade of people – women, children and men – from one country or area to another. Once in the new country they are forced into slavery conditions. Sex trafficking is an example that has been in the news recently in Britain.

The worst forms of child labour affects an estimated 126 million children in work that is harmful to their health and welfare.

"Slavery – I didn't know about all these forms existed. I think it's largely because we aren't expecting it. It is hidden. Generally people would not believe it is possible under modern conditions. They would say 'No I think you are making it all up', because it's just too incredible –"
Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Hull, UK, 1999

This source material was adapted from www.antislavery.org.

CHARACTERS**ON THE SHIP**

CAPTAIN

BOY

GIRL

WOMAN

SAILOR

*AUCTIONEER

IN THE FOREST OF STORIES

ANANSI

TIGER

SNAKE

MANCROW

SERVANTS

KING

GRAN

SOLIDAY

PATRICIA

ARABELLA

BOB

*RATBAT

*MONKEY

*PARROT

*CENTIPEDE

*23 GERBILS

*HER

*CAT

*DOG

*CRAB

* These characters are not included in the extract.

ANANSI

THE GOOD SHIP HOPE. WEST AFRICAN COAST. 1791

THE CABIN

*Listen... hear the last sounds of a ship preparing for the Atlantic voyage. The **Boy** is seated at a desk, reading and writing. His father, the **Captain** consults ledgers and map.*

BOY:	Father, why do I have to study when everyone else is up on deck?	
CAPTAIN	Silence, boy, and look to your books.	5
BOY	But Father, I still don't see how all those people on the shore can be a cargo.	
CAPTAIN	Books or no books you have a lot to learn on this voyage. Look to it and do not bother me with damn fool questions.	
BOY	But who are the people on the shore, Father.	10
CAPTAIN	You are on a serious trading venture whilst you are on my ship, and as the ship's boy you'll address me as Captain, especially in front of the ratings. You'll learn all about the cargo and such soon enough.	
BOY	They looked just like people to me. But they were tied together. They looked frightened. Why...?	15
CAPTAIN	<i>(Cutting him off.)</i> I do not have to give you explanations. I am your father.	
BOY	I thought you said your name was Captain.	
CAPTAIN	<i>(Hits him.)</i> You young pup! Have that for your cheek. and there's worse waiting for you when you get down below.	20

ON DECK

*Look... a **Girl** is waiting to be taken below. She is terrified. She stands, tied to several others. She calls out to deckhands as they pass. But they don't understand her language. They don't look at her or slow down.*

GIRL	Where are we? Are we going to die? What is this place, with all the people tied together and so much crying and fear? And why has the world come to an end? Blue, blue nothingness. Water, waves and more water. The water reaches up and touches the sky. Where is my mother? Where did all the pale men come from? Why don't you answer me?	25
SAILOR	Come along my beauty. Less jabber and down the hatch with you. I don't know! At least a bale of cotton doesn't chatter in some heathen tongue, and whatever it is you're blathering about you'll have to get yourself down this hatch. Can't throw you and damage the goods eh? Move!	30
	<i>He bundles her down the hatch.</i>	

THE CABIN

BOY	<i>(Reading.)</i> Yesterday we put in to the West African coast for the last time before the long haul to the Indies. I was looking forward to coming on this trip with Father: I really was. I thought we'd be away for a few months, and I knew we'd be coming back to Bristol with Rum and Coffee. I did not think to be so puzzled. No answers come to my questions. Who were	35
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those people on the shore? Herded together like cattle. Some of them were whipped and beaten. One old woman was standing stiff and proud, with her hands tied, waiting her turn to be loaded aboard. She looked so calm as if she'd done it all before and didn't care. But she can't have, can she? They bought them down the river from far away upstream, and she can't have seen the sea, even, until just then. She caught my eye but turned away. She reminded me of Gradmama. 40

Dear Diary, you're my only friend on this ship. There's one Sailor who teaches me knots and talks to me. I shall tell you all my secret thoughts if Father gives me the chance from time to time. 45

THE HOLD 50

*It is almost completely dark, but look... The outline of hundreds of people packed together in rows on the floor, lying on narrow shelves that line the walls. Some are tied back to back to an upright beam. One of them is a **Girl**. A little light filters down from a crack in the roof. Behind her is the dim outline of someone tied to the other side of the beam. We will hear but never see this person.* 55

GIRL I remember the river, carrying me further and further away from my mother on its great brown back. They tied us together. I don't know why. 60

They threw us into a huge canoe, bigger than the biggest war canoe of our tribe, and I didn't know why.

The jungle slid past. Two green walls of giant trees. We lay in the bottom of the boat, tied together like goats waiting for the knife, and I didn't know why.

Now all I see are people tied together, chained together, crushed together in the dark. It's so dark, Mama, like the big hut with no windows where the tribe stores the grain. Everyone is lying in filth and sickness and fear. Please, please come and hold me Mama. Tell me this isn't true. 65

WOMAN What's true is true. Don't fight it. You're alive and it's true. It's true.

GIRL Who are you? I can feel your warmth but I can't see you. 70

WOMAN I am who I am, and you are who you are. No amount of fear and darkness can change that truth. Hold on to it! Hold on!

THE CABIN

CAPTAIN Dictation.

BOY Yes, Captain. 75

CAPTAIN Our last port of call on the African coast. Only three slaves of the last batch of forty have died on the six day river passage. May God be thanked for it. We have branded and documented and all slaves are now insured against death on route to the Indies. They are to be exercised daily in the hope that fresh air will reduce disease. One cup of maize porridge per slave per day should ensure that stores are sufficient for the voyage. 80

That'll be all.

BOY Yes, Captain.

THE HOLD

*Listen. A **Girl** is crying. Crying in the darkness.* 85

Woman Child. Child. Listen to me. Don't waste your tears. You owe it to your

	ancestors to live.	
GIRL	<i>I just want my Mama. I don't know where I am. Oh, please help me!</i> Please!	
SAILOR	(From above.) Shut your noise down there!	90
WOMAN	And how can you or I help each other?	
GIRL	I don't know! I am so frightened! I am still sitting in my own filthy mess. <i>The two women sit quietly for a moment.</i>	
WOMAN	Riddle me this, riddle me that.	
GIRL	What is your riddle?	95
WOMAN	What part of you stays free when your arms and legs are tied?	
GIRL	But all of me is tied. None of me is free.	
WOMAN	Think, child, think.	
GIRL	But I'm scared! I think I might go mad! I think I want to die!	
WOMAN	Tell me what you see!	100
GIRL	Just what you see. Only dark. Why do you ask me when you see the same as I do... nothing.	
WOMAN	Only nothing?	
GIRL	You know what I can see. Rows and rows of people. Men, women and children. Piled up like wood for fire.	105
WOMAN	And what else?	
GIRL	Why are you asking me these things?	
WOMAN	Don't question your elders! Tell me what you see.	
GIRL	I see a little light. Just a little light through a crack in the roof. Like light through the leaves of a great dark tree.	110
WOMAN	So what part of you is free?	
GIRL	Well... my eyes, I suppose.	
WOMAN	And what else?	
GIRL	My stomach. I'm hungry. They give us so little.	
WOMAN	And what else? What else is free?	115
GIRL	I don't know! Why do you ask me such things? You're not my mother!	
WOMAN	Tell me what you see.	
GIRL	Ooh. I hate spiders. Sometimes they make webs in the roof of our hut. And I get my mother to throw them outside. And if she's not there I get a big stone and I squash them dead and flat. Squish!	120
WOMAN	And do you see a spider?	
GIRL	Yes. Why else would I talk about him?	
WOMAN	Tell me what he is doing.	
GIRL	Why? What for?	
WOMAN	Just to pass the time...	125

THE CABIN

CAPTAIN	Take this log entry, Boy, and then you can help in the hold.	
BOY	What's to be done in the hold, Captain?	
CAPTAIN	One thing at a time. We have embarked for Jamaica without incident. As we earlier feared, the	130

fever which was rife on the coast before our departure has taken hold on the ship. Crew and slaves alike are showing signs of infection.

- BOY Captain, what happens to the cargo when we get to Jamaica?
- CAPTAIN We auction them, and if this fever leads to depreciation, it'll be at a loss, though the insurance will provide at least some recompense. 135
- BOY Who will be recompensed, Sir?
- CAPTAIN Our masters in London, so start praying they are merciful should we lose too many.
- BOY Our masters, sir?
- CAPTAIN Yes, boy, our masters. Do you think there is a man alive who has no masters of one kind or another? 140

THE HOLD

A Girl peering through the dark at a spider we cannot see. A woman coughing. See how the same web links them all together.

- WOMAN (Coughs.) 145
- GIRL Are you ill? I wish we weren't so tied so I could see your face.
- WOMAN You are, so you can't. You'll have to use your ears for eyes.
- GIRL But that is impossible!
- WOMAN Don't tie yourself up with words like impossible. Ears can be better seeing than eyes can, if you listen and don't just hear. Now tell me: what is our Anansi doing now? 150
- GIRL Anansi?
- WOMAN Anansi is the name of that spider.
- GIRL Look at him! He can hardly get his web started! He scrambles up to that beam, and then falls, and then he creeps up again, then he falls again, and each time he tries he can't get a single thread to stick to that beam. Why doesn't he just give up and start in a new place? Maybe he'll just give up and die... 155
- WOMAN But he is free, and you are not.
- GIRL But he's so little and weak. He doesn't know any better. Look at him! He's just trying and getting nowhere. 160
- Wait! He managed! He got one little thread onto the beam! A little, little spider with thin, thin legs. Ha! Anansi. Who gave him that name!
- WOMAN You may think he's too weak and small to have a name, but that little spider Anansi was once a king. 165
- GIRL Only lions and elephants can be kings.
- WOMAN And why do you say that?
- GIRL Because they're the strongest and the most beautiful.
- WOMAN Listen. I will tell you a story. An Anansi story.

THE FOREST OF STORIES

170

Imagine... A forest of stories. It looks just the way you see it in your mind. A mix of fairy tales you heard as a child to high-tech cartoon fantasy. It is all places and styles. In the forest of stories there is no such thing as time.

The girl is still tied up in the ship, but dimly through the trees we can make out beams, and ropes... or are they branches and creepers.

175

1 NAMING THE STORIES

ANANSI	I am Anansi small and quick Some folk are bigger, but usually thick A crafty spider's what I am I'm never without the smartest plan The smartest plan and the cleverest head Is how I keep from getting dead 'Cos the forest is full of every kind Of creature you can bring to mind From Tiger to Rabbit to Snake to Bee And every one is bigger than me But how do I do it? Wait and see I can teach you things if you listen to me. Two legs to dance and two to run Two are free for banana fun And the other two apart from those Are for scratching my head and picking my nose. <i>A terrible roar thunders through the forest.</i> Tiger come this way. One false move and I'm dead. Tiger's so royal, Tiger's so bold, Tiger's so strong, that the flowers close up when Tiger comes by. The birds pretend to be closed up flowers when Tigers come by. The monkeys pretend to be birds pretending to be closed up flowers when Tiger comes by. And the elephants...	180
		185
		190
		195
TIGER	Anansi!	
ANANSI	Tiger, Tiger, burning bright. You're the boss by day or night.	200
TIGER	Sweet talking me Anansi? Forget it. I've been thinking.	
ANANSI	Thinking? Well, that's big change for you, Tiger!	
TIGER	What do you mean? Answer me, or I'll pull your arms and legs and brains out one by one.	
ANANSI	Just that you're so busy roaring and stomping about the forest being grand and frightening people and... that sort of thing. Not much time left to think when you've got that kind of schedule. You Royals have it tough.	205
TIGER	I've been thinking about our stories.	
ANANSI	Stories?	
TIGER	The stories that will be told of our fame, our power and our deeds long after we are gone and (Heaven forbid) forgotten. They will be called Incredibly Grand Magnificent and Wise Beyond Belief Tiger Stories and I shall star in all of them.	210
ANANSI	Oh, that will never do.	
TIGER	What do you mean?	215
ANANSI	Too obvious.	

TIGER	I'll make toothpicks out of your ribs and a hat out of your bum.	
ANANSI	I just mean that if they were named after a less magnificent and heroic and unbelievable person than yourself, like Rabbit or Mouse or possibly even a little squirt like, me, then people, all over the world, to the end of time, would be so amazed when they found out that YOU were the real star of the stories that they would be even more impressed, your Majesty, than they would been in the first place.	220
TIGER	You can make words stand on their heads, Anansi. But I won't let our stories... my stories... be named after you unless you do the impossible to prove you deserve it.	225
ANANSI	The impossible?	
TIGER	Bring me Mister Snake, tied to a pole, and the naming of the stories will be yours.	
ANANSI	I'll bring you Mister Snake, tied to a pole, quick-quick, chop-chop, swift-swift...	230
TIGER	Get on with it! Not that you've got a hope... <i>(He goes proudly off.)</i>	

2 TRICKING SNAKE

ANANSI	Now, Mister Snake is a clever man But I will catch him if I can He's wise and shiny, cool and long Smart and cross and VERY strong But though I'm tiny and he's big Let's try him with a juicy Pig!	235
	<i>Along comes Snake. Somehow, Anansi has found a pig which he leaves in the middle of the path with a rather obvious noose dangling in front of it which anyone with a long enough neck can easily avoid.</i>	240
SNAKE	Yum, Yum. A nice little tasty little, juicy little pig. What a shame someone has tried to set him in a trap for me. Silly, stupid, so, so, dumb: I'll just stretch out my neck and gobble 'um!	245
ANANSI	Oh, nits, bugs and maggots! and blast as well! A better trap is what I need. Let's try him with a chicken. <i>This time Anansi ties the string to a chicken, which he has amazingly found! He hides behind a bush with the other end wrapped around one of his many hands.</i>	250
SNAKE	My, my, my, what a super, succulent, salivating surprise. What a pity it comes complete with a trap, yet again. I'll just slide my neck sideways and gobble 'um. <i>All Snake needs to do is give the string a hefty yank, and Anansi ends up on his back in the path before him.</i>	255
ANANSI	All right Mr Snake. I give up. It was the only way I could think of saving your reputation but it's failed and I apologise for any inconvenience caused.	
SNAKE	Reputation? What has setting silly little traps got to do with my supreme reputation?	260
ANANSI	Well... now that I can see you close up, as it were, I'm sure that Tiger and Rabbit, Parrot and Monkey and everyone else in the Forest were wrong about you being short.	

SNAKE	Short! How dare you! I am the longest creature in the whole wide world!	265
ANANSI	Yes, well I know that now, and you know that, but everybody else decided that this year's prize for the Longest Creature of the Year should go to... no, I can't say it, you'll only be upset.	
SNAKE	Who? What? Who gets this prize instead of me? I'm the longest creature in the forest and everybody knows it!	270
ANANSI	Well... we were thinking of giving the prize to that bamboo tree over there... not a very interesting choice, but the committee did agree...	
SNAKE	A bamboo tree! But any silly, simpering, snivelling little snit can see that I'm longer than that stupid tree! And I'm wise, and superior and intelligent as well!	275
ANANSI	Yes, but none of the committee are here to prove that to, and even I can't tell your real length when you're all coiled up.	
SNAKE	Oh, for goodness sake. Why do I have to do everything myself? Being the cleverest and most beautiful being in the entire forest (not to mention by far the longest) is so tedious sometimes.	280
ANANSI	Oh, it must be awful being as superior as you.	
SNAKE	Stop grovelling. Now here's what we do. You cut down the bamboo tree, tie me to it so that all my coils are stretched out, out, out, then you carry me to the Longest Creature of the Year Committee and I win. Is that clear?	
ANANSI	Perfectly clear, Mr Snake.	285
SNAKE	Well, hurry up then, I haven't got all day!	
	<i>Anansi ties Snake to the tree. Just as he's finished, Tiger comes back.</i>	
TIGER	Anansi, I don't know how you do it, but I suspect your methods are not quite honest.	
SNAKE	So, where is my prize?	290
TIGER	Anansi, I don't know what Snake means, but the Stories we live in will be called Anansi stories from this day on. As for you, Mr Snake, have you any idea how stupid you look?	
SNAKE	I'll get you for this, Anansi, you... you... Arachnid!	
ANANSI	Using what for legs, my friend?	295
	You're all tied up, you cannot bend When you can squiggle from your tree Then you can settle things with me Your strings are tied, your trap is set And scissors aren't invented yet.	300
	And that, my friends, is why they call the stories after Anansi... that's me!	

ON BOARD

THE HOLD

Listen... even in the darkest dark there is laughter.

GIRL	So Anansi was the weakest and the strongest at the same time.	305
WOMAN	Yes. You listen and you learn. When I was a child my mother told all the Anansi stories to me, and now we are together I will tell some of those stories to you.	
GIRL	But you're not my mother.	

WOMAN	What good is your mother to you now?	310
GIRL	I don't know.	
WOMAN	Can she make you strong?	
GIRL	The thought of her does.	
WOMAN	Listen! You must be strong the way Anansi is strong. Strong on the inside. And you do have a mother.	315
GIRL	But she isn't here!	
WOMAN	Africa is your mother. I will teach you stories. They are a treasure no-one can steal, even if they have stolen your body. Tell me what you see.	320
GIRL	No!	
WOMAN	Tell me, girl: tell me what you see.	
GIRL	The beginning of a web in the dark. How strong those tiny threads must be for Anansi to swing from them.	
WOMAN	Strong enough, you see? From inside himself he finds the strength to make his web: just enough and no more. Enough is all he needs to catch a fly.	325
GIRL	How did you know a fly was in the web? I didn't see it till you spoke, and you can't see the web at all!	
WOMAN	Do I need to see something to know it's really there?	
GIRL	No, I don't suppose so.	330
WOMAN	So it is with strength.	

THE CABIN

See how two men share such a small space. Miles and miles apart.

BOY	(Reading.) Last night I heard them singing down below. The song was as deep as the sea, but warm, not cold. I don't know if I want to know what it's like down in the hold.	335
CAPTAIN	What is that book there? The little blue one.	
BOY	It is nothing, Captain, just a kind of diary.	
CAPTAIN	A diary? That sort of nonsense is for lasses. Put it away and get on with your work.	340
BOY	But you keep a diary, Captain.	
CAPTAIN	These are the ship's journals and accounts. The ship's log.	
BOY	But they still tell a story.	
CAPTAIN	The only story that counts, young man. The story that says that money makes the world go round.	345
BOY	Is Mr Newton wrong, then, to talk of gravity?	
CAPTAIN	Smart talk me, young fellow, and I'll whip you.	
BOY	Sorry, Father.	
CAPTAIN	Captain.	
BOY	Captain.	350

THE HOLD

GIRL	Mother? Are you there?	
WOMAN	I was walking in the forest.	
GIRL	But you're all tied up, like me!	
WOMAN	Weren't you listening?	355
GIRL	All I can hear is crying. People are getting sick.	
WOMAN	You must listen even more carefully. Not with sick ears but with your forest ears that hear the health of the sick and the last breath of the healthy.	
	<i>Peer into the darkness. See, in the background, two sailors untying a body and dragging it out of sight. Hear their mumbled curses. What or who are they cursing?</i>	360
GIRL	Oh, look! Mama, look! They're dragging away a man! He doesn't move!	
WOMAN	Silence! Don't let them notice you!	
GIRL	But what are they doing? How rough and cruel their language sounds. Like animals.	365
WOMAN	You're still not listening. Animals are never cruel. They only live, and die.	
GIRL	Well, the pale men deserve to die.	
WOMAN	Who can say who deserves to live or die. Listen again. What do you hear in them.	
GIRL	Hard noises. They act as if we aren't really here. If they try to drag me away from you I'll bite them till they bleed.	370
WOMAN	Then they'll flog you, and what will you have achieved? Haven't you seen them flog the others? To them you're not a person, just a thing.	
GIRL	Will they eat us?	
WOMAN	Not the parts you can see. They eat your soul and leave your body empty. I pity them. Live well, die well, that's all.	375
GIRL	And pity them?	
WOMAN	Shh! Look, and learn.	
	<i>A Sailor and the Boy come past, but stop and look and say...</i>	
SAILOR	Now see this old 'un here, Boy. We have to keep an eye on her for the fever. If she looks any worse than this it's over the side.	380
BOY	But why?	
SAILOR	Orders, lad. It's for the sake of the others. Come on with you. It stinks like Death's own backyard down here and you're white as a little ghost yourself.	385
	<i>They go on their way, brushing aside a spider's web as they pass.</i>	
GIRL	That one was just a boy my age.	
WOMAN	They don't come in just one size, child. Even these great conquerors can't build a person from nothing. They grow just like you.	
GIRL	I know it, mother. That's our secret, like spinning the web.	390
WOMAN	Now you're showing strength. Weave your little web, like a dream in the dark, and wait, wait, wait.	
GIRL	But what are we waiting for?	
WOMAN	Not knowing is part of the strength of it.	
GIRL	But they are throwing people away!	395

WOMAN Riddle me this. Riddle me that.
 GIRL What is your riddle?
 WOMAN Listen to my story.

THE FOREST OF STORIES

*In this story animals and people are mixed up together. **Soliday** and **Gran** are human, so is the **King**. **Soliday** is a hero, any hero you like.* 400

1 THE WORLD BLOTTED OUT

ANIMALS Leopards leap and bunnies bounce
 Peacocks preen, flamingoes flounce
 The forest of Stories is alive 405
 With birds on the wing and bees in the hive.
 With a buzz and a flap we dance the day
 We dance our cares away
 With a shriek and a squawk we dance the day
 We dance we dance our cares away. 410
Thunder rolls across the darkening sky.

ANIMALS Mancrow's coming! Despair and death!
 Close your eyes and bate your breath!
 Huge as horror, vast as night
 Blotting the sun out, eating light 415
 Close your eyes and bate your breath
 Mancrow's coming! Despair and death!
*In comes **Mancrow**, as dark and huge and horrible as any of you would expect a creature called Mancrow to be.*

MANCROW Bring me babies, bring me your eggs 420
 I'll drain your skulls to the desperate dregs
 I'll suck out your eyes and empty your veins
 I'll guzzle your guts and I'll feast on your brains
 I've eaten them old and I'm hungry for new
 And once I've had them I'll devour all of YOU! 425
There is a lot of screaming and panic – just as you'd expect!

2 THE PROCLAMATION

SERVANT Hear ye! Hear ye! O yes! O no! O maybe!
 Hear ye here and hear ye there
 Hear left ears right here and right ears over there! 430
 KING Oh, dearest friends...

SERVANT Ears of the living, ears of the dead...

KING O public true...

SERVANT On either side of the average head...

KING Shut UP! 435

SERVANT I was merely doing my job, sire.

KING Yes, well, you've done it. Now scram.

SERVANT Typical.

KING What was that?

SERVANT Mythical, sire, I said mythical. 440

KING What is? (*He whispers to the Servant.*) Look, I've got the public to address here and they don't just sit and gawp, you know... as a rule...

SERVANT I said mythical, sire, this huge Mancrow bird eating up the whole world and everything... selfish, I call it...

KING Don't tell them the whole proclamation! I'm supposed to be king! I am King! 445

Ladies and Gentlemen, good and true
 Boy have I got news for you
 Mancrow's back – as you have heard
 (He glares at the Servant.) 450

The mythical, magical, murderous bird
 Whose wings have plunged us into night
 And fearful; fumbling, fidgeting fright!
 Whoever can save us from this threat
 In addition to untold wealth will get 455

The hand of my daughter and the rest of her too
 If they can PROVE they're the one who slew
 This horrible, hungry, hideous hawk.
 Now, let's see some action and less fancy talk.

3 THE INITIATION 465

GRAN Soliday! Soliday!

SOLIDAY Here, Gran.

GRAN But what are you doing? You've just BEEN out hunting!

SOLIDAY This isn't ordinary hunting, Gran.

GRAN Now, Soliday. I may be old and splintery-boned... 470

SOLIDAY Gran...

GRAN Don't interrupt me when I'm enjoying being a miserable old woman! I may be old and creaky-kneed...

SOLIDAY Gran, I'm going...

GRAN I may be old and... 475

SOLIDAY No, really you're not!

GRAN crotchety-fingered, but...

SOLIDAY Gran, I'm going to help the King...

GRAN I may be old and...

SOLIDAY Look, I've said you're not. 480

GRAN rustily-elbowed...

SOLIDAY Yes, alright then, so you're a decrepit old windbag!

GRAN Then look me in the eye. That's where the truth is. Stand up to me, and you can probably manage this scrawny old Mancrow and still have time to fetch me some mangoes on the way home. Hold still. (*Looks him in the eye.*) 485

You'll do.

SOLIDAY Wish me luck then, Gran. I'm off to kill Mancrow with my very own bow.

GRAN Wait. You need arrows.

SOLIDAY Oh, I'll whittle them as I go along.

GRAN No ordinary arrows will do. Wait, I said. 490
 I'm a sharp old woman as you know
 And I've six sharp points before you go.
She seems to conjure from nowhere six spectacular arrows.
 This is for hope: without it we quail
 This is for wits: without them we fail 495
 This is for fear: your fear makes you strong
 This is for anger at everything wrong
 This is your name, simple and true
 And this is the secret held only by you.
 Now go, without a word. you have everything you need. 500

4 THE BATTLE

MANCROW Good morning to you, Soliday.
 SOLIDAY Good morning to you, Mancrow, bird of darkness.
 MANCROW And how might I help you, Soliday?
 It's far too late to run away. 505
 SOLIDAY Just sit still then, ugly one
 And eat my arrows one by one.
 MANCROW Pipsqueak!
 Trying to kill me? You pitiful thing!
 It's like tying up the night with a noose of string 510
 Trying to shoot stormclouds with a straw
 I'll skewer you through with a single claw!
*One by one, **Soliday** fires the arrows in the order given by **Gran**.*
 SOLIDAY Take that!
 MANCROW Your hope means nothing to me... 515
 SOLIDAY And that!
 MANCROW Your wits are far too wee!
 SOLIDAY And that!
 MANCROW Your fear is justified...
 SOLIDAY Take that! 520
 MANCROW Your anger's empty pride.
 SOLIDAY And that!
 MANCROW Your name will be snuffed out...
 SOLIDAY AND THIS!
 MANCROW What's 'this'? Your faith? Your doubt? 525
 Your sins? Your patience? Mercy? Might?
 That's odd... I usually get this right.
 Which means I'm wrong. which as King said
 Means that I might as well be...
Thud. He's dead! 530
***Soliday** takes a feather. Anansi appears from where he's been watching and steals one.*
 ANANSI If in doubt, chicken out. If there's a prize, improvise.
 When you've a thirst, get there first.
 If there's liquor, get there quicker. 535

I am the man that killed Mancrow...

5 THE REWARD

ANANSI	I am the man that killed Mancrow...	
KING	The day is saved! The sun is bright! Weakness has triumphed over might!	540
ANANSI	What do you mean, weakness? Getting this feather took me all I've got!	
KING	I know, dear boy, I know. And to prove I'm as good as my word allow me to offer in marriage my daughter Patricia.	
PATRICIA	But I'm married already, Daddy.	
KING	Very well, then: my daughter Arabella.	545
ARABELLA	I'm not your daughter, I'm your Aunt.	
ANANSI	Couldn't we just start the banquet while you all sort yourselves out? <i>He starts to eat.</i>	
KING	My daughter Lucretia. Where is she?	
ARABELLA	Mancrow ate her last week.	550
KING	My daughter Anastasia.	
BOB	I'm not your daughter Anastasia, I'm your son, Bob.	
ANANSI	Look, I'm quite happy with just the huge banquet, really...	
KING	But what, pray, is this? <i>Enter Soliday with a feather. Anansi scuttles off with the food.</i>	555
KING	And just who do you think you are?	
SOLIDAY	I am the man that killed Mancrow.	
KING	I've heard that one before. Look me in the eye. (<i>Soliday</i> does.) Oh. Then who is... and indeed where is...? Scoundrel! Imposter! After him! <i>The Servants chase around the stage and come at last to a locked door. They bang on the door.</i>	560
SERVANTS	Knock, knock.	
ANANSI	Who's there?	
SERVANTS	Never mind who we are, we are looking for Anansi.	
ANANSI	But how do I know who you are?	565
SERVANTS	Ask us knock, knock.	
ANANSI	Knock, knock.	
SERVANTS	Who's there?	
ANANSI	I thought you wanted to know who YOU were.	
SERVANTS	NO! We want to know who YOU are!	570
ANANSI	Knock, knock.	
SERVANTS	Who's there? (That's better.)	
ANANSI	Come in and find out! <i>They do, but...</i>	
SERVANTS	He's gone!!!	575

KING (Handing rewards to *Soliday*.)
 This is for hope: without it we quail
 This is for wits: without them we fail
 This is for fear: your fear makes you strong
 This is for anger at everything wrong 580
 This is your name, simple and true
 And no-one can pass on your secret but you.

ANANSI (*Sneaking onto the stage.*)
 Off they go to the wedding bed
 Me? I'll stay just me... and fed. 585
 Live on the outside, grab what I can
 Be myself – quick spider man.
 I am the man that killed Mancrow.

ON BOARD

THE HOLD 590

GIRL Why does Anansi keep looking for trouble?
 WOMAN Because if you have wits like Anansi you have to use them. Like a knife,
 you have to keep them sharp. And like a knife, you can use them rightly or
 wrongly: to cut bread with, to live, to kill, or to harm yourself. One little
 knife against all these men: that's all you've got. Keep it hidden! 595

GIRL Mother?
 WOMAN One more question, and that's all.
 GIRL What do they do with the people they don't throw away?
 WOMAN Do you want to know the truth?
 GIRL Yes. 600

WOMAN They sell, they buy, they buy and sell.
 GIRL I knew it.
 WOMAN Then why did you ask?
 GIRL Because I want to know what's to happen to me. You see, Mother, they
 won't throw me away. 605
 WOMAN Go to sleep.

ON DECK

*Smell... The salt of the sea crashing the bow. the clean fresh wind singing in
 the ropes. The putrid stench oozing up from the moaning grates.*

*The **Boy** sits crying in a corner.* 610

SAILOR What's all this? You're a lad, a big 'un an' all. You don't cry.
 BOY I don't feel big.
 SAILOR You're big enough to birch, which is what Captain will do if he finds you
 here like this. You don't let your side down.
 BOY But I'm not on anybody's side. Nobody's on mine. 615
 SAILOR Not now, maybe, but one day you'll be Management, and that's the right
 side to be on, I reckon. Better'n mine, at any rate.
 BOY May I...?

SAILOR	Now there is no time for knot-tying, if that's what you are after.	
BOY	May I ask you something?	620
SAILOR	What can I tell you that you don't know already from your fancy books?	
BOY	That's not the same and you know it. Books don't listen, fathers don't listen. All I get is told things.	
SAILOR	So what is it? I'll be flogged if I dawdle here all day.	
BOY	What colour is God?	625
SAILOR	<i>(Laughs.)</i> Blow me! If that doesn't take it for a question to end them all! What do you mean, lad?	
BOY	Well if He's a man like they say, only a man that's always good and never dies, then what colour is He?	
SAILOR	All I know is what they told me as a lad, and that's that we're all of us made in His image.	630
BOY	So that man they threw in the sea today...	
SAILOR	Is that what you were crying about?	
BOY	Listen! That means that man looks just as much like God as you or I?	
SAILOR	No, no. You're out of your depth there, Boy. Slaves are different... more like, beasts, or so they reckon.	635
BOY	Isn't it true! I saw a girl today, down... down there...	
SAILOR	Your trouble is too much imagination. You think too much and some thoughts is plain dangerous.	
BOY	But she wasn't a beast! She was just like me!	640
SAILOR	I've no time for this. A man is a man and a beast is a beast. The good book says that men were given to rule over beasts as they see fit, and neither you nor I are free to question that. Now let me be. Beasts or no, I'm just doing my job, and if throwing away spoiled cargo is part of it, then who am I to argue. If you want to know more, young sir, ask yourself whose fiddle your father dances to and why he jigs at all. Aye, there's a God to be reckoned with!	645

THE CABIN

BOY	<i>(Reading.)</i> Today they threw a man away. The sea was grey, so was his face. But the sea looked angry and he looked like he was asleep.	650
CAPTAIN	I warned you, boy... <i>He takes the diary and hits the boy.</i>	
BOY	But those are my thoughts...	
CAPTAIN	I leave you to work on the ledgers and you betray me.	
BOY	Let me have it back, Father. Please.	655
CAPTAIN	<i>You'll take this book and you'll throw it overboard. Then I might consider forgiveness for that and your other acts of dalliance.</i>	
BOY	But I haven't done anything.	

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