

**OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION**

1916/02/T/PRE

DRAMA

Written Paper Option A

TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2010: Morning

DURATION: 2 hours

SUITABLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

READ INSTRUCTIONS OVERLEAF

INFORMATION TO 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.

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.

5

BOY: Father, why do I have to study when everyone else is up on deck?

CAPTAIN Silence, boy, and look to your books.

BOY But Father, I still don't see how all those people on the shore can be a cargo.

10

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.

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.

15

BOY They looked just like people to me. But they were tied together. They looked frightened. Why...?

20

CAPTAIN (*Cutting him off.*) I do not have to give you explanations. I am your father.

BOY I thought you said your name was Captain.

25

CAPTAIN (*Hits him.*) You young pup! Have that for your cheek, and there's worse waiting for you when you get down below.

ON DECK

Look... a GIRL is waiting to be taken below. 30
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 35
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. 40
Where is my mother? Where did all the pale
men come from? Why don't you answer me?

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 45
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!
He bundles her down the hatch. 50

THE CABIN

BOY (*Reading.*) Yesterday we put in to the
West African coast for the last time before
the long haul to the Indies. I was looking 55
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 60
to my questions. Who were 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 **65**
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. **70**
She caught my eye but turned away. She
reminded me of Grandmama.
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 **75**
secret thoughts if Father gives me the chance
from time to time.

THE HOLD

*It is almost completely dark, but look... The
outline of hundreds of people packed together **80**
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 **85**
tied to the other side of the beam. We will hear
but never see this person.*

GIRL I remember the river, carrying me further
and further away from my mother on its
great brown back. They tied us together. I **90**
don't know why.
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 **95**
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.**

100

105

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.**

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.**

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.

That'll be all.

BOY **Yes, Captain.**

THE HOLD

	<i>Listen. A <u>GIRL</u> is crying. Crying in the darkness.</i>	130
Woman	Child. Child. Listen to me. Don't waste your tears. You owe it to your ancestors to live.	
<i>GIRL</i>	<i>I just want my Mama. I don't know where I am. Oh, please help me! Please!</i>	135
SAILOR	(From above.) Shut your noise down there!	
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>	140
WOMAN	Riddle me this, riddle me that.	
GIRL	What is your riddle?	
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.	145
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!	
GIRL	Just what you see. Only dark. Why do you ask me when you see the same as I do... nothing.	150
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.	155
WOMAN	And what else?	
GIRL	Why are you asking me these things?	
WOMAN	Don't question your elders! Tell me what you see.	160

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.	
WOMAN	So what part of you is free?	
GIRL	Well... my eyes, I suppose.	165
WOMAN	And what else?	
GIRL	My stomach. I'm hungry. They give us so little.	
WOMAN	And what else? What else is free?	
GIRL	I don't know! Why do you ask me such things? You're not my mother!	170
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!	175
WOMAN	And do you see a spider?	
GIRL	Yes. Why else would I talk about him?	
WOMAN	Tell me what he is doing.	180
GIRL	Why? What for?	
WOMAN	Just to pass the time...	

THE CABIN

CAPTAIN	Take this log entry, Boy, and then you can help in the hold.	185
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 fever which was rife on the coast before our departure has taken hold on the ship.	190

Crew and slaves alike are showing signs of infection.

- BOY** Captain, what happens to the cargo when we get to Jamaica? **195**
- 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.
- BOY** Who will be recompensed, Sir? **200**
- 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? **205**

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. **210**

- WOMAN** (*Coughs.*)
- 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. **215**
- 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? **220**
- GIRL** Anansi?
- WOMAN** Anansi is the name of that spider.

GIRL	<p>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...</p>	<p>225</p> <p>230</p>
WOMAN	But he is free, and you are not.	
GIRL	<p>But he's so little and weak. He doesn't know any better. Look at him! He's just trying and getting nowhere.</p> <p>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!</p>	<p>235</p>
WOMAN	You may think he's too weak and small to have a name, but that little spider Anansi was once a king.	<p>240</p>
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.	<p>245</p>
WOMAN	Listen. I will tell you a story. An Anansi story.	

THE FOREST OF STORIES

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. **250**

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. **255**

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 **260**
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 **265**
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 **270**
Two are free for banana fun
And the other two apart from those
Are for scratching my head and picking my nose.
A terrible roar thunders through the forest. **275**
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. **280**

The monkeys pretend to be birds pretending to be closed up flowers when Tiger comes by. And the elephants...

TIGER

Anansi!

ANANSI

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright. You're the boss by day or night.

285

TIGER

Sweet talking me Anansi? Forget it. I've been thinking.

ANANSI

Thinking? Well, that's big change for you, Tiger!

290

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.

295

TIGER

I've been thinking about our stories.

300

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.

305

ANANSI

Oh, that will never do.

TIGER

What do you mean?

ANANSI

Too obvious.

310

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 have been in the first place.	315 320
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.	325
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...	330
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!	335 340
	<i>Along comes <u>SNAKE</u>. Somehow, <u>ANANSI</u> 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>	345
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! **350**

ANANSI Oh, nits, bugs and maggots! and blast as well! A better trap is what I need. Let's try him with a chicken.
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. **355**

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. **360**
All SNAKE needs to do is give the string a hefty yank, and ANANSI ends up on his back in the path before him.

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. **365**

SNAKE Reputation? What has setting silly little traps got to do with my supreme reputation? **370**

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! **375**

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. **380**

SNAKE	Who? What? Who gets this prize instead of me? I'm the longest creature in the forest and everybody knows it!	
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...	385
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!	390
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.	395
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.	400
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?	405
ANANSI	Perfectly clear, Mr Snake.	
SNAKE	Well, hurry up then, I haven't got all day! <i><u>ANANSI</u> ties <u>SNAKE</u> to the tree. Just as he's finished, <u>TIGER</u> comes back.</i>	410
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?	

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? **415**

SNAKE I'll get you for this, Anansi, you... you... Arachnid! **420**

ANANSI Using what for legs, my friend?
You're all tied up, you cannot bend
When you can squiggle from your tree
Then you can settle things with me **425**
Your strings are tied, your trap is set
And scissors aren't invented yet.
And that, my friends, is why they call the stories after Anansi... that's me!

ON BOARD **430**

THE HOLD

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

GIRL So Anansi was the weakest and the strongest at the same time. **435**

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. **440**

WOMAN What good is your mother to you now?

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. **445**
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. **450**
Tell me what you see.
GIRL No!
WOMAN Tell me, girl: tell me what you see. **455**
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. **460**
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! **465**
WOMAN Do I need to see something to know it's really there?
GIRL No, I don't suppose so.
WOMAN So it is with strength.

THE CABIN **470**

*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. **475**

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.	480
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.	485
BOY	Is Mr Newton wrong, then, to talk of gravity?	
CAPTAIN	Smart talk me, young fellow, and I'll whip you.	490
BOY	Sorry, Father.	
CAPTAIN	Captain.	
BOY	Captain.	

THE HOLD

495

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?	
GIRL	All I can hear is crying. People are getting sick.	500
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.	505
	<i>Peer into the darkness. See, in the background, two sailors untying a body and</i>	

dragging it out of sight. Hear their mumbled curses. What or who are they cursing?

GIRL	Oh, look! Mama, look! They're dragging away a man! He doesn't move!	510
WOMAN	Silence! Don't let them notice you!	
GIRL	But what are they doing? How rough and cruel their language sounds. Like animals.	
WOMAN	You're still not listening. Animals are never cruel. They only live, and die.	515
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.	520
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.	525
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.	530
GIRL	And pity them?	
WOMAN	Shh! Look, and learn. <i>A <u>SAILOR</u> and the <u>BOY</u> 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.	535
BOY	But why?	
SAILOR	Orders, lad. It's for the sake of the others. Come on with you. It stinks like Death's own	540

backyard down here and you're white as a little ghost yourself.

They go on their way, brushing aside a spider's web as they pass.

GIRL That one was just a boy my age. 545

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. 550

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. 555

GIRL But they are throwing people away!

WOMAN Riddle me this. Riddle me that.

GIRL What is your riddle?

WOMAN Listen to my story.

THE FOREST OF STORIES 560

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.

1 THE WORLD BLOTTED OUT 565

ANIMALS Leopards leap and bunnies bounce
Peacocks preen, flamingoes flounce
The forest of Stories is alive
With birds on the wing and bees in the hive.
With a buzz and a flap we dance the day 570

We dance our cares away
With a shriek and a squawk we dance the
day
We dance we dance our cares away.

Thunder rolls across the darkening sky. **575**

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
Close your eyes and bate your breath **580**
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 **585**

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 **590**
And once I've had them I'll devour all of
YOU!

*There is a lot of screaming and panic – just as
you'd expect!*

2 THE PROCLAMATION **595**

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!

KING Oh, dearest friends... **600**

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

KING O public true...

SERVANT On either side of the average head...

KING Shut UP!

SERVANT I was merely doing my job, sire. **605**

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

SERVANT Typical.

KING What was that?

SERVANT Mythical, sire, I said mythical.

KING What is? (*He whispers to the SERVANT.*) **610**
 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... **615**

KING Don't tell them the whole proclamation! I'm supposed to be king! I am King!
 Ladies and Gentlemen, good and true
 Boy have I got news for you **620**
 Mancrow's back – as you have heard
 (He glares at the Servant.)
 The mythical, magical, murderous bird
 Whose wings have plunged us into night
 And fearful; fumbling, fidgeting fright! **625**
 Whoever can save us from this threat
 In addition to untold wealth will get
 The hand of my daughter and the rest of her too
 If they can PROVE they're the one who slew **630**
 This horrible, hungry, hideous hawk.
 Now, let's see some action and less fancy talk.

3 THE INITIATION

GRAN	Soliday! Soliday!	635
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...	640
SOLIDAY	Gran...	
GRAN	Don't interrupt me when I'm enjoying being a miserable old woman! I may be old and creaky-kneed...	645
SOLIDAY	Gran, I'm going...	
GRAN	I may be old and...	
SOLIDAY	No, really you're not!	
GRAN	crotchety-fingered, but...	
SOLIDAY	Gran, I'm going to help the King...	650
GRAN	I may be old and...	
SOLIDAY	Look, I've said you're not.	
GRAN	rustily-elbowed...	
SOLIDAY	Yes, alright then, so you're a decrepit old windbag!	655
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. (<i>Looks him in the eye.</i>) You'll do.	660
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.	665

GRAN No ordinary arrows will do. Wait, I said.
 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.* 670

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
 This is your name, simple and true 675
 And this is the secret held only by you.
 Now go, without a word, you have
 everything you need.

4 THE BATTLE

MANCROW Good morning to you, Soliday. 680

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.

SOLIDAY Just sit still then, ugly one 685
 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 690
 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! 695

MANCROW Your hope means nothing to me...

SOLIDAY And that!

MANCROW Your wits are far too wee!
 SOLIDAY And that!
 MANCROW Your fear is justified... 700
 SOLIDAY Take that!
 MANCROW Your anger's empty pride.
 SOLIDAY And that!
 MANCROW Your name will be snuffed out...
 SOLIDAY AND THIS! 705
 MANCROW What's 'this'? Your faith? Your doubt?
 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... 710
Thud. He's dead!
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. 715
 When you've a thirst, get there first.
 If there's liquor, get there quicker.
 I am the man that killed Mancrow...

5 THE REWARD

ANANSI I am the man that killed Mancrow... 720
 KING The day is saved! The sun is bright!
 Weakness has triumphed over might!
 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 725
 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.

ARABELLA I'm not your daughter, I'm your Aunt. 730

ANANSI Couldn't we just start the banquet while you
all sort yourselves out?
He starts to eat.

KING My daughter Lucretia. Where is she?

ARABELLA Mancrow ate her last week. 735

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... 740

KING But what, pray, is this?
*Enter SOLIDAY with a feather. ANANSI
scuttles off with the food.*

KING And just who do you think you are?

SOLIDAY I am the man that killed Mancrow. 745

KING I've heard that one before. Look me in the
eye. (SOLIDAY does.) Oh. Then who is... and
indeed where is...? Scoundrel! Imposter!
After him!
*The SERVANTS chase around the stage and
come at last to a locked door. They bang on
the door.* 750

SERVANTS Knock, knock.

ANANSI Who's there?

SERVANTS Never mind who we are, we are looking for
Anansi. 755

ANANSI But how do I know who you are?

SERVANTS Ask us knock, knock.

ANANSI Knock, knock.

SERVANTS Who's there? 760

ANANSI I thought you wanted to know who YOU
were.

SERVANTS NO! We want to know who **YOU** are!

ANANSI Knock, knock.

SERVANTS Who's there? (That's better.) **765**

ANANSI Come in and find out!
They do, but...

SERVANTS He's gone!!!

KING (Handing rewards to *SOLIDAY.*) **770**
 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
 This is your name, simple and true
 And no-one can pass on your secret but you. **775**

ANANSI (*Sneaking onto the stage.*)
 Off they go to the wedding bed
 Me? I'll stay just me... and fed.
 Live on the outside, grab what I can
 Be myself – quick spider man. **780**
 I am the man that killed Mancrow.

ON BOARD

THE HOLD

GIRL Why does Anansi keep looking for trouble?

WOMAN Because if you have wits like Anansi you **785**
 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 **790**
 you've got. Keep it hidden!

GIRL Mother?

WOMAN One more question, and that's all.

GIRL	What do they do with the people they don't throw away?	795
WOMAN	Do you want to know the truth?	
GIRL	Yes.	
WOMAN	They sell, they buy, they buy and sell.	
GIRL	I knew it.	
WOMAN	Then why did you ask?	800
GIRL	Because I want to know what's to happen to me. You see, Mother, they won't throw me away.	
WOMAN	Go to sleep.	

ON DECK

805

*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.

810

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.
---------------	---

815

BOY	But I'm not on anybody's side. Nobody's on mine.
------------	--

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.
---------------	---

820

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?	825
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.	830
SAILOR	So what is it? I'll be flogged if I dawdle here all day.	
BOY	What colour is God?	
SAILOR	(<i>LAUGHS.</i>) Blow me! If that doesn't take it for a question to end them all! What do you mean, lad?	835
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.	840
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?	845
SAILOR	No, no. You're out of your depth there, Boy. Slaves are different... more like, beasts, or so they reckon.	
BOY	Isn't it true! I saw a girl today, down... down there...	850
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!	
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	855

question that. Now let me be. Beasts or no,
I'm just doing my job, and if throwing away **860**
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! **865**

THE CABIN

BOY (*READING.*) 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. **870**

CAPTAIN I warned you, boy...
He takes the diary and hits the boy.

BOY But those are my thoughts...

CAPTAIN I leave you to work on the ledgers and you
betray me. **875**

BOY Let me have it back, Father. Please.

CAPTAIN *You'll take this book and you'll throw it
overboard. Then I might consider forgiveness
for that and your other acts of dalliance.*

BOY But I haven't done anything. **880**

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