

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Another version of this same tale (by Michael Auld) can be found online at: http://anansistories.com/Traditional_Stories.html

It is one of the many Anansi stories that ends with an often used Jamaican moral.

ANANSI

Anansi (pronunciation Ah-nahn-see) the trickster is a cunning and intelligent spider, and is one of the most important characters of West African and Caribbean folklore. He is also known as Ananse, Kwaku Ananse, and Anancy; and in the Southern United States he has evolved into Aunt Nancy. He is a spider, but often acts and appears as a man. The story of Anansi is akin to the Coyote or Raven trickster found in many Native American cultures.

The Anansi tales are believed to have originated in the Ashanti tribe in Ghana. (The word Anansi is Akan and means, simply, spider.) They later spread to other Akan groups and then to the West Indies, Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles. On Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire he is known as Nanzi, and his wife as Shi Maria.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anansi>

ALL CHORUS

The ALL CHORUS included in this script was created from online

information about the traditional way of beginning and ending this type of tale: "We do not really mean, that what we are about to say is true. A story, a story; let it come, let it go" and finishes with: "This is my story which I have related. If it be sweet, or if it be not sweet, take some of it elsewhere, and let some of it come back to me."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anansi>

YELLOW YAM

Yam is one of the main staples in a Jamaican meal. It has been suggested that Jamaican yellow yam is the secret to Jamaica's track athlete Olympic success. Boiled yam is the most popular, but yams can also be baked roasted, fried, or pounded.

I-134 Anansi and the Five Yam Plants

Retold for
Readers Theater by Lois Walker

ALL READERS: A story, a story
 It goes and it comes.
 Let it come, let it go
 Like the beating of drums.
 Whatever the story
 Please don't make a fuss,
 Just share it and let it...
 Come right back to us!

READER 1: There once was a witch.
 And FIVE was her name.

READER 2: Her name was FIVE?

READER 1: Yes, that's what they claim.

READER 3: And all the kids teased her...

(Free form)

READER 4: "Hey Witchie! Give me FIVE! OK?"

READER 3: And nobody pleased her...

(Free form)

READER 4: "Hey Witchie! With a name like FIVE, you could be your own basketball team!"

READER 3: And they pushed her and pinched her
And shoved her and squeezed her.

READER 5: And they made FIVE so mad
That the witch cast a spell:

(Squeaky witches voice)

READER 6/

(WITCH): "Say my name out loud
And things won't go so well.
Say my name out loud,
Now let me be clear.
Say my name out loud...
And you will disappear!"

READER 7: Now, from that day on
Things did not go so well.
If you said the word FI...

(Free form)

ALL

EXCEPT 7: No! Don't say it!

(pause)

READER 7 OK...
 If you said... *that word*
 You went under the spell.
 No matter the day
 The month or the year,
 If you said... *that word*...

ALL: You would just disappear!

READER So, nobody said it
 And nobody read it.

READER No one uttered or muttered
 And nobody stuttered
 The one little word
 That brought on such fear.
 For if you said... *that word*

ALL: You would just disappear!

READER Now enter Anansi
 A long legged spider.
 He was searching for food
 As the family provider.

READER When he heard of the witch
 His heart filled with glee
 And he said,

READER/

(ANANSI): "I must make
 Her fine spell work for me!"

READER Then he piled up some mounds
 Of rich brown earth.
 Stuck seeds in those mounds
 And waited for birth.

READER He waited for birth
 Of those plump yellow yams
 You can bake, broil, and roast
 Or pound into jams.

 When the yams were grown...

READER/

(ANANSI): "I sat down to wait."

READER Brother Dog
 Came along with a crate
 Of tasty fruit
 To be sold in town.

(continued)...

And when Dog saw the yams,
He put the crate down.

READER/

(ANANSI): "Oh, Dog,"

READER Anansi the spider said.

READER/

(ANANSI): "Never went to school,
Am not well bred.
I've planted these yams,
But to no account.
Don't know how to count,
Can't count their amount.

READER/

(DOG): "No problem, Dude",

READER Said Brother Dog
As he sat his crate
Down on a log.

READER/

(DOG): "I'm here to help you
Thrive - no jive.
You got one yam, two yams,
Three, four..."