



The Magic of Anansi

Talespinners
Collection

THE MAGIC OF ANANSI

Anansi the spider is tired of being looked down on by all the jungle animals— just because his webs don't catch bugs. The fearsome Mr. Tiger promises to respect the little spider if he brings him Mr. Snake, the world's grumpiest creature. After much wily scheming and plotting, Anansi delivers a humiliated Mr. Snake to Mr. Tiger. Only then does he realize that Mr. Tiger's respect comes at too high a price. Anansi doesn't want to make anyone miserable, not even Mr. Snake. Anansi stands up to Mr. Tiger and, in the end, this is what wins him the respect of the other creatures.


The *Magic of Anansi* is part of the NFB's *Talespinners* collection. Created for children aged five to nine, *Talespinners* uses vibrant animation to bring popular stories from a wide range of cultural communities to the screen.

Director: Jamie Mason
Producer: Tamara Lynch

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www.nfb.ca/talespinners

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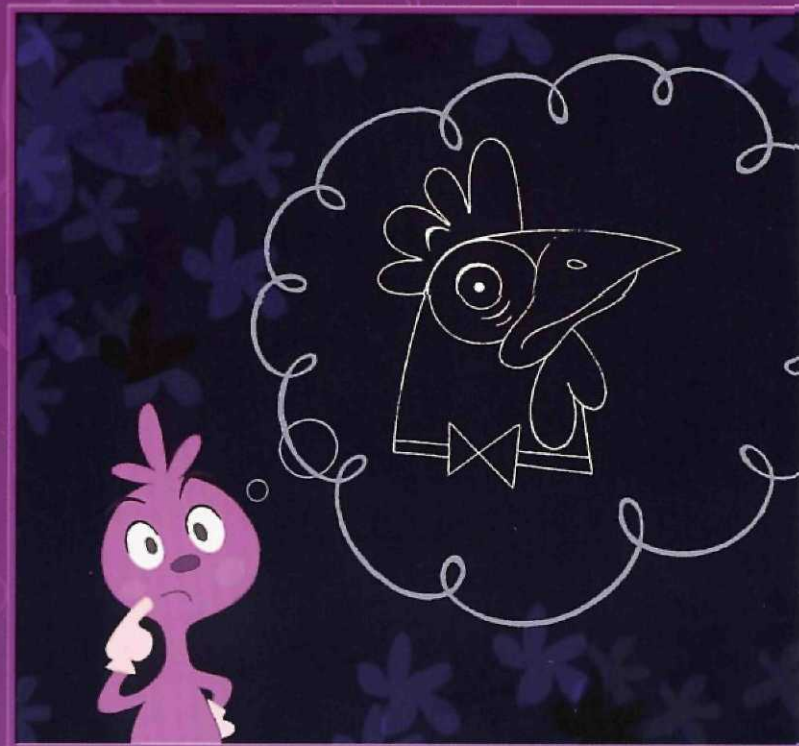
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The Magic of Anansi



A TRADITIONAL WEST INDIAN TALE

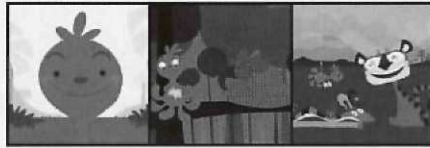


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Talespinners Collection



THE MAGIC OF ANANSI

Study guide

A. The Origins of Anansi

The tales of Anansi the wily spider, part of the storytelling tradition of West Africa, were brought to the West Indies by African slaves. HarperCollins first published the stories in 1954. Ask the class why the tales are still popular with adults and children. How many versions can they find at the library? Refer students to the Internet site www.anansi.org.

B. Jungle Creatures

Draw a class mural of a jungle. As preparation, discuss the plants and trees to be included. Each student could draw a jungle animal and place it on the mural according to where it lives in the jungle – in water, on the ground, in the trees or in the sky. Students could also research a jungle food chain to determine what the different animals eat as well as how they find and catch their food. Students could also research how the different animals move, (slither, fly, crawl, swing) and what body parts they use to propel themselves. Students could imitate

these movements in the gymnasium while measuring how long it takes them to travel a specific distance.

C. Telling a New Anansi Story

The Anansi stories are believed to have originated as an Ashanti legend from Ghana. The stories have been passed from generation to generation in West Africa in oral and written forms. Have the class imagine a time before history was written down. How did people remember and pass on stories? In Africa, the storyteller was called a griot, who was also the keeper of history. This man would travel to villages, telling stories that entertained and informed.

Divide the students into groups and ask them to create / write / tell a myth or legend about Anansi. They may create props to help tell their story by using puppets, or masks. Once the stories are ready, one representative from the group then moves to another group to tell their story. The students become storytellers, passing on an oral story to new listeners.



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SHELDON COHEN

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ISOBEL MARKS

Producer:
TAMARA LYNCH

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RELATED NFB VIDEOS

Raven's Feather Dance – A Creation Legend: This 9-minute animated tale is based on a West Coast Native legend. Part of the *Videos for Children Collection*, 23 animated tales for elementary school.

The Animal Movie: A little boy discovers that he can't compete

with animals by imitating the way they move. Part of the *Elementary ESL Collection*.

Fine Feathers: A cartoon starring two quarrelsome birds that get the urge to change their plumage, with disastrous results! Part of the video compilation *Children's Favourites: Five Fables*.

For more teaching ideas, recommended reading and related NFB videos, visit:

www.nfb.ca/talespinners



Jamie Mason, born in Don Mills in 1969, is a typically funny, idealistic and painfully honest Sagittarian. He grew up on a steady diet of Saturday morning cartoons, with influences ranging from The Flintstones to Spider-Man. After graduating from Sheridan College in 1991, Mason rounded out his skills with courses in illustration at George Brown College and the Richard Williams Animation Workshop. His enduring interest in cartoons led him to work on numerous TV and film projects, including *The Ren and Stimpy Show* and the series *Sticking Around*, produced by Nelvana. **The Magic of Anansi** is his first film with the NFB. He recently made an animated short on nutrition for the UNICEF *Animation Jam*.

Director:
JAMIE MASON

Animators:
LUIGI ALLEMANO, JAMIE MASON

Based on the book
The Magic of Anansi
adapted by Mary Withers
Published by Tutkam Books, Edmonton, 1993.