

How spiders came about – An African folktale

419 reading

Many years ago 5-foot spiders roamed the earth. A great king ruled the earth. The king owned a ram. It was *magnificent*. Every one *revered* the ram because the king said the ram could wander wherever he wanted and that no one could do him any harm. If anyone harmed the ram that person would surely die.

Anansi the spider owned an outstanding garden where he grew corn. The corn was the yellowest and largest you could find. Everyone hoped the ram would never enter Anansi's garden. Well one day Anansi started down to his garden. He was about to reap his crops when he noticed a large ram eating happily in his best corn patch. Anansi grew angry. He picked up a pebble *hurling* it at the ram - hoping to scare it off. The rock hit the ram between the eyes and he fell dead.

Anansi was afraid so he hid the ram high in a Sprundunkii nut tree. After worrying all night Anansi came up with an idea. Although Anansi was responsible he would not tell the king he killed his precious ram. He called his friend Kumbali. He said, "Kumbali my brother, I found a new nut tree. I shook it and got one of the tastiest nuts you can find. Come let me show you.

Anansi took Kumbali to the Sprundunkii tree and told him to shake the tree. Kumbali shook the tree and down fell the king's ram. Kumbali fainted. When he awakened he felt *spent* but decided to go to the king and confess to the death of the ram - accepting whatever fate might become him.

Kumbali went home to bid farewell to his wife. When Kumbali's wife heard what happened to the ram she became suspicious. She told Kumbali to pretend to go the king and confess but soon return home and say the king had pardoned him. Kumbali traveled for a day then returned home and told Anansi the king said the death of the ram was an accident and that Kumbali and his family could have all the meat from the ram.

Anansi became angry and stomped up and down saying, "I killed the ram. I deserve the meat." When Kumbali and his wife heard they jumped on Anansi, bound him and took him before the king. They told the king the whole story. When the king finished listening he was so angry he kicked Anansi as hard as he could. Anansi burst into a thousand pieces and fell all over the room. Today Anansi is still seen in many pieces waiting for the day when someone will put him back together again.