



INTRODUCTION

BABA INDABA (pronounced Baaba Indaaba) lived in Africa a long-long time ago. Indeed, this story was first told by Baba Indaba to the British settlers over 250 years ago in a place on the South East Coast of Africa called Zululand, which is now in a country now called South Africa.

In turn the British settlers wrote these stories down and they were brought back to England on sailing ships. From England they were in turn spread to all corners of the old British Empire, and then to the world.

In olden times the Zulu's did not have computers, or iPhones, or paper, or even pens and pencils. So, someone was assigned to be the Wenxoxi Indaba (Wensosi Indaaba) – the Storyteller. It was his, or her, job to memorise all the tribe's history, stories and folklore, which had been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. So, from the time he was a young boy, Baba Indaba had been apprenticed to the tribe's Wenxoxi Indaba to learn the stories. Every day the Wenxoxi Indaba would narrate the stories and Baba Indaba would have to recite the story back to the Wenxoxi Indaba, word for word.

In this manner he learned the stories of the Zulu nation.

In time the Wenxoxi Indaba grew old and when he could no longer see or hear, Baba Indaba became the next in a long line of Wenxoxi Indabas. So fond were the children of him that they continued to call him Baba Indaba - the Father of Stories.

When the British arrived in South Africa, he made it his job to also learn their stories. He did this by going to work at the docks at the Point in Port Natal at a place the Zulu people call Ethekwene (Eh-tek-weh-nee). Here he spoke to many sailors and ships captains. Captains of ships that sailed to the far reaches of the British Empire - Canada, Australia, India, Mauritius, the Caribbean and beyond. He became so well known that ship's crew would bring him a story every time they

visited Port natal. If they couldn't, they would arrange to have someone bring the stories to him. This way his library of stories grew and grew until he was known far and wide as the keeper of stories - a true Wenxoxi Indaba of the World.

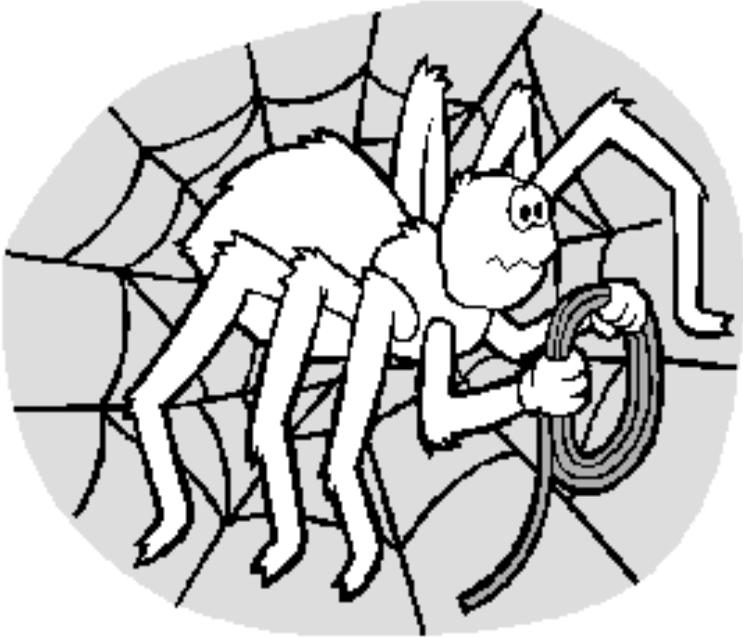
Baba Indaba believes the tale he is about to tell in this little book, and all the others he has learned, are the common property of every child of every nation in the world - and so they are and have been ever since men and women began telling stories, thousands and thousands of years ago.

WHERE IN THE WORLD - LOOK IT UP!



This next story was told to him by a sailor from the city of Douala in West Africa. Can you find it on a map? What country is it in?

WHY THE JACK-SPANIARD'S WAIST IS SMALL



“Umntwana listen!” cried Baba Indaba, lifting his kerie, bringing the children to order.

One day, long, long ago, Anansi, the trickster spider and umiyane (Um-i-ya-neh - Mosquito)

were talking together, and boasting of their fathers' crops. Anansi said his father had never had such a crop in his life before; and Mosquito said, he was sure his father's was bigger, for one yam they dug was as big as his leg.....