



# African Folktales

*Roger D. Abrahams (Editor)*

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Nearly 100 stories from over 40 tribe-related myths of creation, tales of epic deeds, ghost stories and tales set in both the animal and human realms.

Part of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library

## African Folktales Details

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# **From Reader Review African Folktales for online ebook**

## **Andreas says**

African Folktales is what I would define as an interesting book, but not a pleasant read. While I understand that this is a different culture in a different time, the sexism that washes over most of these stories are problematic for me and the structure of the stories are often a bit too out of my comfort zone to really appreciate. It was fascinating to read about, but not quite my thing.

I'd recommend it to people who are able to accept a more, by western standards, unfamiliar approach to storytelling and who are more fascinated in African culture than they are sensitive to sexism.

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## **Ruthie says**

The stories were awesome, the commentary? I was very eh about it. I definitely want to read more stories from Africa, but the next one I read I hope will be one written by someone from Africa.

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## **Olivia says**

Abrahams lacked the cultural sensitivity I expect from a Pantheon folktale editor. Ignoring his commentary, this is a good collection, and is worth checking out for the Mwindo Epic alone.

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## **Heather says**

The author is a renowned scholar who does use some colonial sources, but acknowledges their biases and tries to compensate for it. This is still a collection put together by a white American scholar, so it will still be somewhat Western centric. He does record which African culture each tale comes from and does not try to harmonize styles to make the tales sound more similar than they are.

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## **Helmut says**

### **Anthropologie in Geschichtenform**

Wer an diesen Band in Erwartung von afrikanischen Grimmschen Märchen herangeht, wird überrascht: Ein Großteil der Geschichten passt nicht in dieses Schema von "Gutenacht-Geschichten". Insgesamt ist die Lektüre nicht die allereinfachste, denn die erzählten Geschichten sind oft sprunghaft, ohne Fokus und nicht linear. Manchmal hat man den Eindruck, der Erzähler erfindet sie während er spricht. Man merkt die vielen unterschiedlichen Kulturen und auch Quellen, aus denen die Geschichten gezogen wurden - einige sind anthropologisch und literaturwissenschaftlich aufgearbeitet, andere nacherzählt oder von Tonaufzeichnungen transkribiert.

Hin und wieder tauchen bekannte Ideen und Motive auf, doch insgesamt wirken die Geschichten allein durch ihre Erzählweise, die sehr stark auf mündlicher Weitergabe und sozialer Interaktion während des Erzählens beruht, stellenweise fremdartig. Die Geschichten dieses Bandes stammen von den Hausa, Swahili, Ewe und diversen anderen afrikanischen Volksstämmen und schwanken in der Länge zwischen wenigen Absätzen und mehreren Seiten.

Eine sehr interessante Lektüre, wenn man sich darauf einlassen kann; das ausführliche Vorwort hilft einem dabei. Kleinere Illustrationen lockern den Inhalt etwas auf.

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### **Anna says**

This book is as much an anthropological treatise as a collection of folk tales, so I'm afraid I skipped a lot of the introduction, which may be very interesting to someone who wants to know how these tales were collected and transcribed.

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### **Katya Kazbek says**

Just like the others, I really enjoyed the tales, but not the commentary, which seemed excessive, superficial and a justification for the white scientist to have his name on the cover. Also, the grouping was weird (I would prefer by tribe), and the pictures of art objects seemed to be attached to fairy tales randomly and haphazardly. But I can forget a lot of things for the epic of Mwindo alone, it's so good. Even if I dug around and noticed that the translation in the book has faults.

Actually it makes me wonder, do anthropology takes on folktales sell better than just collections? Doesn't seem like it. I'm sure anyone would easily want to buy a wild collection of tales with cool illustrations, and the anthro version is most likely to just be limited to people who are not afraid of nerdy-looking books (and lament it in their reviews later, haha).

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### **Yaaresse says**

While I usually shelve myths-folklore as fiction, I'm labeling this one non-fiction because of the introductory material about collection and transcription of oral traditions.

I read this in college for a course on myths and folklore, and I enjoyed most of it even while noting that it could have used a lot more authentic input and a lot less Ivy Tower attitude. The professor for the course was very critical of it, but thought it was worth reading because of the information in the introduction and, as she said with some chagrin, it was one of the few books on the topic at that time that was widely available and didn't cost more than a semester's tuition.

It's worth a read if one is interested in non-European folklore, but it's definitely from a white western perspective. I would hope there is something out there by now that represents the material better.

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## **sardit says**

I admire that they included folktales that were written out exactly as they were told, but I have to admit I found them nigh unreadable. Oral storytelling and written storytelling are two very different beasts. The ones that were written out like that are not all of them, or even the majority, but the collection generally leans pretty hard in retaining as much of the oral qualities of the original stories. Which makes for an interesting collection, but not as entertaining of one.

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## **Amyem says**

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