



# A Dictionary of African Mythology: The Mythmaker as Storyteller

*Harold Scheub*

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## A Dictionary of African Mythology: The Mythmaker as Storyteller Harold Scheub

In this marvelous collection of hundreds of fascinating, mysterious, and revealing tales, Harold Scheub captures the immense sweep and diversity of African mythology.

Scheub offers an unprecedented collection of 400 stories, arranged alphabetically, that touch on virtually every aspect of religious belief. Here are gods and goddesses, epic heroes and divine tricksters, along with epics of the world's origins, the struggle between the human and the divine, and much more. Scheub covers the entire continent, from the mouth of the Nile to the shores of the Cape of Good Hope, including North African as well as sub-Saharan cultures. Here, for example, is the tale of Abu Zayd (from the Bani Hilal of Tunisia), an epic hero who battles a jinni; and here too is a myth of how the moon and the toad created the first man and woman, from the Soko of Congo. Scheub not only retells each story, but provides information about the respective belief system, the main characters, and related stories or variants. Perhaps most important, Scheub emphasizes the role of mythmaker as storyteller--as a performer for an audience. He explores various techniques, from the rhythmic movements of a Zulu mythmaker's hands to the way a storyteller will play on the familiar context of other myths within her cultural context.

In *A Dictionary of African Mythology*, Harold Scheub has constructed an invaluable bridge to the richly diverse oral cultures of Africa. In this magnificent collection, he not only provides hundreds of fascinating myths, but recaptures their cultural contexts--in which story and storyteller, tradition and performance, all merge.



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