

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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Mwindo

By
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Inspired by the Ancient Nyanga African Fable

Mwindo was originally produced by Seattle Children's Theatre in the 2014-15 season.

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PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE: The play takes place in the dense forest land of Zaire (the Congo), a place of magic, mystery and much music. There should be various playing levels that suggest slopes and mountain ridges as well as those mysterious places in the underworld that are accentuated by sound and shadowy figures/apparitions. African music should be plentifully threaded throughout the play - music sung, chanted, and accompanied by African percussion instruments - instruments either played by the actors or recorded.

CAST:

Mwindo	(our flawed hero)
Chief	(Mwindo's evil father)
Spider-Cricket	(ultra femme hybrid creature whose many legs tap dance)
Cha-Cha	(singing male hedgehog)
Woman	(plays Mwindo's mother, and Aunt Iyan,
Man 1	(plays Warrior 1, Kuti the serpent, and Village Men)
Man 2	(plays Warrior 2, Suitor, and Village Men) (Various other creatures presented through puppets, shadow and/or sound)

WHERE: Village of Tubondo, Domain of Restless Spirits, and Domain of Decay.

In the dark, we hear the melodic sound of chirping crickets. Eventually, the cricket sound is drowned out by village song and pulsating African drums, drums that grow increasingly loud and urgent in this dense forest land of Africa.

Village puppet animals growl/squeal/howl/then scurry in fear. TWO WARRIOR MEN yell and chase the animals, attempt to recapture them but the animals are too afraid and thus too quick for capture. In the midst of this chaos comes...

CHIEF'S BOOMING VOICE

JAMBO! Behold, my good village of Tubondo. Hear the sound of good fortune coming my way.

The drums suddenly halt at the approaching sound of BELLS. Immediately, the men stop chasing the animals and drop to one knee, bow their heads deferentially. Sacred stillness except for the approaching bells. Finally, we see standing high above them at the

CHIEF'S PERCH

Stands the wearer of the anklet bells, the prideful village CHIEF, adorned ceremoniously. In his arms, he holds a swaddled baby. His much beloved black HAWK rests on his shoulder.

CHIEF Men, you may lift your heads. *(Holding the swaddled baby to the sky)* I offer to the Gods daughter number six. Soon, she will be joined by her sister, my lucky number seven. Rejoice my people. Rejoice! One day all of my daughters will marry and bestow upon me big, big bride prices! Yes, I am destined to be a very rich man.

The Warrior men exchange veiled looks of disgust. Nevertheless, they whoop in celebration. Again the drums pulsate and by rote the men rhythmically clap and dance while at...

THE SLOPE BELOW THE CHIEF

The preferred wife, extraordinarily, "otherworldly" big with child appears (MOTHER), isolated in tableau. She is perched atop a thatched roof on top of wooden stilts - her hut. She is quite sorrowful.

HAWK changes his perch to a nearby tree as Chief calls forth SPIDER-CRICKET.

CHIEF Spider-Cricket, the mouth that is never still, make your presence known.

SPIDER-CRICKET (OS)

I'm coming. I'm coming, I'm coming, my Chief, my lord and master.

And we hear clickety-clap, tap-tap as A GIANT, OVERLY ADORNED CREATURE appears looking and moving like both a spider and a cricket. She is dramatically feminine with long, flirtatious eyelashes and each of her wings and hairy legs are decorated with colorful shells and

ribbon bows. Red plant paste dot her cheeks.

After a quick look at her reflection to make sure she looks the part, she eagerly crawls and alternately jumps before the Chief while making her own distinctive sound.

SPIDER-CRICKET Did you call for me, my lord and master? I have waited so long...well not long, but...well, as you can see I'm a tad nervous but so happy to be dispatched to a task worthy of my skills and talents. *(Doing a little tap dance)* Thank you and another thank you, my Chief, my lord and master.

CHIEF Must you chatter so? On second thought, maybe I should just send my trusted Hawk.

SPIDER-CRICKET No, no, no, my master lord. I will seal my lips and fulfill your every wish.

CHIEF Go forth and see what is taking so long for my last daughter to be born.

SPIDER-CRICKET Right away, Master-Lord Chief. Right away.

The Hawk squawks. Chief lovingly feeds it a plant root while Spider-Cricket scurries forward to where Mother sits. Stealthily, she hovers from a web overhead, singing gently a sweet African lullaby. However, Mother is so despairing she doesn't seem to hear or notice Spider-Cricket at all. A burst of light from the sky. The Chief is overjoyed.

CHIEF Yes, the Gods have shined their light upon me. It is time, my best time.

Again, the men exchange looks. Warrior 2 musters his courage.

WARRIOR #2 Chief, if I may dare to speak on this happy occasion. Our animals continue to run away and without...

CHIEF You must be a fool, talking to me about animals when I'm awaiting the birth of my special child...

WARRIOR #2 But, Chief, without the animals, no one in the village can work the land properly or produce enough food.

WARRIOR #1 Yes, yes. The people are hungry. Their bellies empty. There's such growing discontent.

CHIEF *(Feeding some seeds to his Hawk)* Silence. This is my day, not your day to speak of problems, problems unworthy of my attention! *(The men hang their head)* I am the great Chief of Tubondo and today I will hear nothing but the drums of celebration.

Drum sounds as...

MOTHER Why, heaven above? I cannot bear this suffering another day, another minute. Why won't this girl child come?

Suddenly and violently, the drum sounds. Then the God of Fire and the God of Lightning converge to huge sound and lighting effect, an effect so terrifying that the warrior men scurry away yelling in fear. Alone now, the Chief cockily laughs.

Hawk gracefully swoops overhead, squawks. The Chief gleefully laughs.

CHIEF Yes, my seventh and best daughter is finally born!

Chief exits as MOTHER backs away from her newborn child, (MWINDO) a child born as a full-size boy. Born with a scepter-conga (made from a buffalo tail) attached to his body.

While his mother sputters, Mwindo crawls, then slowly stretches upright until he's at full height.

MOTHER No...Oh, no... Who...Who...What? What have I done? This is not good. Oh no, what have I done.

Mwindo takes one step, then another, clapping his hands with glee at his accomplishment. He then wobbly crosses to Mother, growing more sure-footed with each step.

MOTHER Oh my...what manner of child is this? How could you already be walking?

The child takes Mother's hand and holds up Mother's little finger, which is illuminated with bright rays of light.

MWINDO I am your son, baby boy Mwindo.

MOTHER Oh, no, no, no. Did I just hear you talk? How are you able to talk? How did you...

MWINDO I was born of your little finger.

The mother stares at her hand aghast while the child, MWINDO, dances jubilantly about, cackling to his own tune and impressively using his conga and rope as magic lasso boomerangs. Intermittently, he uses some object (a tree, a table) to bang on as one would a drum. He is in perpetual motion.

MWINDO I am baby boy Mwindo! Born of good fortune, Kahindo. The mighty son born number seven/In all that's good in seventh heaven!

Tickled with himself, Mwindo continues to posture and jump around imitating a mighty, but childishly silly warrior.

MOTHER Oh my, could it be? Could you be the chosen one? The prophecy? Why else would be able...

Spider-Cricket, for once, is at a loss for words. Her legs tap nervously while Mwindo is suddenly still.

MWINDO Am I not the son you want? Do you not see both you and my father within me?

She looks into his eyes, softens. She outstretches her arms, embraces him with love.

MOTHER Mwana, my child. It is because of whom I see in you that makes me tremble with fear. *(Off of Mwindo's protest)* You are a baby. You cannot know what Mother knows. Come, let me hold you while we both rest and Mother ponders what to do.

Mother holds Mwindo close, softly singing him an African lullaby until he is completely still.

SPIDER-CRICKET Oh my. Oh, boy. Something must have upset the Gods to create a child such as this. I must go report this to the Chief. Oh boy, oh my.

The song echoes about the land as Lights shift to the...

CHIEF'S PERCH

Where the Chief excitedly waits for the grand news - his spear attached to his side - his beloved Hawk on his shoulders. The drums sound with new urgency. Spider-Cricket approaches tentatively. The Chief turns to face her expectantly.

CHIEF My seventh daughter? She is beautiful like her mother? Will she be worth a hefty bride purse one day? Make me even richer? Speak up.

SPIDER-CRICKET Well...I'm not sure about beautiful? You see, honorable Chief...

CHIEF What is it, you silly creature? Tell me about my daughter, my lucky number seven. Tell me now!

SPIDER-CRICKET *(Takes a deep courage breath)* Well, she is not a she, exactly. She is rather a he.

CHIEF A what?!

The Chief grabs Spider-Cricket by one of her wings.

SPIDER-CRICKET No, no, no, not my flying wings. Please. I don't know what kind of baby it is but I do know it talks. *(Mimicking Mwindo's movements)* And it walks. And it was born dancing. Yes, dancing. I have never seen anything like it.

CHIEF What are you saying to me, you fool?

SPIDER-CRICKET It's a boy. No, it's more like a little man...a boy-man! That's what it is, a little boy man! His mother says he's the prophecy, though I'm not sure what that means.

CHIEF *(stunned, but quickly recovers)* What else did his mother say? And you are to repeat it exactly.

SPIDER-CRICKET I think maybe she said, that maybe he's the, he's the chosen child.

CHIEF *(Drawing his spear threateningly)* How dare you? There is no chosen child! I am the only chosen chief, a chief that should kill you.

Fearful, Spider-Cricket starts to tap, clickety-clack uncontrollably.

CHIEF And now you dare to dance???

SPIDER-CRICKET No, no, Chief. It appears I get a bit nervous when someone threatens to kill me. Dancing is a tad better than screaming, don't you think?

CHIEF From this day forward you are banned from the village of Tubondo.

SPIDER-CRICKET But why? This is my home. I belong here. I am your ever faithful...

CHIEF You belong nowhere. You are nature's miscreation, an abomination.

SPIDER-CRICKET *(Fluttering her wings, smiling confidently)* Please don't say that. Once I perfect my ability to fly, you'll see how all will marvel...

Hawk squawks. Chief looks to it.

CHIEF **Even Hawk says you are not worth the effort to pick flesh from your bones. Take her away before she brings me more bad luck!**

Crushed, Spider-Cricket draws in her arms and legs protectively.

WARRIOR 1 Wewe!

SPIDER-CRICKET *(As she's being escorted off)* Please, this is my home. PLEASEEEEEEEEEEE!
I don't like the dark. I'm scared of the dark. Please.

The Chief takes his spear, sharpens it with a stone, practices aiming it at Mother's hut.

WARRIOR 2 *(Mustering his courage)* Chief, if I may speak. Is there no other way? The child is your son. Your son! Born of your blood. He needs it as you will

one day need him. Might you reconsider?

CHIEF How dare you question me? A son will only grow to compete with me and will bring me no money when it's time for him to marry. So, what use is he?

MOTHER Mwindo, wake my son. Quickly! We must collect food and supplies. We must hide in the forest until Mother can get stronger.

CHIEF He is of no use to me. *(Yelling toward Mother's hut.)* I TOLD YOU NO SONS!

The Chief throws his spear in the direction of Mother's hut and Mwindo. Miraculously, Mwindo catches it with his special conga tail.

MWINDO Mother, look. I've caught my father's spear. Is this a game he plays?

Mother responds by hurriedly retrieving a basket that she fills with food and supplies. She grabs Mwindo's hand, gestures for him to stay quiet as she stealthily leads him off. At the same time, the HAWK flies and squawks near the Chief. The Chief catches sight of Mwindo and the mother running off.

CHIEF *(furious to the Warriors)* Go now. My spear didn't slay him so find him and bury that creature alive! Hawk, follow them so that I may know my orders have been obeyed.

Hawk squawks, flies away. Chief furiously exits. Warrior men collect rope and tools to bury Mwindo. They conspiratorially whisper.

WARRIOR 1 How can our Chief not see the suffering, what's happening to our poor village? Was the man born without a heart?

WARRIOR 2 What can you expect from a man with hollow eyes, who denies his own son a father's love and protection? He doesn't deserve to be called an African man nor a leader for our people. We must continue to pray to the Gods for our village to be delivered one from his evil...

He stops short when he sees Hawk circling and squawking overhead. He indicates to the other Warrior, they had better get to it. Quickly, they sneakily approach where Mother has stopped to rest with Mwindo.

MOTHER *You must stay very quiet Mwindo and stay hidden. (Mwindo jumps around.)*

MWINDO But why, Mother? I want my father to know I still want to play.

The warriors abruptly halt when they spot Mwindo. Exchanging shocked looks, they back up.

WARRIOR 1 We are cursed. We are cursed. This is no baby boy! *(Drops to his knees in wailing prayer)* “Please I call upon the Gods and my ancestors for protection...”

Hawk swoops.

WARRIOR 2 *(Pulling Warrior 1 to his feet)* Get up! Get up now! We’ll be banished from our families. We must do as commanded.

They signal each other, then the Warrior Men burst forth and grab at Mwindo. Thinking this is another game, Mwindo hops around giggling, eluding them with his agility.

MOTHER Don’t hurt him. He doesn’t understand. He’s just a baby.

WARRIOR 1 Woman, we do not know what he is but that is no baby.

MOTHER Please, please don’t hurt him. He doesn’t understand – he thinks you’re playing with him. Please let him go, please. *(Mother tries to block the men.)* Please, I will go to my husband and beg for our son’s life.

WARRIOR 2 *(taking pity on Mother)* It will not help. The Chief will never let a son live... or you if you interfere.

MOTHER But without my son, this life is not worth living.

MWINDO You there...take me to my father so that we might play a different game.

The Warriors jump back, stunned. The boy-child actually talks.

WARRIOR 1 Did you hear that? Did he just talk?

WARRIOR 2 What manner of child is born talking?

WARRIOR 1 I knew it. The Chief and his wicked ways has brought this upon us. He’s cursed our village, our animals and now this...this child...

MWINDO Am I something bad, Mother? A curse? *(Warriors grab at him again)* Oh, I like this game. Yes, okay, you still want to play?

The Warrior men silently signal, then lurch for Mwindo. They bind him with rope to carry him. Again, Mwindo giggles as if it’s another game.

MWINDO Yes, tie me up and take me away. Games must be my father’s way.

They carry Mwindo out.

MOTHER Please, he's a baby. Please, he doesn't understand. Please.

Mother tries to follow but soon collapses. Eventually, she collects herself. She notices Mwindo's dropped conga, picks it up and hides it beneath her clothes, exits. Meanwhile, we find Mwindo exhaustively chanting in a...

UNDERGROUND CAVE

Where the warrior men have buried him. Mwindo, glowing in the dark, exhaustively repeats his mantra.

MWINDO I am baby boy Mwindo, born of good fortune, Kahindo... I am baby boy Mwindo, born of good fortune, Kahindo... I am baby boy Mwindo, born of good fortune, Kahindo... *(Yawns, exhausted)* I have grown so tired of these games my father plays. When will he and my mother come for me?

But then he hears wracking sobs coming from a dark corner. Mwindo goes to investigate. He discovers a huge hedgehog with extra-long spines, his head and legs tucked inward so it looks like a huge spiky ball. It is CHA-CHA, the hedgehog.

MWINDO What are you? A porcupine ball that cries?

The porcupine ball suddenly raises its head. Mwindo, startled, jumps back.

CHA-CHA No, no, no, not a porcupine. Rather a hedgehog. Cha-Cha's my name. And you...you glow by your own light. Oh my! My, my, my. Yes! It's a sign, the spirit world has not forsaken us! Tubondo can once again rise to...

MWINDO What are you blabbering so about?

CHA-CHA *(excitedly clasps his paws to the heavens)* The Gods have sent you, have they not? Are you not the only son of the Chief, the Chief of Tubondo?

MWINDO I am. I am the Mighty Mwindo!

CHA-CHA Yes, yes, yes. You just can't know, Mighty Mwindo, how much I've had to suffer. Daily, I dig for something to believe in only to discover even more sadness. But you are...you are the miracle I have waited for, that all of Tubondo has waited for. *(Tries to bow but his belly is in the way)* I weep tears of joy to be in your presence.

MWINDO I order you to stop that weeping. Right now. Goodness, you are a hedgehog that looks like a cow.

CHA-CHA Too many years spent alone. Banished a decade ago by your father for one mistake. Please don't ask of my mistake; though your presence does vindicate... *(Catches himself)* Oh, what foolishness am I saying? Absolutely nothing of real importance...

MWINDO The Mighty Mwindo needs to sleep so leave me be!

CHA-CHA Yes, you must sleep. I will make you a grass mat to rest your head.

Cha-Cha bustles about until he's created a mat that he presents to Mwindo with much fanfare. Mwindo sprawls on it without any acknowledgement.

CHA-CHA The great Mwindo, do you like?

But Mwindo has fallen fast asleep. Cha-Cha tenderly covers him with a blanket of leaves.

CHA-CHA That's OK. You sleep the mighty Mwindo and I will surprise you in the morning light. You just wait.

And Cha-Cha, with renewed energy, begins to burrow a tunnel for them. As he works, he sings a made up ditty and does a silly dance.

CHA-CHA *(Singing)*
Thank you heavens above
For sending me Mwindo to love He is my test
And for him, I will do my best I dance with glee
What an opportunity
Once again, I'm important to some-body Tee-hee-hee-hee
Mighty Mwindo I will dig us both free

Cha-Cha toils arduously until he has burrowed a hole all the way to freedom and light and the sound of the river.

CHA-CHA Wait until the Mighty Mwindo sees what I have done for him, what the Gods have appointed me to continue to do for him.

He steps outside to the bright sunlight. He momentarily shields his eyes from the light, so unused to it. He squints more because in the distance he sees a sight he can't believe. It's the waterlogged Spider-Cricket hopping out of the river. When she notices Cha-Cha, she attempts to shimmy her shells back into place. She approaches Cha-Cha with as much "queenly" dignity as she can muster.

SPIDER-CRICKET Why do you stare at me so? I know I'm a bit streaked and I've lost a few of my shells but...lucky for me, my incredible flying wings kept me beautifully afloat.

She smiles at him winningly. Cha-Cha continues to stare at her, mesmerized.

SPIDER-CRICKET What is the problem? Are your eyes unable to blink? Or have you, too, been blinded by my beauty? It's sublime, isn't it? My own family used to gasp every time they gazed in my direction.

CHA-CHA Oh? No! Oh no. I mean yes. Yes. I really don't know what I mean but we hedgehogs don't have very good eyesight but it would take complete blindness not to see you are the most beautiful creature.

SPIDER-CRICKET It's the wings, my divine wings. *(Flutters her wings dramatically)* They are indeed my best feature.

CHA-CHA And to have two of God's creatures talking to me in one day...

He tries not to but he can't help himself. He turns away and sobs. Spider-Cricket frowns- Cha-Cha must be a nut case. Mwindo emerges from the cave, seems surprised that he's free and that there is light. He wipes his eyes, stretches. Spider-Cricket immediately curtsies.

SPIDER-CRICKET Oh my, the little boy-man. The Mighty Mwindo!

MWINDO Do I know you?

SPIDER-CRICKET Oh, yes, yes, I was present at your birth, my little friend.

Mwindo waves her away, moves longingly toward the drum sound in the distance.

CHA-CHA *(Waddling after him)* Well, he is my friend, too. Remember I am the one that has freed us, Mighty Mwindo...

MWINDO How dare you say you freed me?! No one frees the Mighty Mwindo.

CHA-CHA But you inspired me to dig until I saw light. Please, all I want is to return home to Tubondo.

SPIDER-CRICKET We all want to return home. I have an exceptional family, a huge family, yes I do, spiders and crickets both, all who must miss me terribly. They're weeping I'm sure.

MWINDO What are the drums saying? Are they saying my father wants me to return so that we can play another game?

SPIDER-CRICKET A game??? Little baby-man, this is no game. That is exactly why you need counsel...

CHA-CHA Well, if I may wag my own tail for a minute...

SPIDER-CRICKET ...Someone knowledgeable to advise you.

CHA-CHA I can offer superior male companionship. Mighty Mwindo, I will stay by your side morning, noon and night...

SPIDER-CRICKET But I was once a trusted advisor to your father. Very trusted. Plus, you don't know this... (*Fluttering her wings*) But I am expecting to fly any day now.

CHA-CHA I'm not sure if that's possible for your species but I do think having a beautiful companion such as...I'm sorry I didn't catch your name...

SPIDER-CRICKET Spider-Cricket.

CHA-CHA Yes, Spider-Cricket, a lovely, lovely name. I do think Miss Spider-Cricket will be of great use to us in our travels.

MWINDO I have no use for a weeping hedgehog or a cricket spider who thinks she can fly.

Undaunted, Spider-Cricket continues making her case. Cha-Cha cosigns with repeated grunts of, "yes, that's right".

SPIDER-CRICKET But you may want revenge one day, Mighty Mwindo, for how your father has carelessly cast you aside. That is where I..

CHA-CHA WE! I'm sure you meant to say we.

SPIDER-CRICKET We can be most useful. Picture the day when you can dangle us before him as your good friends and laugh in his face. Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CHA-CHA Yes, Ha...ha!

But Mwindo is distracted by a sight in the distance. It is his mother, lugging a basket of supplies and using every ounce of strength she has to make her way to him.

MWINDO Mother! You've come for me.

Grabbing the sleeping mat Cha-Cha made, Mwindo runs to greet his Mother.

CHA-CHA (*watching him go*) We must give them their time. Losing a mother is never easy.

Spider-Cricket suddenly takes a running start, then flaps her wings to take flight but lands on her

backside with a thud. Cha-Cha horrified.

CHA-CHA Oh my, you've fallen. Did you trip? Let me help you...

SPIDER-CRICKET You really don't see well, do you? I didn't fall. I was flying. Do you not see these cricket wings? One day they'll call me "THE SUBLIME" Spider-Cricket. Those show-off male crickets use their wings to create that chirping sound but I...I will be the first female to use her wings to fly, to soar! Every species will fight to claim me. *(Cha-Cha sobs)* **Why in the "spider-web" are you crying now?**

CHA-CHA It's just that life is so sad. You have wings and cannot fly. And I live in a hole with no friends, no hope or belief in myself. I don't know if you've noticed but I'm a tad overweight. *(Beat, no response from Spider-Cricket)* Well, did you notice?

SPIDER-CRICKET *(Dramatically to the heavens)* Oh please! We have bigger problems than your weight. Sweet God of Lightning, deliver me!

Suddenly, there's a thunder clap and a huge bolt of lightning. Spider-Cricket screams, hurriedly retreats out of sight. Cha-Cha scurries after her, sobbing like there's no tomorrow.

SPIDER-CRICKET I DIDN'T MEAN IT! I DIDN'T MEAN IT!!

CHA-CHA You must be careful what you say! And maybe I should have never left my cave.

AT THE RIVER'S EDGE

Mwindo offers his exhausted mother water from the river. She gulps it, parched.

MWINDO Mother, you have come to tell me my father wants me now?

MOTHER Mwindo, we don't have much time... You were born with this conga.

Mother hands Mwindo his scepter conga and he's thrilled. Immediately, he begins to laugh, dance and do tricks with his conga.

MOTHER I suspect it holds much of your magical power. But a man's true power, Mwindo, will always equal the amount of love in his heart.

MWINDO And I have much love in my heart, right Mother? Like you and my father?

MOTHER Mwindo, Mother has prayed and asked the ancestors for guidance and I have been rewarded. I know now that for you to fulfill your destiny as the greatest leader our village has ever known, you will need time to grow out

of your father's sight, for you are the chosen one.

We see Cha-Cha has inched closer, hiding to overhear Mwindo and Mother's conversation. On her last sentence, he clasps his paws to the heavens, then scurries away. Mwindo nods, grins, he's listening but his attention span is short so at some point he begins playing with his conga or any animal shadow. The drums sound.

MOTHER The drums say that our time slips away so listen carefully my son. Journey deep below this river to where your Aunt Iyan, the woman of many hearts, rules. (*Mwindo grins, not quite understanding*) Travel, you will, through many domains. The deeper you go, the less fear you must show. You understand? NO FEAR.

Mwindo plays with his conga, laughing and half listening. Hawk squawks overhead. Mwindo mimics Hawk's sounds and movements. Mwindo suddenly notices the golden light radiating around his mother. He grins, looks up at the sky, then points to his mother.

MWINDO Oh, Mother, look how the sun is smiling upon you. Now you shine bright as gold.

Mother looks to her golden radiating limbs, becomes inexplicably more panicked. More urgent African chanting/music in the distance.

MOTHER Mother's time is short. The spirit world is growing impatient.

MWINDO Spirit world? Am I of the spirit world?

MOTHER Most definitely. Since the Gods favored me to birth you already walking and talking, I know you are very special, much like the ancient golden hawk, a creature only a special few in hundreds, maybe thousands of years have ever witnessed. The elders believe if you ever lay eyes on the miracle of the golden hawk, you will know the greatest truth imaginable.

A swirling wind suddenly picks up. Mother becomes alarmed. She grabs him close.

MOTHER But sadly, sacrifice precedes most miracles, my son... Oh, I can't bear to let you go...

More swirling wind. Louder drums. The river rages. The Warrior men appear and drag Mwindo into a drum. Mother yells over the loud and swirling wind. Hawk circles.

MOTHER Mwindo, REMEMBER, SHOW NO FEAR!

WARRIORS Wewe! Kuja sasa!

MWINDO (*Screaming*) Mother! Mother they are going to drown me!

The wind whips mother as she runs into the river to catch sight of Mwindo one last time. The drum swirls.

MOTHER Mwindo! Mwindo! Do not be afraid, my son. Look for the golden hawk for one day it will return you home to me.

The Chief's Hawk swoops low over the river. Lightning bolts crack the sky and thunder shakes the earth. The world turns dark and ominous while we hear Hawk squawking and screeching for mercy. And suddenly there is an explosion of magnificent golden light, which Mwindo witnesses and yells.

MWINDO MOTHER!

And then Mwindo disappears underwater.