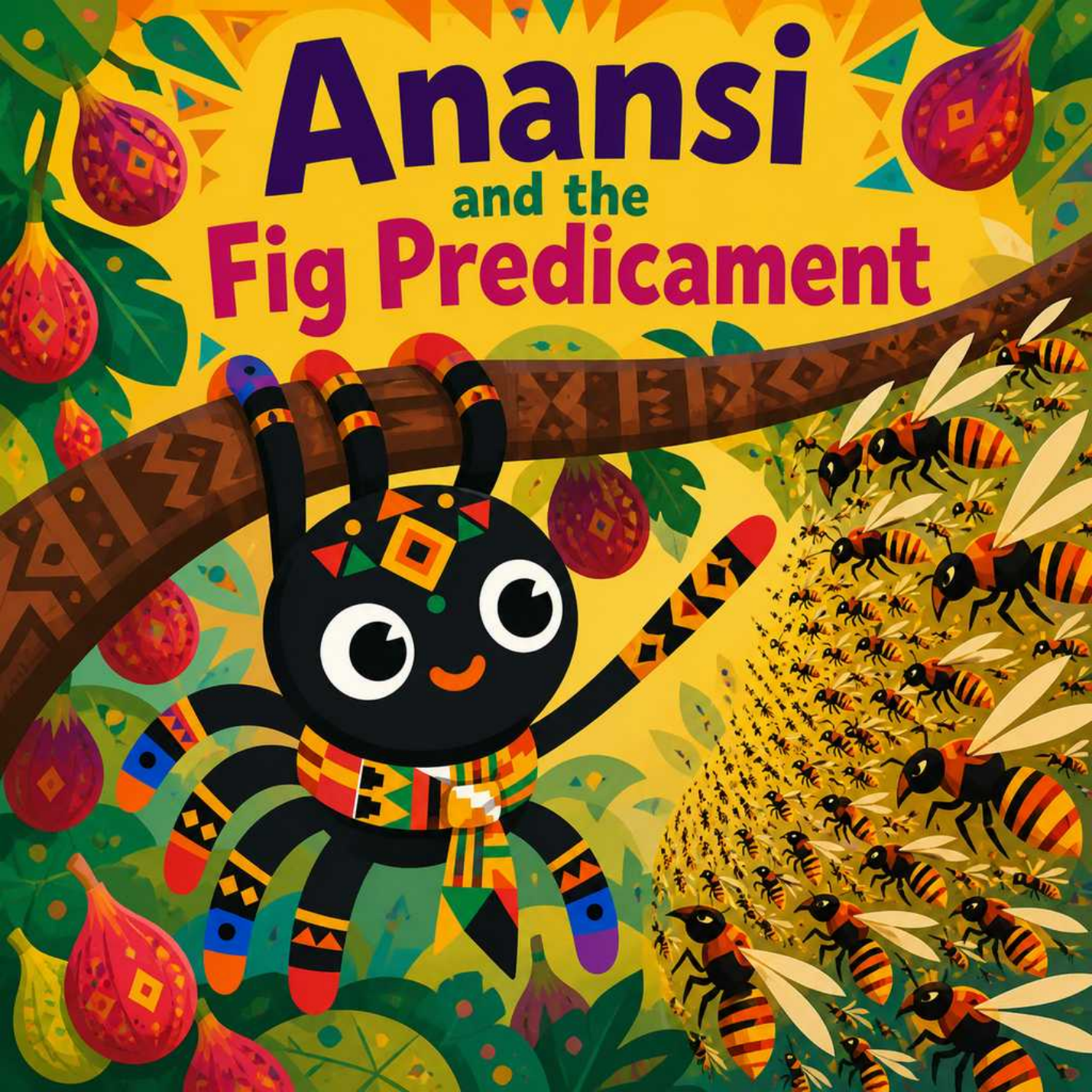


Anansi

and the

Fig Predicament



The great fig tree at the edge of the town holds the best figs in all the Ashanti forest. Its branches bend low, heavy with sweet red and gold fruit.

But now the hornets claim every last fig. No one can pick a single one. The town is in a sad **predicament**.





The hornets sting any one who comes close. They sting goats, hens, and kids. They even sting Old Grandmother Akosua, who drops her basket and runs like never before.

For seven days the town eats plain yams. No figs for the kids, no figs for the elders, no figs at all. Such **torment!**

Anansi the spider hears the sad talk, and his own tummy growls. He is very fond of figs. He skitters to the fig tree, looks up at the hornets, and makes an **announcement**. 'I will settle this!' No one has faith in him, but no one has a plan at all.



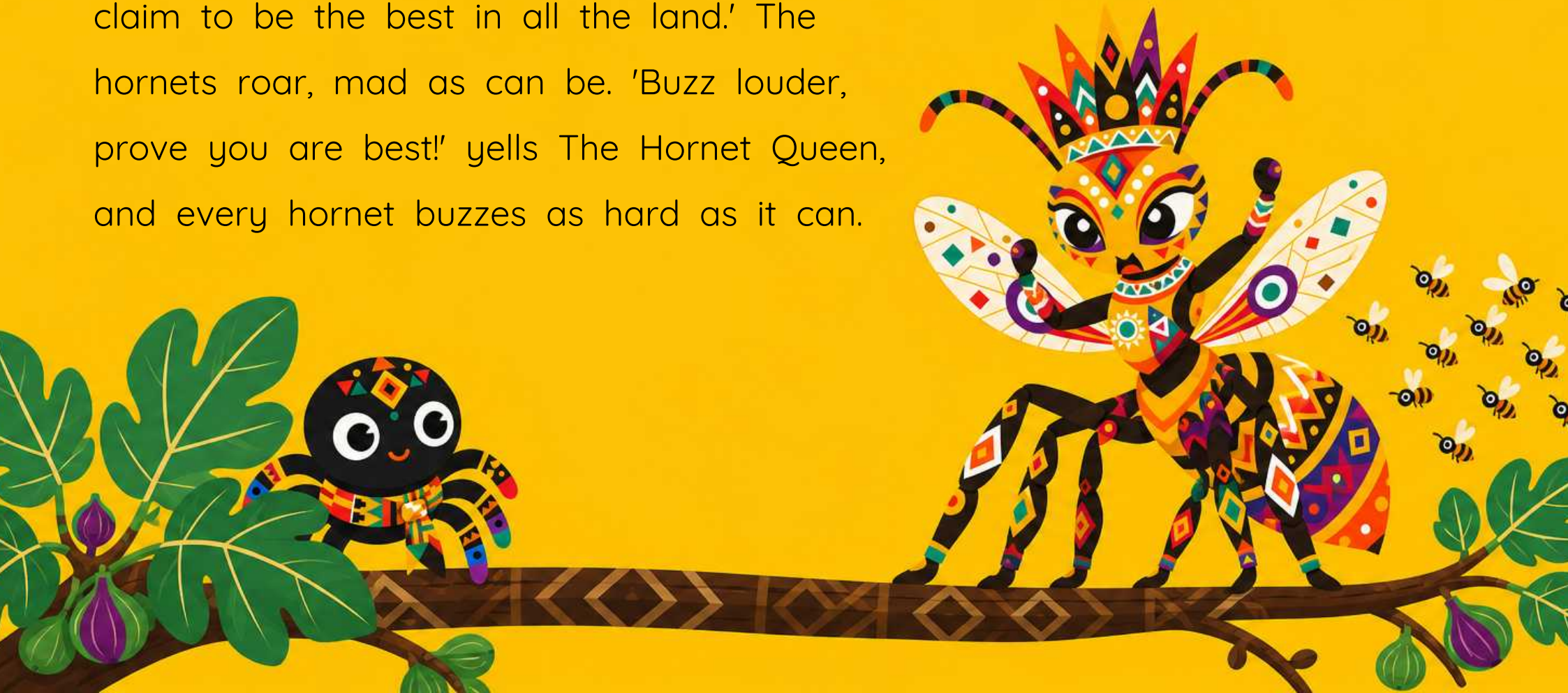
First, Anansi finds Kofi and his drum. 'Kofi,' he says, 'take the drum deep into the ravine across the river and beat it. Beat it deep and steady. Do not stop, not even for a **moment.**' Anansi pays Kofi with a gold coin. A **payment** like that is hard to refuse. Kofi tucks the drum, a big hollow log, under his arm and goes.



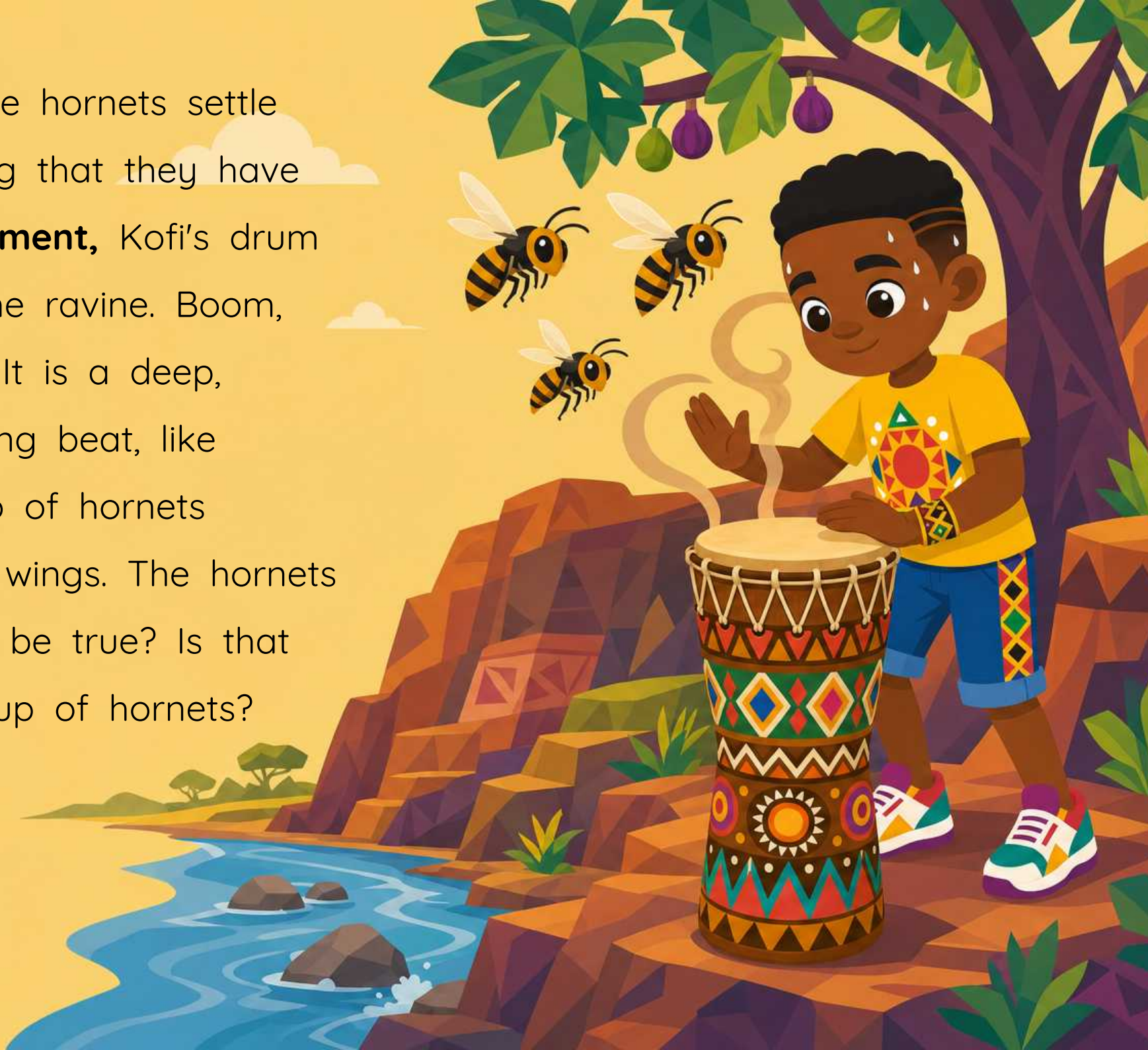


Then Anansi climbs a branch on the near side of the fig tree, just close enough that the hornets turn to face him, wings trembling to scare him. 'Great hornets,' he says, sweet as a fig, 'there is talk in the land. Talk the great hornets should hear.' The big cloud of hornets goes very still. For a **moment**, there is no buzz at all. Hornets love to hear talk, most of all talk about how great they are.

'Another group of hornets lives across the river, in the ravine,' says Anansi. 'Big hornets. Loud hornets. They say the buzz in this tree is weak, like a small bug that is sick.' Then Anansi makes one more **comment**: 'They claim to be the best in all the land.' The hornets roar, mad as can be. 'Buzz louder, prove you are best!' yells The Hornet Queen, and every hornet buzzes as hard as it can.



But just as the hornets settle down, boasting that they have won the **argument**, Kofi's drum rolls across the ravine. Boom, boom, boom! It is a deep, steady, mocking beat, like another group of hornets flapping their wings. The hornets freeze. Can it be true? Is that the other group of hornets?





Anansi does not waste a **moment**. 'Hear that?' he whispers to The Hornet Queen. 'They mock the queen herself. They drum because they say her buzz can not even reach the river.' The Hornet Queen is so mad she trembles. 'We will go and buzz in their faces until they flee!' she yells. Anansi nods. He does not grin, not yet. 'Yes. Buzz louder, prove you are best!'

The hornets stream across the sky in a long, loud cloud, every last one, toward the ravine. Kofi hears them come, tucks his drum under his arm, and sprints up the far bank into the deep forest. The hornets dive into the empty ravine, buzzing at rocks and roots, searching for the other hornets. To their **bewilderment**, no one is there.



Anansi races back to the town. 'Come quick!' he yells. 'Bring baskets! Bring bowls! Bring cloth bundles!' People rush out with pots and baskets and pick figs as fast as their hands can move. Kids eat as they pick. Old Grandmother Akosua fills three baskets. What **excitement!**

But then, from across the river, comes a mad buzz, and it grows loud. The hornets have discovered the trick.





The hornets scream back across the sky. Anansi is still in the fig tree. He grabs one last fat fig, just one, and drops into his web, spinning down so fast he is hard to see. He hits the ground running. The hornets reach the tree and freeze in **astonishment**. It is stripped bare, and Anansi is waving as he vanishes into town.

That night, the town feasts on figs and soup, and there is **merriment** in every home. Drums play, and kids dance with fig-stained hands. Anansi sits in the best seat and eats until his belly is as round as the full moon. He has outsmarted the hornets with their own pride, the best trick in all the land. To this day, when pride leads any one into a foolish fight, the elders smile and say, 'Buzz louder, prove you are best!' They know just what comes next.





Anansi and the Fig Predicament

In a village where hornets have claimed every fig on the great tree, hungry families eat nothing but plain yams. Anansi the clever spider loves figs too much to give up, so he hatches a trick involving a distant drum and a swarm's own pride. Can a spider outwit an entire hive without lifting a single leg? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 125: -ment), this book practices words like 'moment', 'announcement', 'argument', 'predicament', 'torment'.

Phonics Focus: -ment

announcement, argument, astonishment, bewilderment, comment, excitement, merriment, moment, payment, predicament, torment

Bookbot is not endorsed by or affiliated with UFLI (the University of Florida Literacy Institute) or Jolly Learning Ltd. UFLI Foundations and Jolly Phonics are trademarks of their respective owners.

Learn to read with confidence

The Bookbot app and its carefully designed decodable books help children practise the sounds and words they are learning, building strong phonics and reading skills one step at a time. In the app, children can listen to stories read aloud, follow highlighted words as they are spoken, and read independently when they are ready. Together, the decodable books and oral reading support help develop accuracy, fluency, confidence and a love of reading. Learn more at www.bookbotkids.com.

