

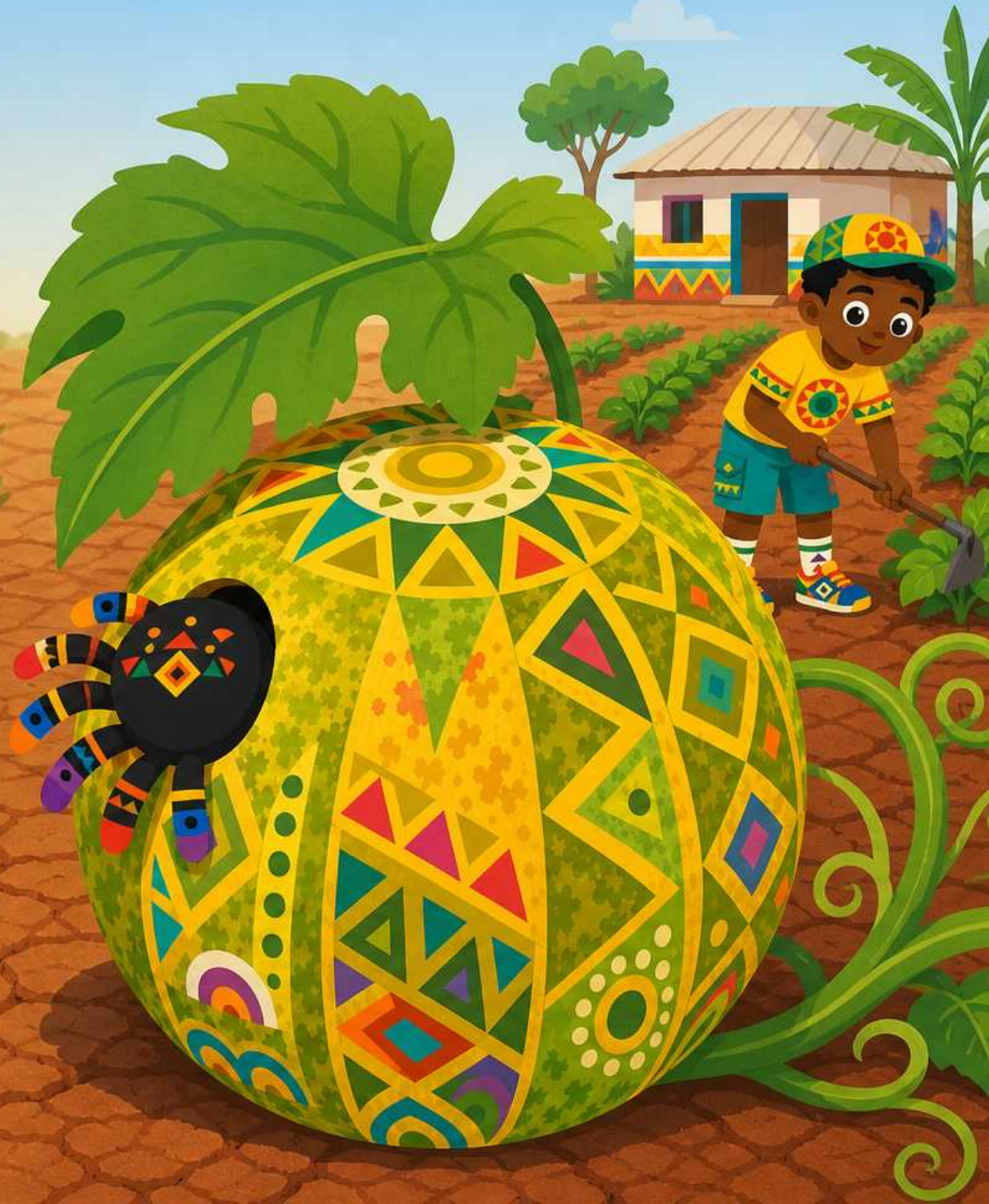
# Anansi

and the

# Full Melon



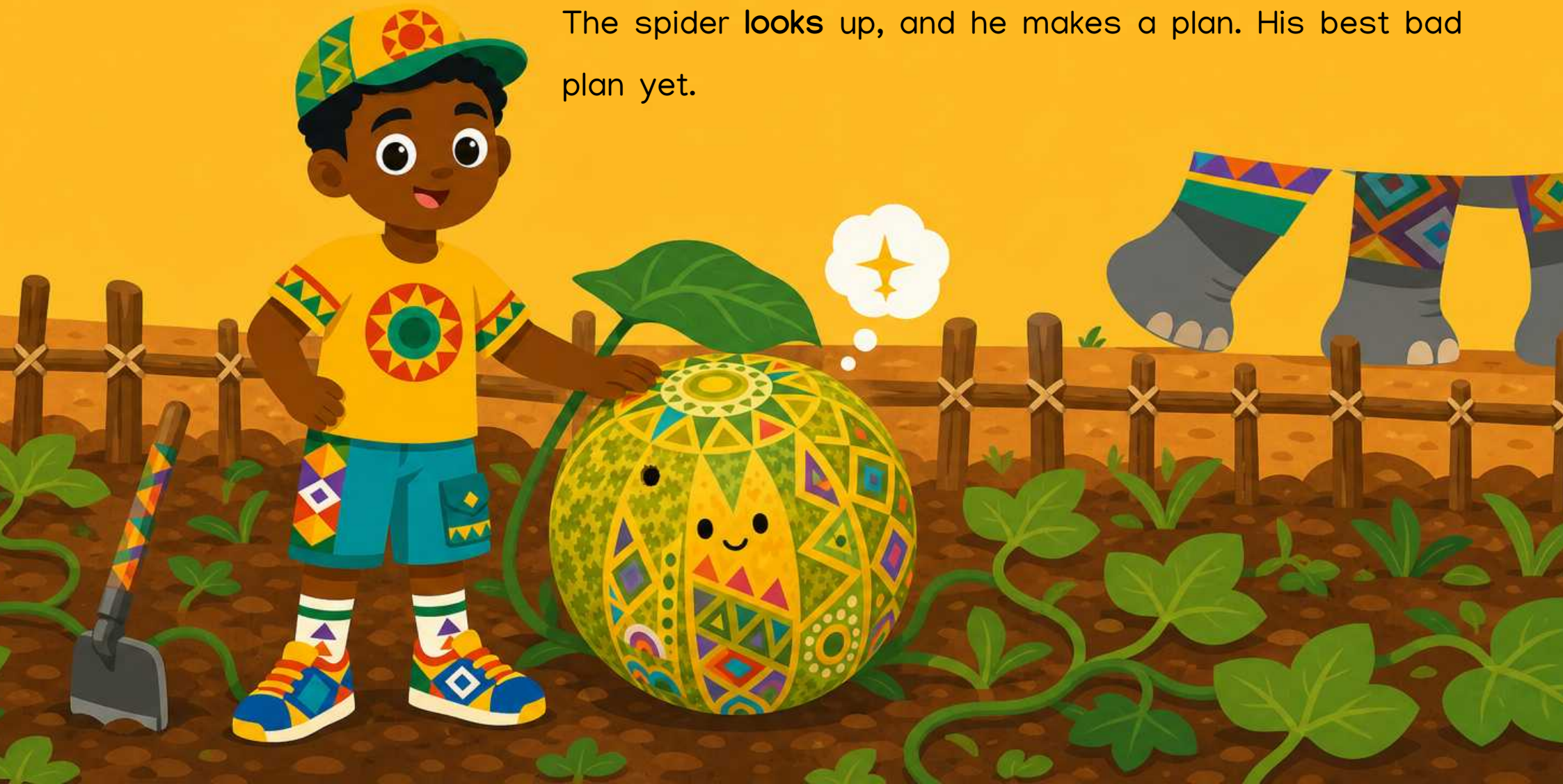
No rain falls for weeks. Just one thing still looks good: a farm man's big yellow-green melon. It sits in the shade of its own big leaf. Anansi the spider smells it from far off. He waits till the farm man looks away, bites a small hole in the melon skin, and slips inside. It is dark and sweet. The spider eats and eats and eats, and naps before he sees the problem.





The problem is this. The spider goes in small. Then he is as big as a yam. His **full** belly presses the walls. The hole is small, and he is big. He can not get his big belly past it. The spider **pushes**. He twists. He tries to go legs first. Then. Thud, thud. **Footsteps!** The farm man walks back to the melon. The spider **pulls** his legs in and stays very still.

The farm man comes to the melon, pats it, and walks on. Anansi is stuck, but no one has seen him. He can work with stuck. Lots of melon is left to eat, and the shade is good. Then Elephant walks past on the road. The spider looks up, and he makes a plan. His best bad plan yet.



'Good morning, Elephant!' the spider calls from inside the melon, deep and slow.

Elephant stops. She looks left. She looks right. No one is on the road. 'Look low,' says the melon. Elephant looks at the melon. 'My, my, Elephant! So big today!' says the spider. Elephant backs up one step, then two, then runs off fast.





The tale runs fast, and gets bigger with each telling. By night, the tale is all over: the farm man's melon can talk! By morning, a big mob stands at the farm plot. Anansi is glad. He waits. The mob leans in, all still. Then he says in his best melon call, 'The rain comes back in seven days.' The mob gasps. One old gal looks hard at the melon, just in case.

By midday, the tale gets to the King. A melon that talks! The King must see this. He calls for the melon to come to his court. Anansi feels sick. Going to the King is not the plan at all. But the spider is stuck in the melon. Four strong men put the melon on a cloth, pull it up, and take it off to the King.



The court is full. The King sits in gold and black, and his aides sit in rows. The mob presses in at every door. The men put the melon on a low table. The King leans in and says, 'We are told this melon can talk. Please talk.' Inside, the spider thinks fast. He can go on with the act, or stay still and quiet. He will not pick quiet.





Anansi **puts** on his best show. The melon tells the King that his dish needs one thing: pepper-seeds. And the melon is right! The melon says it is a lucky day for the crop. The melon tells the drummer where his drumstick is. **Look** behind the water jar! Right again. The King is glad. His aides gape. At the back, the farm man **looks** cross and glad all at once.

Then one of the aides stands up. She is sharp, and she has sat and **looked** hard for a long time. 'My King, I must ask this melon one thing,' she says. She walks to the low table. 'Melon,' she says, 'what am I thinking?' The court is still. The spider is still. He can not tell what the sharp gal thinks. The hush stretches on and on.



'The melon,' the spider says at last, 'is thinking of what the sharp gal thinks.' The court is still for one more second. Then the King stands up slow. 'I was a good host to this melon,' says the King, 'and it plays a trick on my court. Take it away.' His call goes soft and quiet. A man picks up the melon. 'Quick,' says the King. Then the King grabs the melon. And tosses it!





The melon hits the floor with a crack. It bursts into rind, seeds, mush, and one very fat, melon-stained spider. Anansi spins, rolls under a bench, and lies still. He hopes all will think he is a big seed. The farm man looks at the melon. Then at the spider. Then at the King. Then back at the spider. 'What man has seen a melon talk?' says the farm man. Then all the court cracks up, and no one can stop.

The King sends Anansi home with a stern word, a rag, and a bag of pepper-seeds for the farm man. The spider walks back, still stained with melon, picking melon seeds off his legs. He is glad. He is clever. So clever he almost tricks a king. But he does not quit in time, and his big belly can not get past the small hole. 'What man has seen a melon talk?' No one. And no one is with the spider when he says, 'Next time I quit at six bites.' But when the next crop comes, the farm man **looks** long and hard at his melons.





## Anansi and the Full Melon

Anansi the spider smells a farmer's prize melon and can't resist sneaking inside for a taste. Soon his belly is full and he's stuck fast, with the farmer's footsteps coming closer. Can Anansi talk his way out of this sticky mess? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 89: oo, u /oo/), this book practices words like 'looks', 'full', 'pull', 'footsteps', 'puts'.

**Phonics Focus:** oo, u /oo/

footsteps, full, good, look, looked, looks, pull, pulls, pushes, put, puts

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