

Anansi

and the

Hornet Sting



A grand fig tree
stands by the village.
It has the sweetest
figs in all the Ashanti
forest.

But now the hornets
take the tree. They
stay in it all **day**,
and nobody can pick
one fig.





The hornets sting all who come by. Goats, hens, and kids all get a nasty sting. The hornets even sting Old Grandmother Akosua! She drops her basket and runs. For seven **days** the village eats **plain** yams. No figs for the kids. No figs at all.

Anansi the spider likes figs a lot. The village is sad and hungry, and so is he. He goes to the big fig tree and calls up to the hornets. 'I will **save** the figs,' he says. No one thinks he can, but no one has a better plan.



First, Anansi goes to get Kofi, the lad with the drum. 'Kofi,' he says, '**take** the drum deep into the glen across the river. Beat it and beat it, and do not stop.'

Anansi hands Kofi a fat coin. Kofi grins. A spider who **pays** with good coin is a spider to trust!

He tucks the drum under his arm and goes.





Then Anansi swings up on silk to a branch on the fig tree. The hornet wings buzz with **rage**.

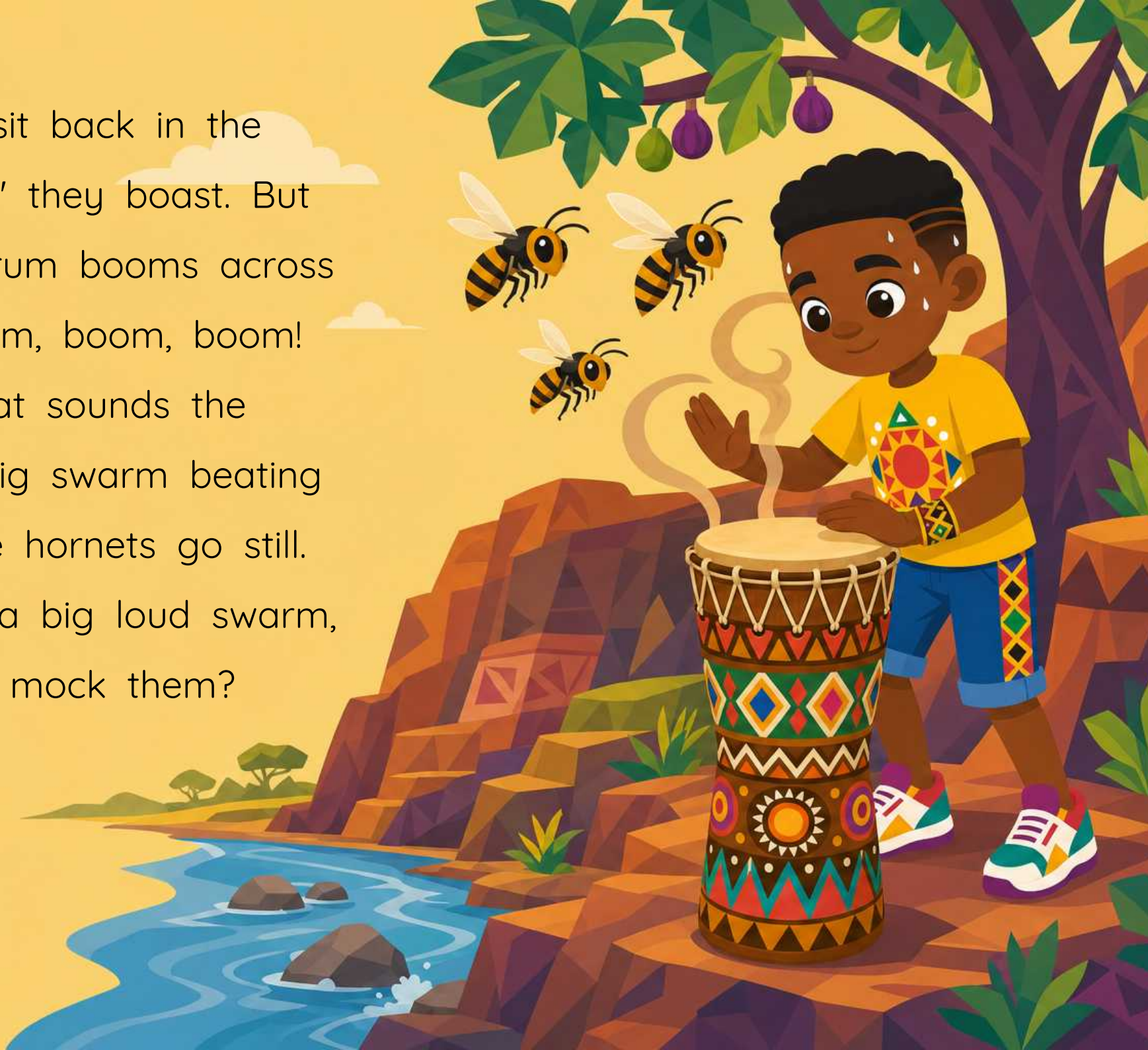
'Grand hornets,' says Anansi in a sweet, sweet **way**, 'I come just to tell a thing. A big thing.'

The swarm goes still.
Hornets like to be told grand things about hornets.

'A big swarm lives in the glen across the river,' says Anansi. 'The hornets there **say** this buzz is weak, like a sad little bug.' He waits. 'They **say** they rule this forest.' The swarm buzzes with **rage**. 'Buzz loud, be the best!' yells the Hornet Queen, and all the hornets buzz as hard as they can.



The hornets sit back in the tree. 'We win!' they boast. But then Kofi's drum booms across the glen. Boom, boom, boom! The deep beat sounds the **same** as a big swarm beating its wings. The hornets go still. Can that be a big loud swarm, drumming to mock them?





'They mock us,' Anansi whispers. 'They **say** this buzz can not even reach the river.' The Hornet Queen's eyes **blaze**. She turns to the swarm. 'We go and buzz at them till they flee!' Anansi nods. 'Yes,' he says. 'Do that. Buzz loud, be the best!'

All the hornets stream up in a long **line** and **race** to the glen. A loud buzz comes Kofi's **way**. He grabs his drum and runs up the bank into the deep forest. The swarm dives down and buzzes at rocks and roots, seeking the other swarm. But no one is there.



Anansi races back to the village. 'Come quick!' he yells. 'Get the pots! Get the baskets!' The crowd rushes out. They pick **ripe** figs as fast as hands can go. The kids eat as they pick. Old Grandmother Akosua fills basket after basket. But then a mad buzz comes from across the river. It gets loud. The hornets can tell it is a trick!





The hornets zoom back across the sky. Anansi is still in the fig tree. He grabs one last fat fig, just one, and slides down his silk at top speed. He lands and runs. The hornets get to the tree. No figs! Not one! And Anansi zips **away** to the village, waving all the **way**.

That night the village has a grand feast. Drums **play**, and kids dance with fig **stains** on each hand. Anansi eats figs until he is round as the full moon. He beats the hornets not with silk, not with a sting, but with pride. The hornets' own pride, the best trick in the forest. The hornets fly **away** to a tree far, far **away**. To this **day**, when a proud kid brags, the Ashanti elders smile and **say**: 'Buzz loud, be the best!' They can tell what comes next.





Anansi and the Hornet Sting

Anansi loves figs more than anything, but a swarm of angry hornets has claimed the whole village's fig tree for themselves. When Old Grandmother Akosua gets stung and drops her basket, the whole village is left with nothing but plain yams to eat. Can a clever spider outsmart a swarm of furious hornets before they sting him too? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 4: /ai/ mixed), this book practices words like 'wait', 'away', 'stay', 'race', 'plain'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

away, blaze, day, days, dive, line, node, pays, plain, play, race, rage, ripe, same, save, say, stains, stay, take, wait, wave, way

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