

Anansi and the Loud Cloud



The grand fig tree stands at the edge of town. Its branches bend down, heavy with sweet figs, red and gold as sunset.

But this season, a loud cloud of hornets crowds the tree. The hornets grab every last fig.





The hornets sting goats, chickens, and kids. They sting Old Grandmother Akosua, and she lets her basket fall and runs, shouting, 'Ouch, ouch, ouch!'

The town eats plain yams for seven days. No figs for the kids, no figs for the elders, no figs at all.

Anansi the spider is fond of figs and full of tricks,
and now his belly growls aloud. He goes to the edge
of town and calls up to the hornets, 'I will fix this!'
No one thinks he can, but no one has a better plan.



First, Anansi finds Kofi the drummer. 'Kofi,' he says, 'take the drum deep into the gully across the river and pound it. Pound it steady. Do not stop, no matter what sounds come.'

Kofi nods. A spider who pays with a gold coin is a good spider to help. Kofi takes his drum and goes down the path.





Then Anansi **crouches** on a low branch of the fig tree, not far from the **crowd** of hornets. A **thousand** wings hum with threat.

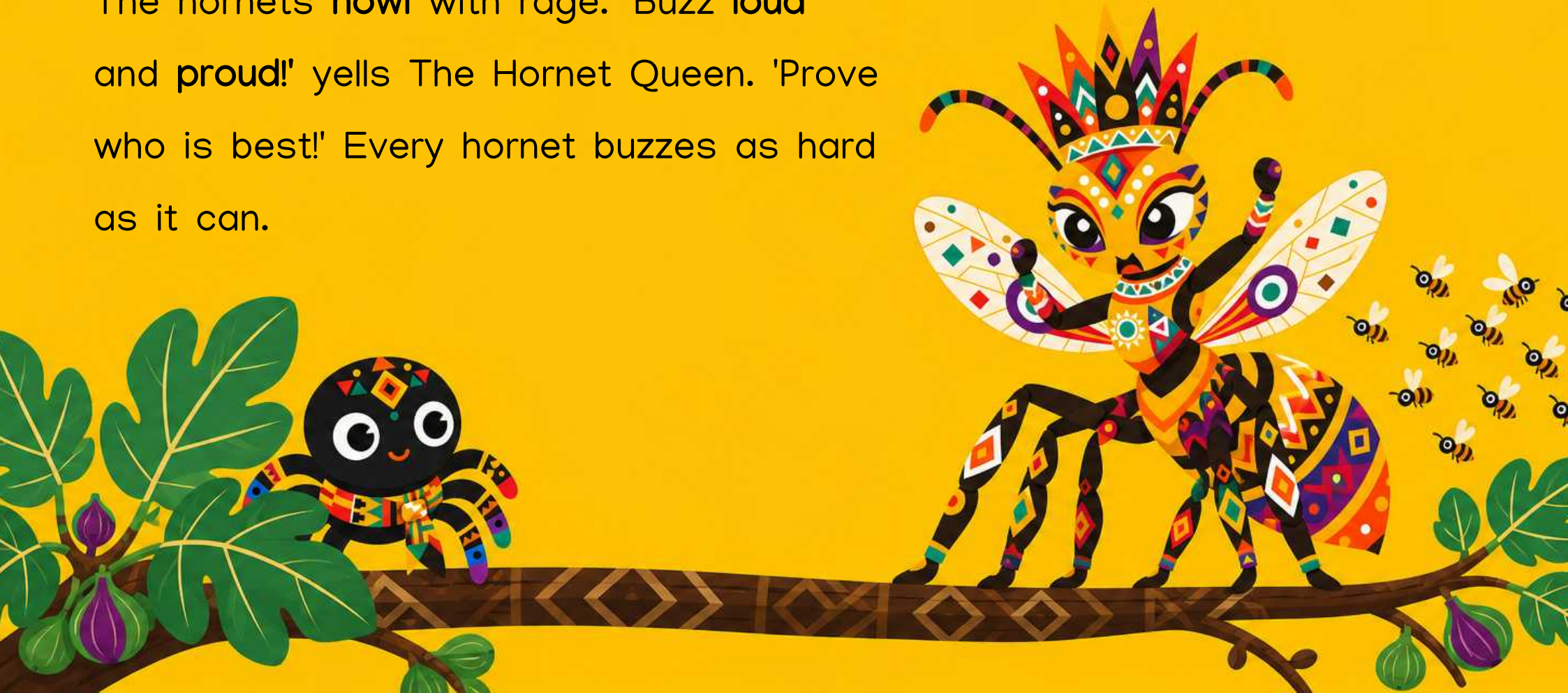
'Grand hornets,' Anansi says in his sweetest way, 'I come to tell one small thing.'

The loud cloud goes still.

Hornets always want to be told things, most of all **about** how grand they are.

'Another crowd of hornets lives in the gully by the river,' says Anansi. 'Big hornets. Loud hornets. They say the buzz in this tree is weak, like a sad baby goat.'

The hornets howl with rage. 'Buzz loud and proud!' yells The Hornet Queen. 'Prove who is best!' Every hornet buzzes as hard as it can.



Just as the hornets brag and boast that they are the best, a deep sound rolls out from the gully. Boom, boom, boom! Kofi beats his drum, steady and mocking, and it sounds just like another crowd of hornets. The hornets go still. Could that be a true foe?





Anansi leans in and whispers,
'That sound is a mocking sound.
They drum because they say the
buzz here can not even cross the
river.'

The Hornet Queen's eyes go
wide with rage. 'We will go there
and buzz in their faces until they
flee!' she yells.

Anansi nods. 'Yes. Go now. Buzz
loud, prove hornets are best!'

The hornets stream out in one long, loud cloud, every last one, out to the gully. Kofi sees the cloud come. He grabs his drum and sprints into the deep trees. The very mad hornets buzz all around the empty gully, hunting for a foe. But there is no one there.



Anansi races back to town.
'Come quick!' he **shouts**. 'Bring baskets, pots, and bowls, all of them!' The people rush out and pick figs as fast as hands can move. The kids eat as they pick, and Old Grandmother Akosua fills three baskets.

But then, from across the river, comes a **loud**, mad buzzing. The hornets have found out about the trick.





The hornets come howling back. Anansi is still up in the fig tree! He grabs one last fat fig, just one, and swings down on his silk thread, quick as can be. He bounces on the ground and sprints for town. The very mad hornets find a tree with no figs at all, and Anansi grins and holds his fig up high.

That evening, the **town** feasts on figs and nut stew. Drums play, and kids skip and clap with fig-red hands. Anansi sits in the best seat and eats until his belly is **round** as the full moon. He **outsmarts** the hornets with their own pride, not with **power**, and that is the best trick in any wood. The hornets find a new tree, far, far from **town**. And to this day, when some one full of pride picks a silly fight, the wise Ashanti elders grin and say, 'Buzz **loud**, prove who is best!' for they can tell what comes next.





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Anansi loves figs, but a loud cloud of hornets has taken over the town's fig tree, stinging anyone who gets close. With the town down to plain yams, Anansi comes up with a trick to outsmart the hornets, but can a clever spider fool a crowd this proud? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 96: ou, ow /ow/), this book practices words like 'loud', 'crowd', 'shouting', 'ground', and 'around'.

Phonics Focus: ou, ow /ow/

about, aloud, around, bounce, cloud, crouches, crowd, crowds, down, found, ground, growls, how, howl, howling, loud, now, ouch, out, outsmarts, pound, power, proud, round, shouting, shouts, sound, sounds, thousand, town

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