

Anansi and the Low Hum



Deep in the forest, the
trees grow so thick that
noon looks like evening.

At the foot of a hill,
Anansi finds a strange
rock, wide and green
with soft moss.

The rock hums a low
hum. Anansi leans in
close, whispers seven
words, and all goes dark.





One **hour** later, Anansi wakes up flat on his back in the ferns. He feels fine, just in a muddle.

Nothing hit him. He just said seven words and fell **asleep**.

Anansi is **too** clever not to test it. He says the words again:

'**What** a strange moss-covered rock this is!' All **goes** dark, and one **hour** later he wakes up in the same spot.

Anansi sits up very slowly and starts to grin a sly grin.

Then a plan drops into Anansi's head, the way a mango drops from a tree. Elephant keeps sweet food in a hollow tree to the east. Lion keeps dried fish under a flat stone, and Hornbill keeps three mangoes for his mother. All Anansi needs to do is lead each animal past the rock and say seven words. He rubs four legs together with glee and trots off to find Elephant.



'Elephant!' Anansi yells. 'There is a very strange thing on the south path!' Elephant is keen to see it, so she follows.

At the rock, Anansi says the seven words. Elephant sways once, sits down with a boom, and starts to snore.

Anansi eats her sweet food while she snores. Elephant wakes, blinks, and walks off. She thinks she just needed a nap.





The trick works so well that Anansi gets **greedy**. Lion's **dried fish goes** the same way. Then Hornbill's mangoes, the otters' basket of roasted nuts, and the bush-pigs' dry fruit **too**. Each animal wakes up on the **south path** with no food and no **clue** where it went. The rock says nothing. It just sits there, **green** and still. Anansi has never had so much food in his life.

But one critter does not follow Anansi to the rock. Little Bush Deer stands in the shadow of a wild fig tree and sees Elephant go down the south path. Bush Deer is small and smart, and she does not trust spiders. So she follows far behind and keeps watch. She sees Anansi lead Lion. She sees Anansi lead Hornbill. She catches each word, and she counts each stolen treat.



Bush Deer goes to find the animals on the south path. At first they shake their heads. How could one small spider put them all to sleep? But the empty food spots do not lie.

Lion counts his fish. Hornbill counts zero mangoes. 'Anansi uses the rock,' says Bush Deer. 'Seven words. I caught each one.'

Elephant sits down again, and this time she means to. She thinks very hard.



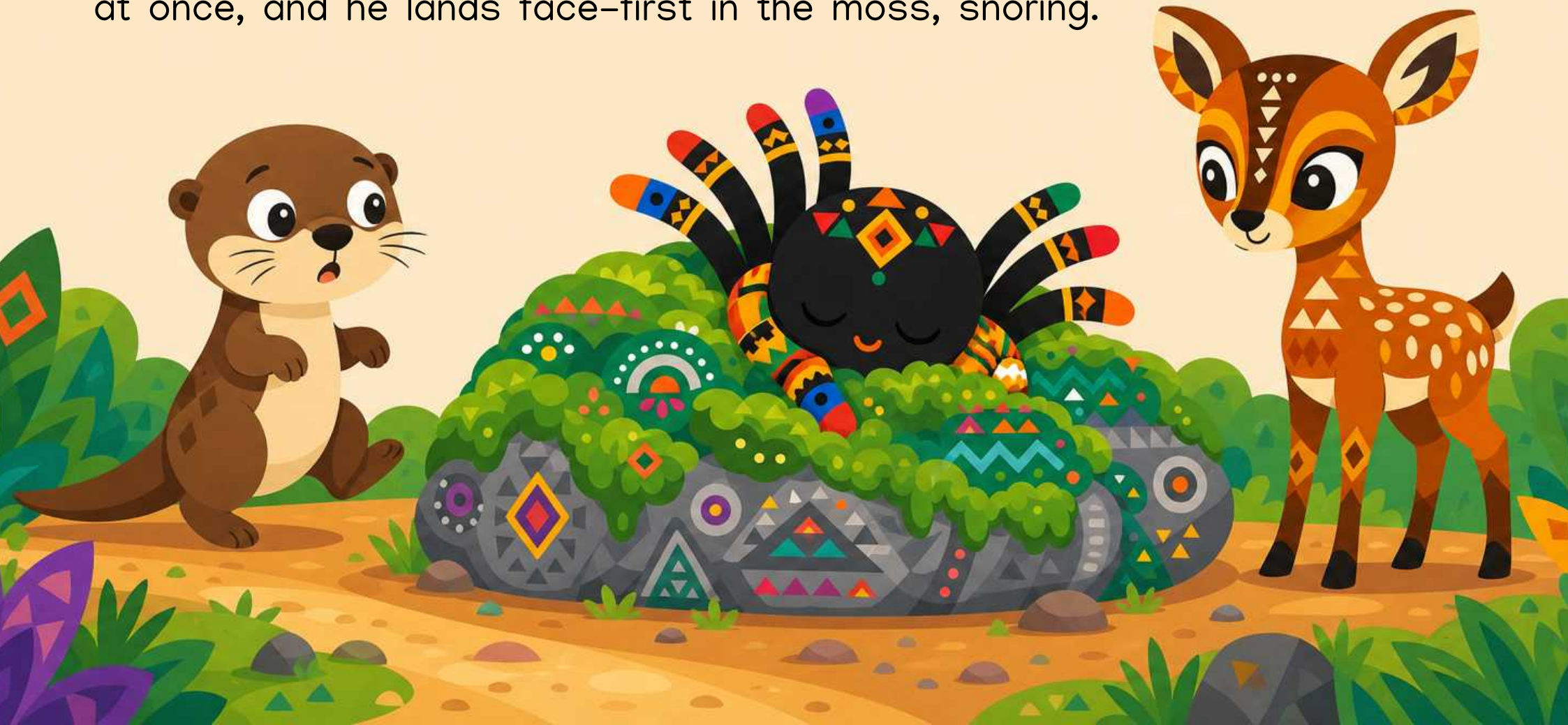


The plan comes from **Bush Deer**. It is **neat** and clever, and it turns the rock against Anansi. Anansi will be back. **Greedy** animals **always** go back to what works.

Bush Deer will hide by the rock, with the other animals **out of sight** behind her. When Anansi brings his next victim, **Bush Deer** will step **out** and **say** the words first.

The animals go over the plan **three** times, until all have their part. Then **they wait**.

The next morning, Anansi comes down the south path with a new victim, the river-otter's cousin. Bush Deer stands by the rock. 'Anansi,' she says, 'is this not a strange moss-covered rock?' Anansi's legs all crumple at once, and he lands face-first in the moss, snoring.



The animals step out
from behind the trees.
They find all the stolen
food and give each treat
back.

The river-otter's cousin
gets a mango, and he
goes home glad.

Then the animals sit
round the rock and have
a feast, while Anansi
snores in the moss
beside them.





One **hour** later, Anansi wakes up. **Full**, calm animals sit all round him. Elephant holds out a small bit of the **sweet food** Anansi stole from her. 'Anansi,' says **Bush Deer**, 'anyone can learn seven words.' Anansi looks at his empty stash. He looks at the rock. He opens his **mouth** and shuts it. Then he eats the **sweet food**, because it is still **sweet**, and a spider who has just lost his trick needs a **sweet treat**.

After that day, no one walks the south path alone. The animals go in a crowd, talking loud, and they always bring more food than they need, because giving feels better than keeping. The rock sits where it always sat, green and still. And when a new animal comes to the forest, one small voice always yells, 'What a strange moss-covered rock this is!' Just to keep them all awake.





Anansi and the Low Hum

Deep in the forest, Anansi finds a strange humming rock covered in soft green moss. He learns just seven words can knock any creature flat asleep, and he starts using the trick to steal food from Elephant, Lion, and Hornbill. But little Bush Deer is watching from the shadows, counting every stolen treat. Will she find a way to turn Anansi's own trick against him? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 97: Vowel Teams & Diphthongs Review), this book practices words like 'sweet', 'south', 'treat', 'follow', and 'crowd'.

Phonics Focus: Vowel Teams & Diphthongs Review

always, asleep, boom, bush, caught, clue, count, crowd, day, deep, doe, down, dried, each, east, eat, feast, feel, follow, food, foot, fruit, full, glee, goes, greedy, green, grow, head, hollow, hour, how, keen, keep, lead, lean, lie, look, loud, low, mean, means, mouth, neat, need, new, noon, out, put, roast, round, say, see, shadow, sight, sleep, slow, south, sways, sweet, they, three, too, treat, tree, voice, wait, watch, way, what

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