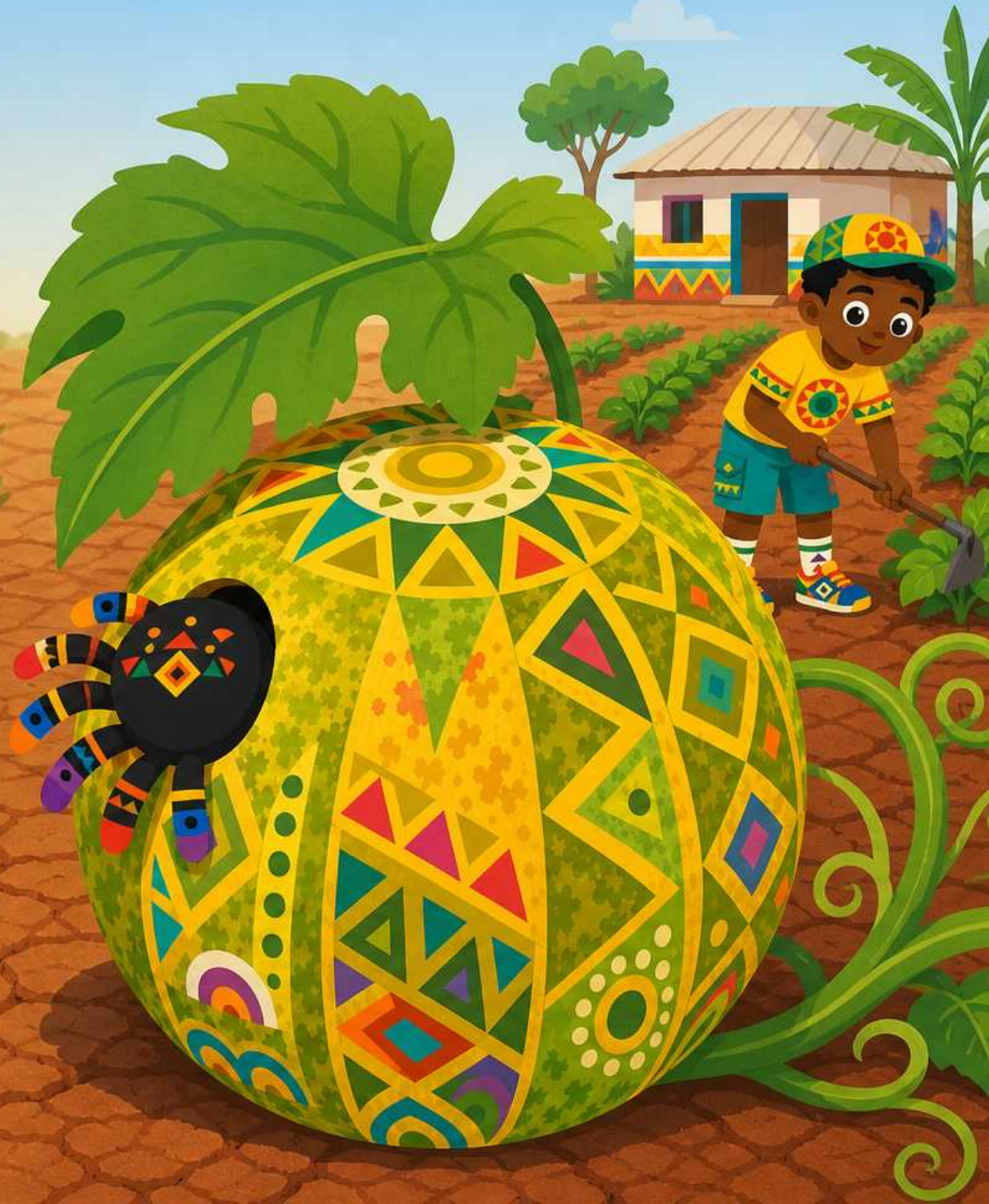


Anansi Grows Too Big



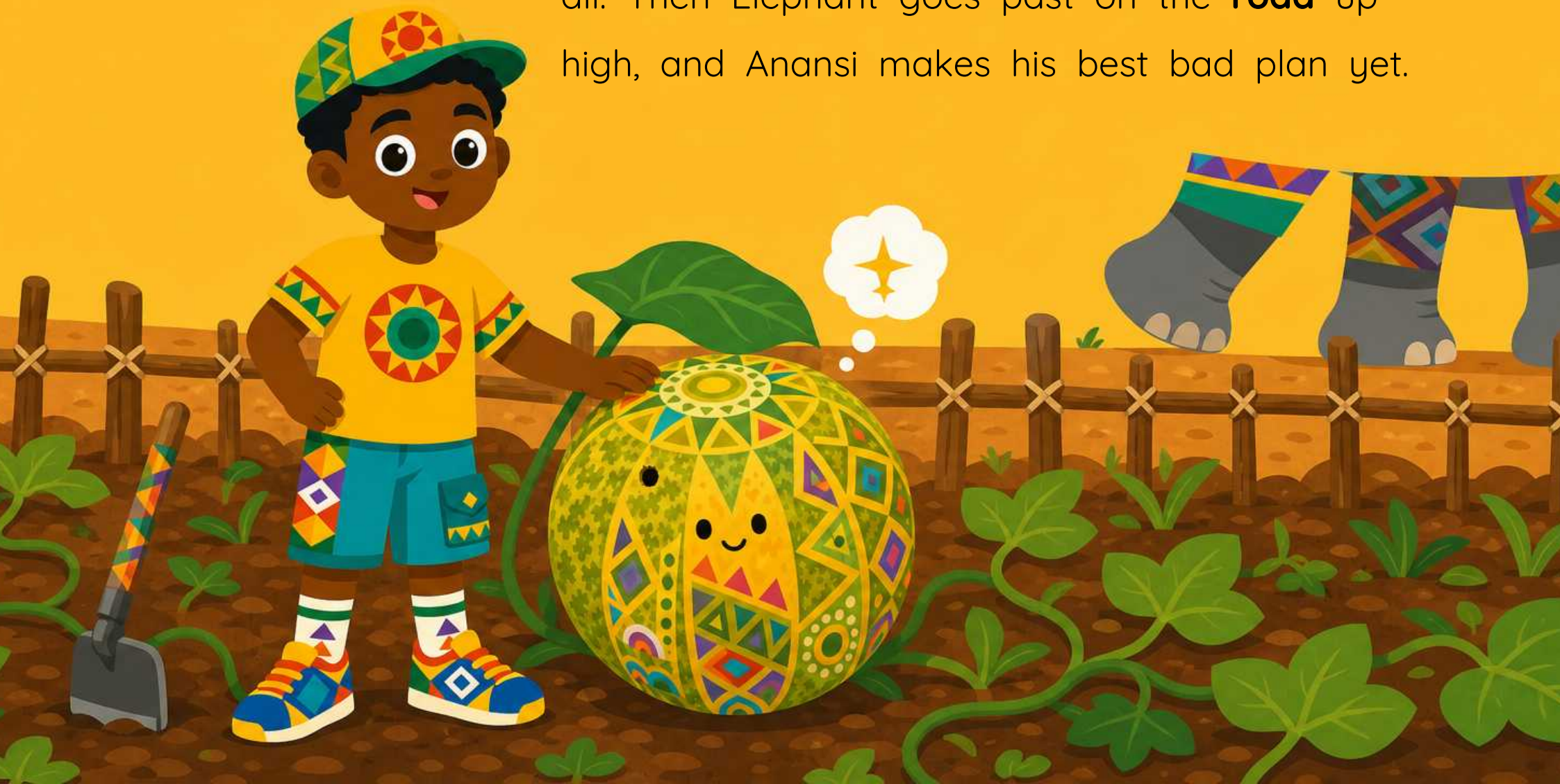
No rain has come for two weeks. Just one thing still **glows** on Kofi's dry land: his prize melon, big and round and yellow-green, in the shade under a big leaf. Anansi smells it from far off. When Kofi turns his back, Anansi bites a small **hole** in the skin and slips inside. It is dark and sweet and cool. Anansi eats, and eats, and eats, and **dozes** off before he sees the problem.





Now Anansi is in a bad, bad fix. He is not small any more. He is as fat as a yam! His belly presses the melon skin on all sides, and the **hole** he came in by is far too small. He pushes. He twists. He tries to go out legs first. No luck. Then Kofi comes back down the path. Anansi pulls his legs in and holds very, very still.

Kofi reaches the melon and pats it, proud. Anansi is stuck, but he is safe. He can still eat sweet melon in the cool shade, so he is not upset at all. Then Elephant goes past on the **road** up high, and Anansi makes his best bad plan yet.



'Good day, Elephant!' Anansi calls in a deep melon voice. Elephant stops. She looks left. She looks right. No one is on the **road**.

'Down here,' says the melon. 'My, what a big, grand Elephant!'

Elephant backs up one step, then two, then turns and runs, and the **road** goes thump, thump, thump.





The tale **grows** fast. By night, all the **town** has the news: Kofi's melon can speak. The next day, a big **crowd** stands on Kofi's land. Anansi waits, then says in his best melon voice, 'The rain comes back in seven days.' The **crowd** gasps. 'Who can say a melon can chat?' says one elder with a **frown**. But she keeps her gaze on it, just in case.

News reaches the King by day's end. The King calls for the melon to come to him. Anansi gulps. This is not the plan! But four strong helpers lift the melon onto a cloth and **load** it up.



The King's big room is full. The King sits on his stool in his fine gold and black cloth. His helpers, the wise men and women who help him rule, sit in **rows**. The **crowd** packs in tight at the back. The helpers set the melon on a **low** stand. The King leans in and says, 'We are told this melon speaks. Melon, please speak.' Inside, Anansi thinks fast. He could stay quiet. But quiet is not Anansi's way. He will put on a grand **show**.





Anansi gives the **crowd** a grand **show**. The melon tells the King his gran's stew needs one more thing: hot pepper seeds. And it is right! The melon tells the drummer where his lost drumstick is: by the jar. Right again! The King is wowed. At the back, Kofi **frowns**. Is this good news or bad? He can not tell.

Then Abena, a sharp and wise helper, steps up to the **low** stand. 'Melon,' she says, calm and **slow**, 'what am I thinking **now?**' All the **crowd** goes still. Anansi can not tell what Abena thinks! Any guess will miss. It is a trap. No one speaks. No sound comes at all. The long, bad wait **grows** and **grows**.



'The melon,' says Anansi at last,
'thinks just what Abena thinks.'
It is his best guess. The big
room is still. Then the King
stands up **slowly**. 'I am a good
host to this melon,' says the
King, 'and it makes us all look
like fools.' His voice is **low now**,
and a king's **low** voice is a
bad, bad thing. 'Take this melon
outside,' says the King. 'Quick!' A
helper lifts the melon up. But
the King takes it from her
hands and **throws** it.





The melon hits the yard with a crack! It bursts into bits and seeds and one very fat, very dizzy spider. Anansi bounces twice and rolls to hide by a bench. He lies very still. He **hopes** all will think he is a big seed. Kofi looks at the burst melon. Then at Anansi. 'Who can say a melon can chat?' says Kofi. Then the King grins and **howls**, and Kofi **howls**, and all the **crowd howls** too.

The King is stern. But he sends Anansi **home** with a cloth and pepper seeds for Kofi's stew. Anansi goes down the **road**, still stained, picking seeds off his legs. He is clever. He can fool a big **crowd**. He can just about fool a king. But when it counts, he is far too fat to slip out. When the next crop **grows**, Kofi looks after his melons well, and a **crow** looks on too.





Anansi Grows Too Big

Anansi the spider smells Farmer Kofi's one glowing melon and sneaks inside for a sweet, cool feast. But he eats so much he grows too big to fit through the hole he came in! Stuck fast, he hears footsteps on the road outside. Can Anansi find a way to turn his sticky fix into something clever? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 7: /oa/ mixed), this book practices words like 'grows', 'road', 'crowd', 'glows', 'slowly'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

crow, crowd, dozes, frown, frowns, glows, grows, hole, home, hopes, howls, load, low, now, road, rows, show, slow, slowly, throws, town, wow, yellow

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