

Anansi in a Den



One day Anansi walks
in the tall grass. He
thinks of yams, so he
does not look where
he steps. A big foot
with spots drops on
his back. It pushes
Anansi flat in the red
dirt, and his legs wag.





'Anansi,' says Leopard in a slow tone. 'Anansi **took** my fish. Anansi ate my yams. Anansi told all the **woods** that I yell like an old man.' Leopard leans in close. 'I will eat Anansi. But not yet. I must hunt. I will eat Anansi when the sun sinks.' He **puts** Anansi in his rocky den.

Anansi **looks** all over the den. The walls are hard rock. The exit is a thin gap. If Leopard can **push** past it, small Anansi can. But Leopard sits in the gap like a big door with spots. Anansi calls. Leopard sits still.



Anansi **looks** in a crack in the rock. He finds a bag of spice. He sniffs it. Very **good** spice! The smell is so strong it stings his nose. He picks it up and grins. Anansi has a plan.





Anansi calls again. This time his tone is not glad. It is the flat tone of a good cook at work. 'Big Leopard,' says Anansi, 'that meat needs help.' Leopard turns to look. 'Leopard got a spider, but has no spice. Plain spider is bad. Even a king adds spice to his meat.' The big tail flicks.

Leopard **looks** back. 'I eat what I catch,' he says. 'I am a leopard.' 'Yes,' says Anansi, 'but that is why they say Leopard can hunt but can not **cook**.' Leopard lashes his tail. Leopard likes his **good** name best of all. Anansi lets the spice smell drift to the gap, and Leopard sniffs.



Leopard stands up. 'A spice tree grows three hills north,' he says. 'I can find it.' He looks at Anansi. 'Anansi wants to trick me and make me go.' 'Leopard sees all,' says Anansi. 'Fine. Plain spider it is. But this is the first spider in a long time. It can be so good.' Anansi sighs. Leopard stands still and thinks.





'I will go north, but first I will block the gap,' says Leopard. 'No exit for Anansi!' He pulls a bunch of old silk from a nook and puts it on the gap. Then he pads north. Anansi waits till the spots go into the bushes. Then he looks at the silk and grins. He has spun webs far better than that.

Anansi slips past the gap fast. But he does not run yet. He takes the bag of spice and tucks it deep in the rock crack, where Leopard will not look for a long time. Then he spins his best web on the gap, so thin and fine the sun will not show it. He hums as he works.



Then Anansi runs. He runs in the woods, swinging on his silk from tree to tree. He is almost to the village when Leopard crashes back past the bushes. Leopard did not find a spice tree. There is no spice tree three hills north. There is none at all. It is all a trick.





Leopard hits the web at full speed and sticks fast. The fine silk grabs his nose and his legs in a big tangle.

Leopard yells. He rolls. But the web holds. Anansi drops from the last tree and gets to the village edge, where Leopard will not go. 'Even a king adds spice to his meat!' Anansi calls back. 'Wait a bit. It helps the taste!'

Anansi sits in the village and eats three hot dishes with spice. The glad cook fills his dish again and again. Anansi grins as he eats. From that day, Leopard looks in every den before a nap. And cooks in the woods still say it when they reach for the spice: even a king adds spice to his meat. But they always wink.





Anansi in a Den

Leopard catches a spider in the tall grass and drags him back to a rocky den, promising to eat him once the hunting is done. The den has solid rock walls and only one narrow gap, blocked by Leopard himself like a big spotted door. Trapped inside with nothing but a crack in the rock to search, what will the spider find to change his luck? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 89: oo, u /oo/), this book practices words like 'look', 'good', 'woods', 'pushes', 'took'.

Phonics Focus: oo, u /oo/

bushes, cook, cooks, foot, full, good, look, looks, nook, pulls, push, pushes, puts, took, woods

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