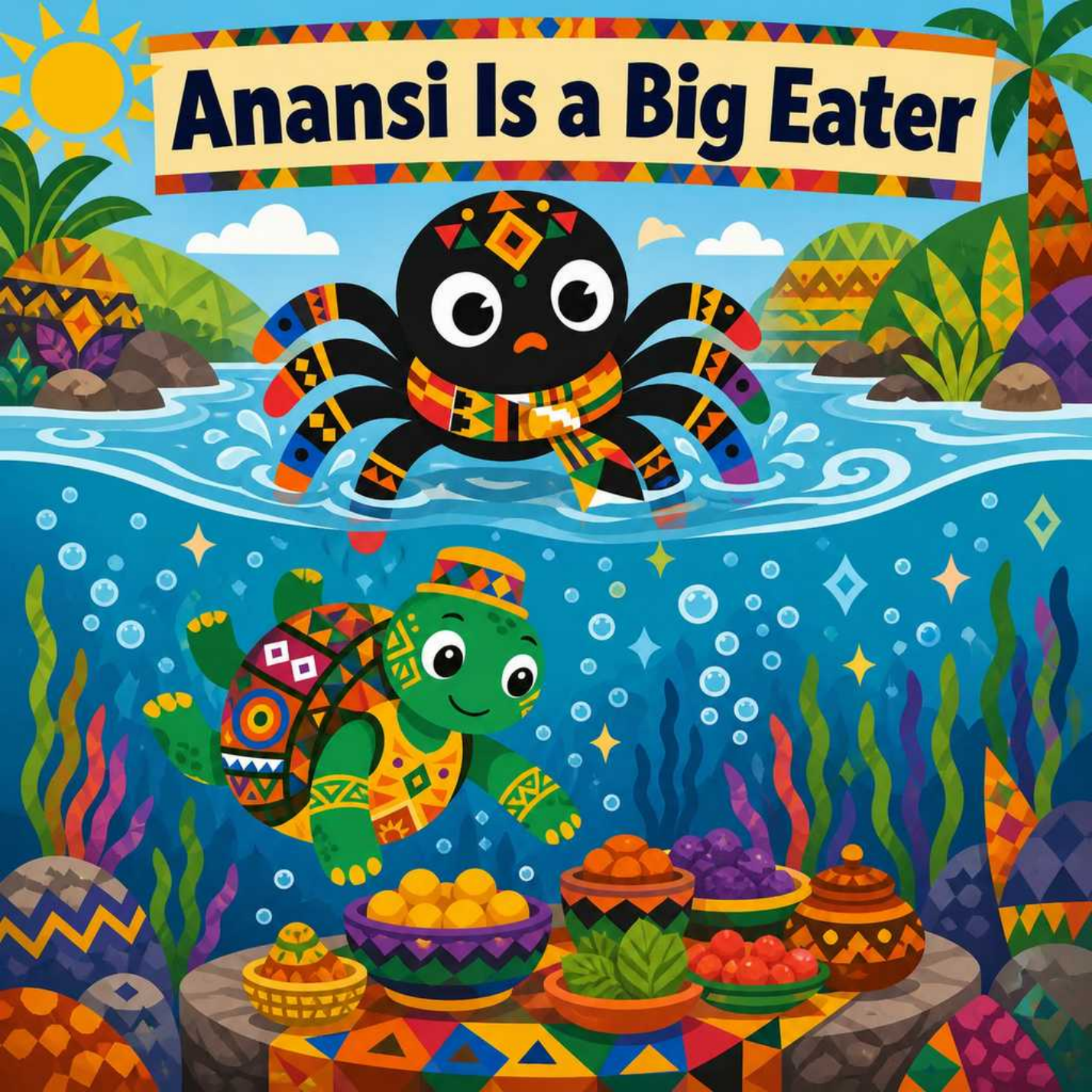
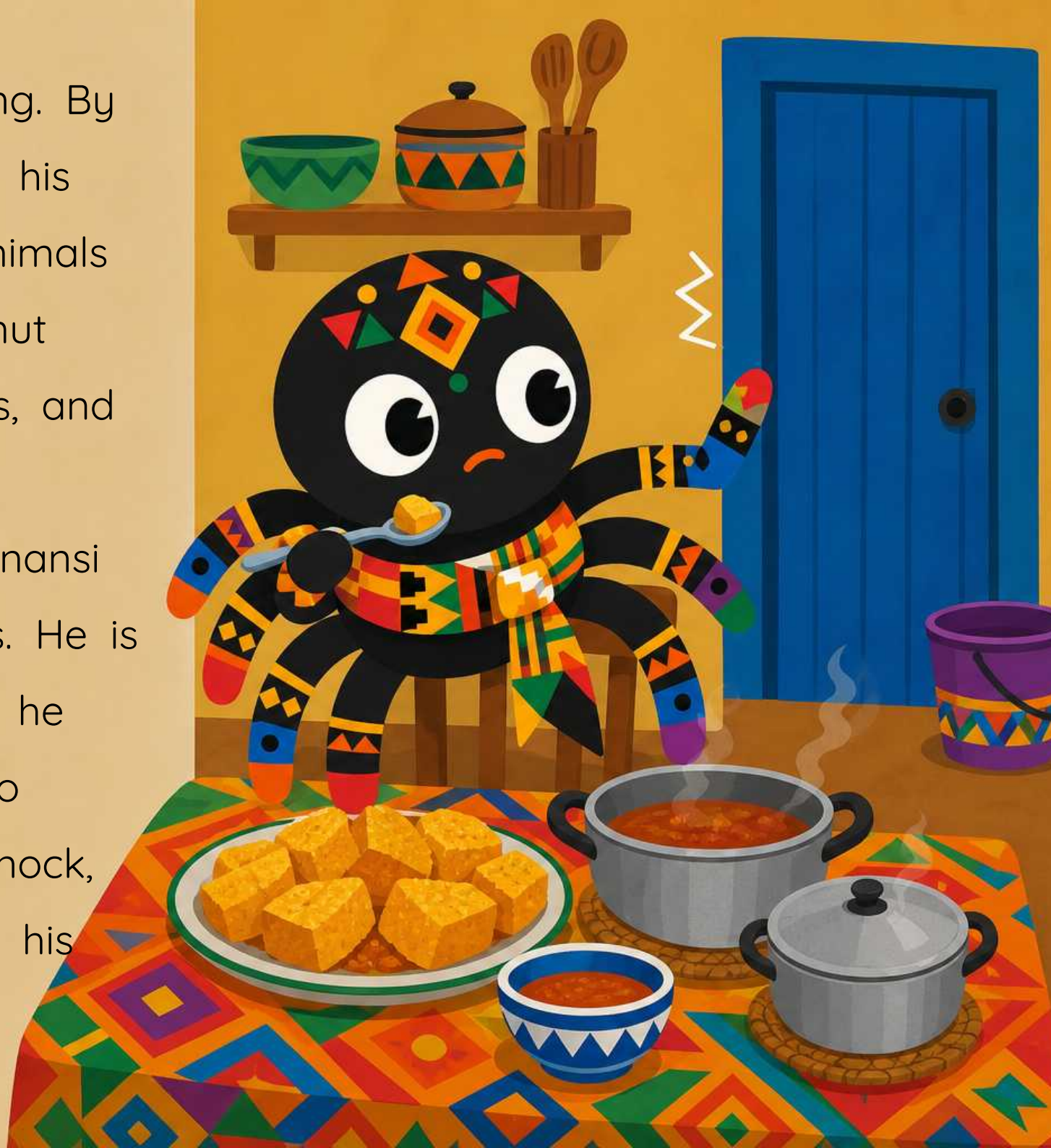


Anansi Is a Big Eater



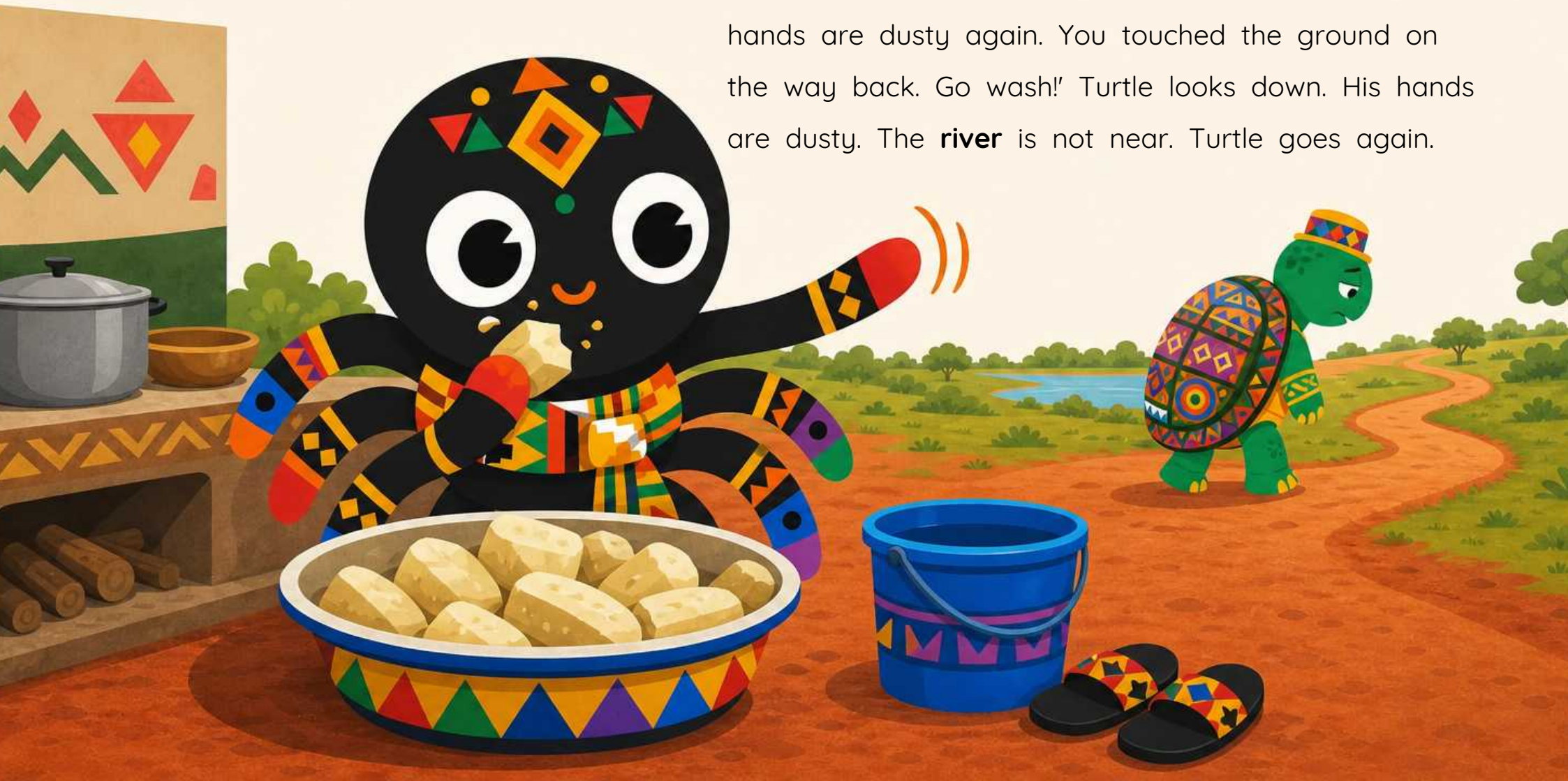
Anansi cooks all morning. By midday, the smell from his house makes all the animals hungry. There is thick nut stew, golden fried yams, and a pot of nut soup that bubbles and bubbles. Anansi sets his table and grins. He is a fine cook, and today he will eat all of it, with no **visitor** to feed. Then, knock, knock! A slow knock at his door.





It is Turtle, a dusty **visitor** from a long road. 'Anansi,' says Turtle, 'I have walked from sunrise to midday. That soup smells like a dream.' Anansi looks at the steaming pots. He looks at Turtle. He looks at the pots again. 'Yes, yes,' he says, with a wide, fake smile. 'Sit down and eat.' Turtle reaches for the bowl. Anansi lifts one leg. 'But first, we wash hands at the **river**. It is the custom in this house.'

The **river** is not near, and Turtle is no **runner**. When he comes back with clean hands, Anansi is midway through the yams. 'Sit, sit!' says Anansi. 'There is plenty.' Turtle reaches for the stew. 'Oh, but look,' says Anansi, and he shakes his head slowly. 'Your hands are dusty again. You touched the ground on the way back. Go wash!' Turtle looks down. His hands are dusty. The **river** is not near. Turtle goes again.



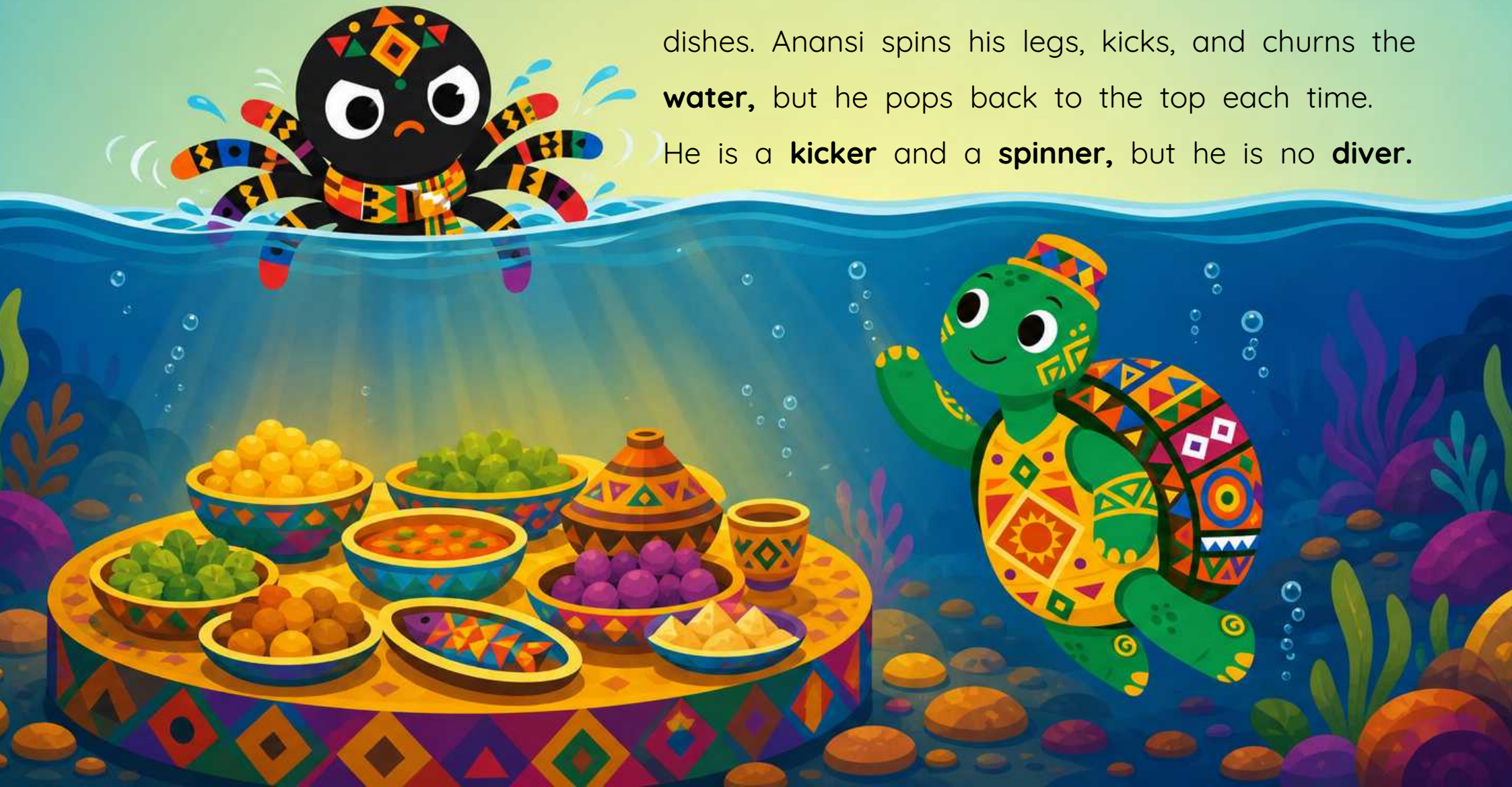
When Turtle returns, hands spotless and legs aching, the pots are empty. Anansi wipes his mouth with a cloth and leans back, feeling like a **winner**. 'I am sad, my friend,' he says. He does not look sad at all. 'My belly is full, and the food is all finished. Come back **another** time.' Turtle looks at the clean, empty pots. He says nothing. He just nods slowly, the way you nod when you have a plan. 'A guest remembers how he is fed,' says Turtle, and he walks back down the road.



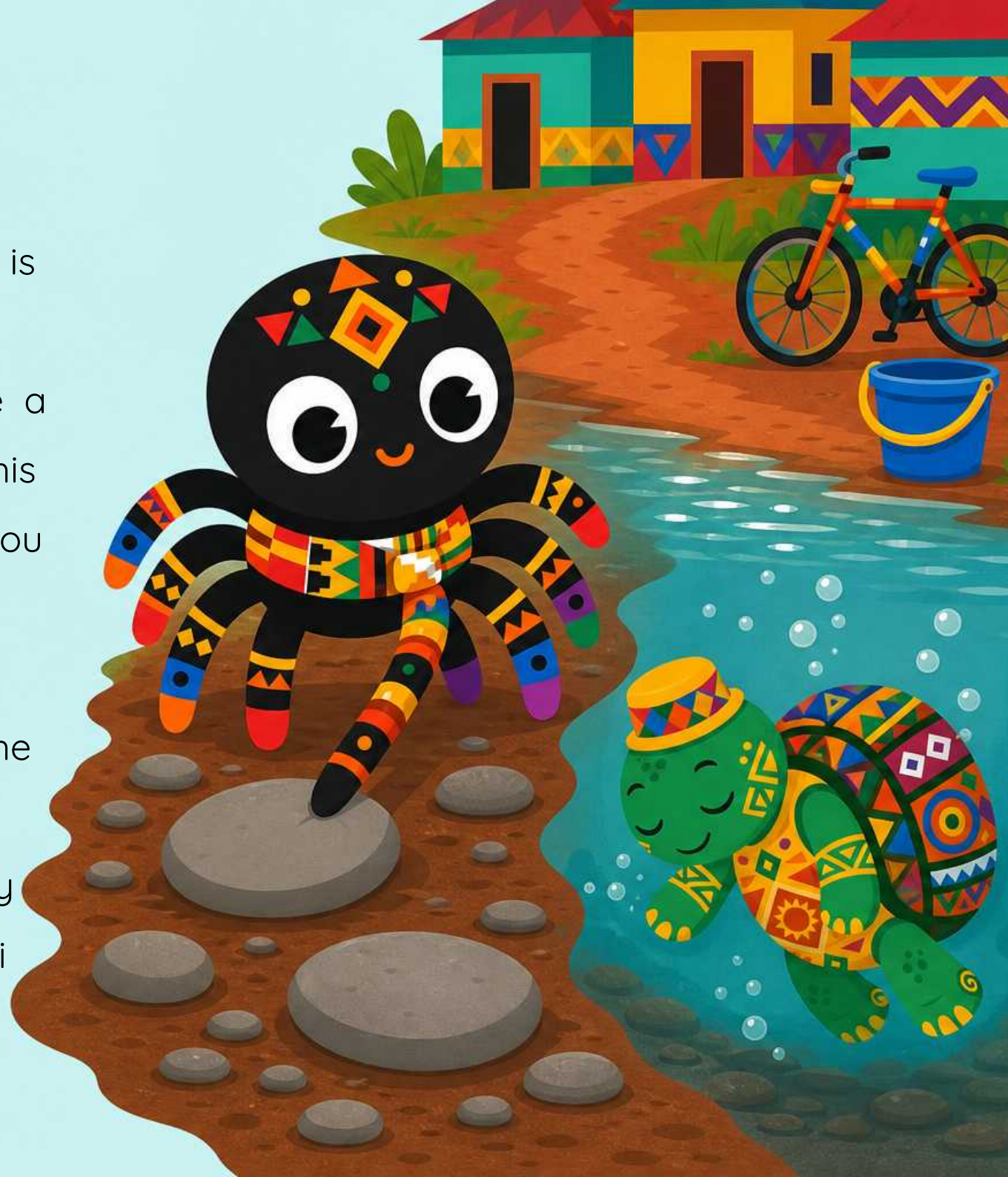


After three days, Anansi finds a neatly folded leaf at his door. It is a note from Turtle, in berry ink: Come to my home down on the riverbed. I am cooking a feast for you. That night, Anansi dreams of spiced clams, smoked fish, and sweet honey bites. What a **dreamer!** He is at the riverbank before the mist lifts.

The problem comes when Anansi jumps in. He floats. Not a bit, a lot! He bobs on top like a cork, while Turtle, a smooth **diver**, sinks down and waves him down. Below, Turtle's table is set with dishes. Anansi spins his legs, kicks, and churns the **water**, but he pops back to the top each time. He is a **kicker** and a **spinner**, but he is no **diver**.



Turtle comes up. 'What is the **matter**, Anansi?' he asks, in a very polite voice. 'The current is strong,' says Anansi, which is not true. 'Maybe you could tie a stone to my leg?' Turtle tilts his head. 'Oh, I would not want you to be hurt. Come down when you are ready.' Then Turtle sinks again. Anansi looks at the riverbank. There are plenty of stones there, round, flat, heavy ones, deep in the mud. Anansi is a sly **joker**. He has a plan.





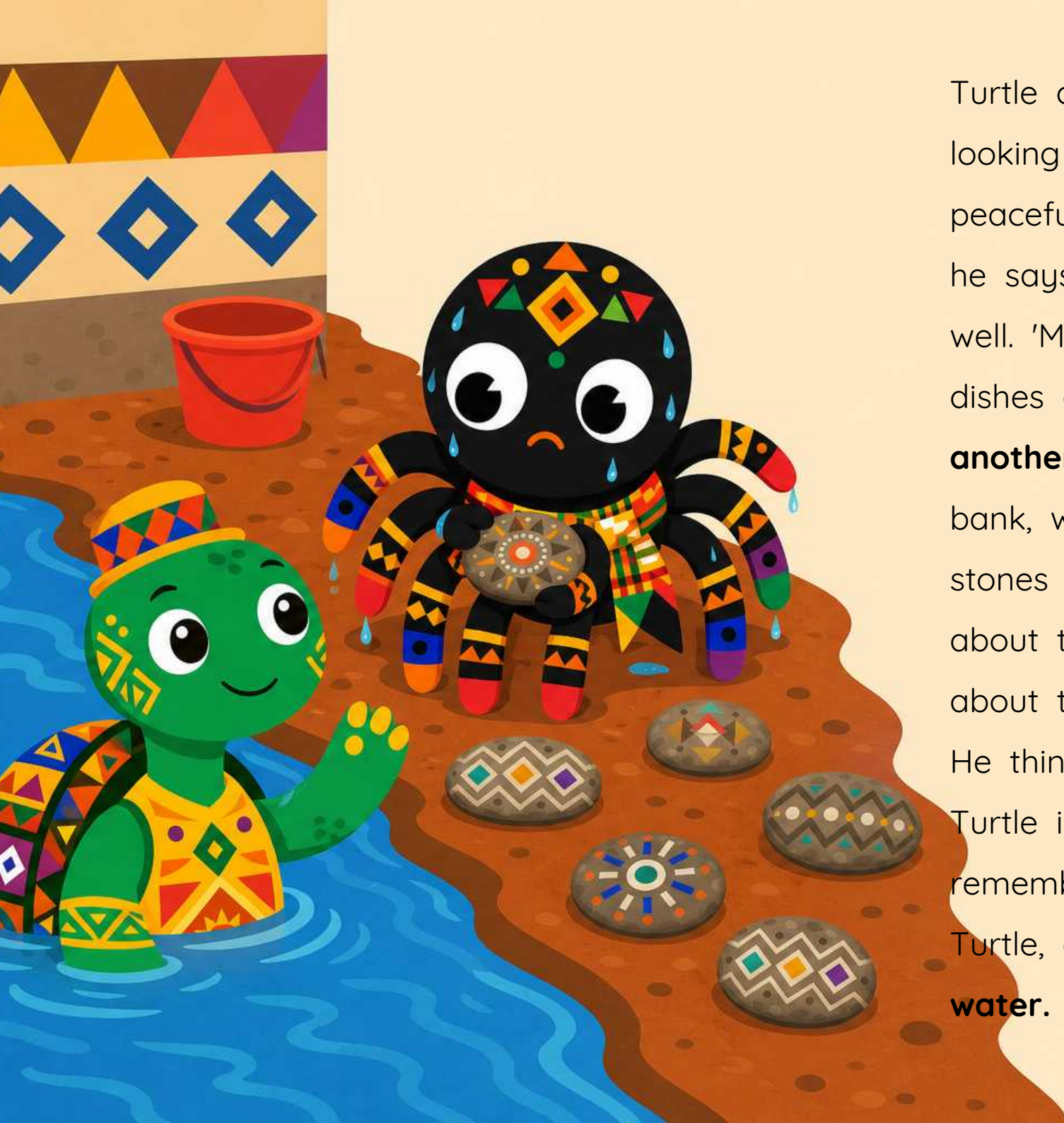
Anansi scurries up the bank and looks left and right. A **fisherman** is drying a thick reed jacket on a post. Perfect! Anansi stuffs the pockets with stones, three on each side, and slips the jacket on. It is heavy. Very heavy. But when he wades in and jumps, he sinks straight down, just like a **proper diver**. Turtle smiles and serves the feast. Spiced clams, smoked fish, sweet honey bites, all of it, and more.

Anansi reaches for the first dish. 'Before we eat,' says Turtle, 'we take off what we wear outside. It is the custom in my home.' Turtle sets down his small hat and folds it neatly. He looks at the reed jacket. Anansi looks at the reed jacket too. If he takes off the jacket, he floats up. If he keeps it on, he can not reach **over** its stiff, heavy sides. The clams steam. The fish smell so good. Turtle takes a big mouthful. Poor Anansi is just a **watcher** at the feast.



Anansi does not give up. He reaches this way and that way. No. He tips his bowl up to his mouth, but the bowl turns **over**. He slips one arm out. The jacket shifts, he tilts, and the **water** takes him up, up, and out. Anansi is a **flier** now! He spins slowly and lands on the bank with a thump, wet stones bouncing all **over**. Down below, Turtle eats the last of the fish and folds his napkin.





Turtle comes up a minute **later**, looking very full and very peaceful. 'I am sad, my friend,' he says, in a tone Anansi knows well. 'My belly is full, and the dishes are empty. Come back **another** time.' Anansi sits on the bank, wet and hungry, with his stones all about him. He thinks about the dusty road. He thinks about the two trips to the **river**. He thinks about the empty pots. Turtle is a fine **teacher**. 'A guest remembers how he is fed,' says Turtle, and he slips **under** the **water**.

Anansi goes home and sits by his cold pots for a while. Then he buys yams and nuts and cooks enough for four. The next **visitor** is a dusty guinea-fowl from a long road. Anansi serves the food right away, at the table, with no trip to the **river**. It is not because Anansi is kind now. It is because Anansi has a very good memory. A guest remembers how he is fed, and so does a host who has been a guest. Anansi learns fast.





Anansi Is a Big Eater

Anansi cooks a feast and plans to eat it all alone, but a hungry visitor named Turtle shows up at his door. Anansi tricks Turtle into two long walks to the river to wash up, gobbling every bite before Turtle returns. Weeks later, Turtle invites Anansi to a feast of his own, at the bottom of the river. Can Anansi find a way to reach the table this time? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 121: -er, -or, -ist), this book practices words like 'diver', 'visitor', 'kicker', 'winner', 'river'.

Phonics Focus: -er, -or, -ist

another, diver, dreamer, fisherman, flier, joker, kicker, later, matter, over, proper, river, runner, spinner, teacher, under, visitor, watcher, water, winner

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