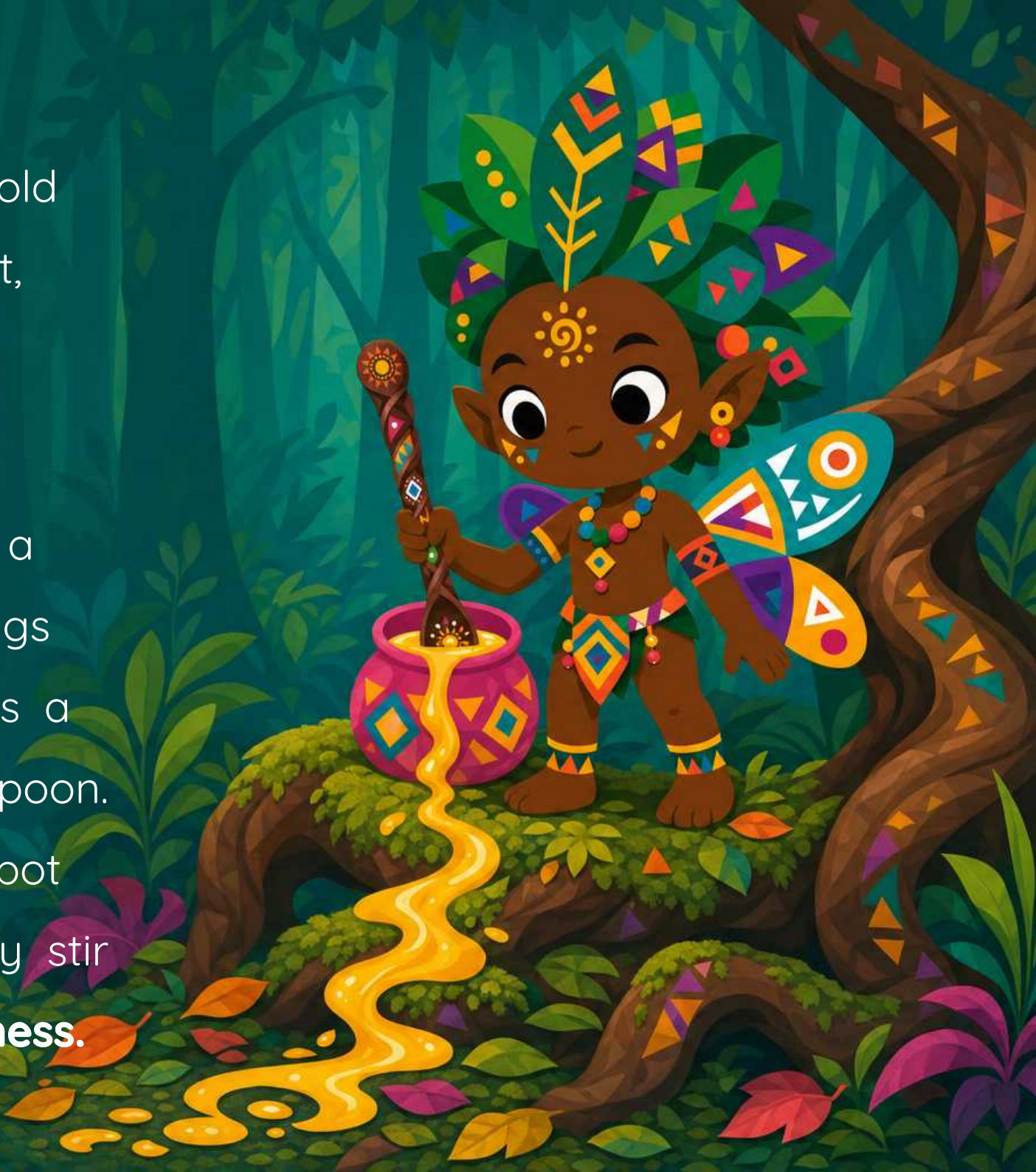


Anansi Is Hungry



Deep in the dark forest,
where the roots of the old
trees twist like a serpent,
there lives Mmoatia the
fairy.

Mmoatia is as small as a
thumb, but her voice rings
like a silver bell. She has a
magic carved wooden spoon.
The spoon can fill any pot
with food. But it will only stir
for a heart full of **kindness.**





On a hot afternoon, a parrot tells Anansi about the magic spoon. Anansi sits in his web, hungry as always, watching the kids below eat sweet roast fruit.

A spoon that can fill any pot with food? Anansi's eyes go wide. He is up on his feet, all eight of them, with great **swiftness**. The parrot is still speaking!

Anansi creeps to the edge of the deep forest and hides behind a fern. Mmoatia stirs her pot and sings with **happiness**. The pot fills with nut stew, then rice, then sweet fruit, more food than one tiny fairy can ever eat. She fills leaf-bowls and sets them out on the roots for a shell beast and the birds. A giving hand fills every pot, and now all can see it is true.



Anansi watches the spoon.
It is dark wood with a
carved swirl, and it glows
faintly gold as it stirs. He
spots one big thing: when
Mmoatia stops to eat, she
sets the spoon down
beside her bowl. While she
eats, the pot just sits
there, still and silent. That
stillness, Anansi thinks, is
just what a clever spider
needs.



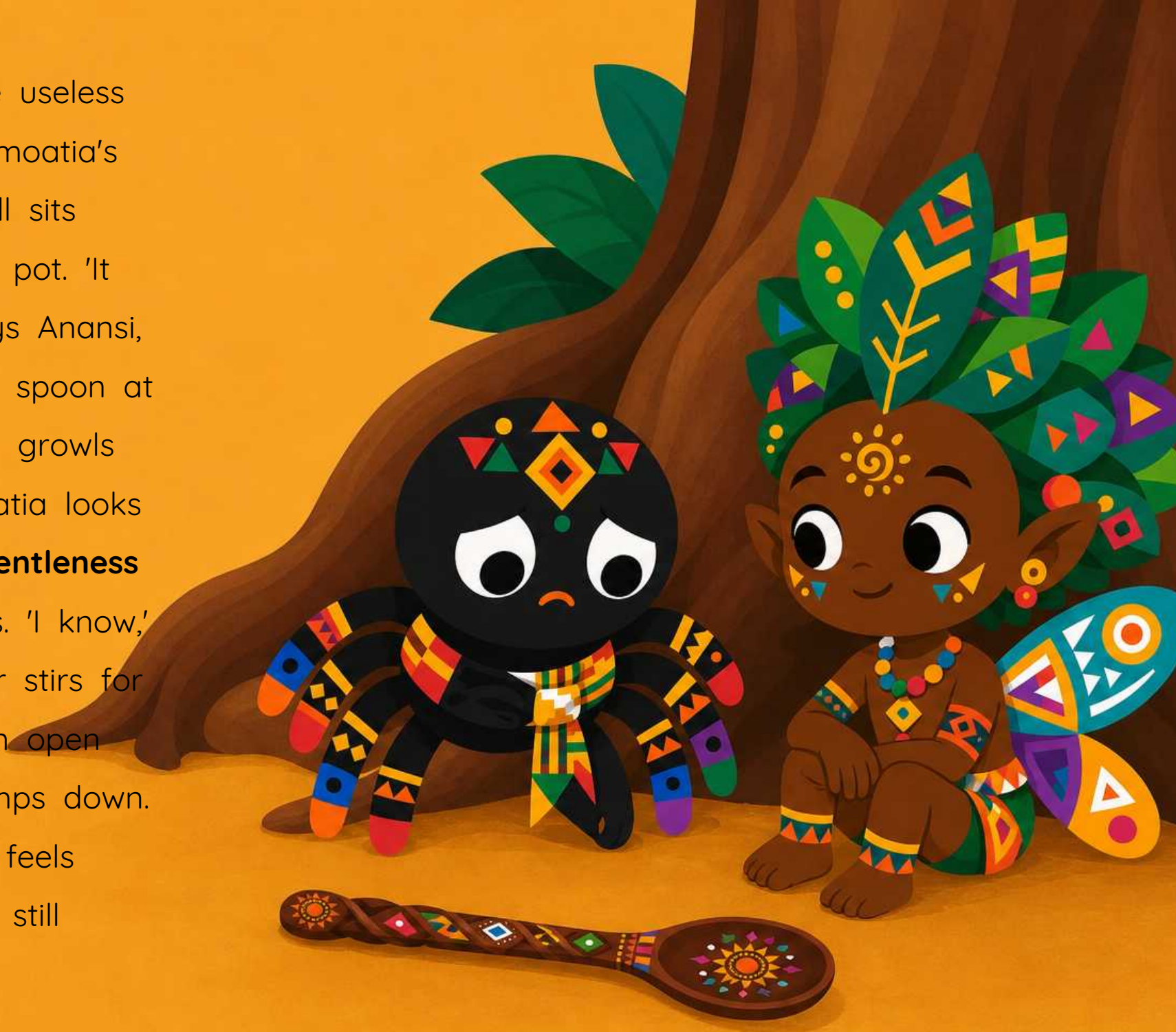


Anansi waits for Mmoatia to set the spoon down. Then he darts in, quick as a raindrop, snatches the spoon, and runs. He grins at his own **slyness**. He is deep in the forest before Mmoatia even looks up. She does not chase him. She does not yell. She just watches him go, and Anansi is far too happy to look back and see her face.

Anansi races home and sets his best big plastic container on the floor. He dips the spoon and stirs. Nothing. He stirs fast. Still nothing. He shakes the spoon, taps it on the rim, and yells, 'Fill! Fill up now!' The spoon glows faintly for one moment. Then it goes dark, and all Anansi feels is its **coldness**.



Anansi carries the useless spoon back to Mmoatia's root. The fairy still sits beside her empty pot. 'It will not work,' says Anansi, and he drops the spoon at her feet. His belly growls and growls. Mmoatia looks up at him with **gentleness** in her bright eyes. 'I know,' she says. 'It never stirs for a fist. Only for an open hand.' Anansi slumps down. He is hungry. He feels shame. And he is still hungry.





'A giving hand fills every pot,' says Mmoatia. 'The spoon will only stir for one who means to share.' Anansi chews on this. His hunger chews on nothing.

'And what if,' says Anansi, 'a very hungry spider, one with no food all morning, stirs it and shares a small bit? Will that count?'

Mmoatia hears the **cleverness** in that. 'Try,' she says.

Anansi picks up the spoon. He thinks about the leaf-bowls Mmoatia set out for the beasts. He thinks about the kids below his web who shared their roast fruit. He stirs the pot, slow this time, not grabbing, not commanding. The swirl on the handle glows with a soft gold **brightness**, and the pot fills with nut stew, rich with forest spice.



The stew fills the pot to the brim. Anansi lifts the spoon. He looks at Mmoatia. He looks at the pot. His belly rumbles like a big drum.

Then he fills the first leaf-bowl, the best and richest bit, and sets it by Mmoatia. It is a small act of **kindness**, and it is hard. Then he fills his own bowl and eats.





The stew is the best thing Anansi has ever eaten. The pot keeps filling. He eats until he is full, which may be a first.

Then, without quite planning it, he wraps the extra stew in a big leaf-bundle and carries it to the edge of the town. He sets it on the path where the kids will find it at dawn. He tells no one.

He walks home by moonlight with an odd **lightness** in all eight feet.

Mmoatia still lives in the deep forest, and the magic spoon still works, but only for an open hand. Anansi visits sometimes. He still plots to take the spoon, because that is just who Anansi is. But every time he grabs it with greedy thoughts, the pot stays cold. And every time he sighs and sets out a bowl for Mmoatia first, the stew fills to the brim, and its **sweetness** is better than any feast. A giving hand fills every pot. Even a spider's.





Anansi Is Hungry

Anansi the spider is hungry, and he's heard about a tiny forest fairy with a magic spoon that fills any pot with food. He sneaks close, watches her stir up feast after feast, and notices one thing: the spoon only works for someone with a generous heart. Could a hungry, scheming spider ever have one of those? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 124: -ness), this book practices words like 'kindness', 'swiftness', 'slyness', 'gentleness', 'happiness'.

Phonics Focus: -ness

brightness, cleverness, coldness, gentleness, happiness, kindness, lightness, slyness, stillness, sweetness, swiftness

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