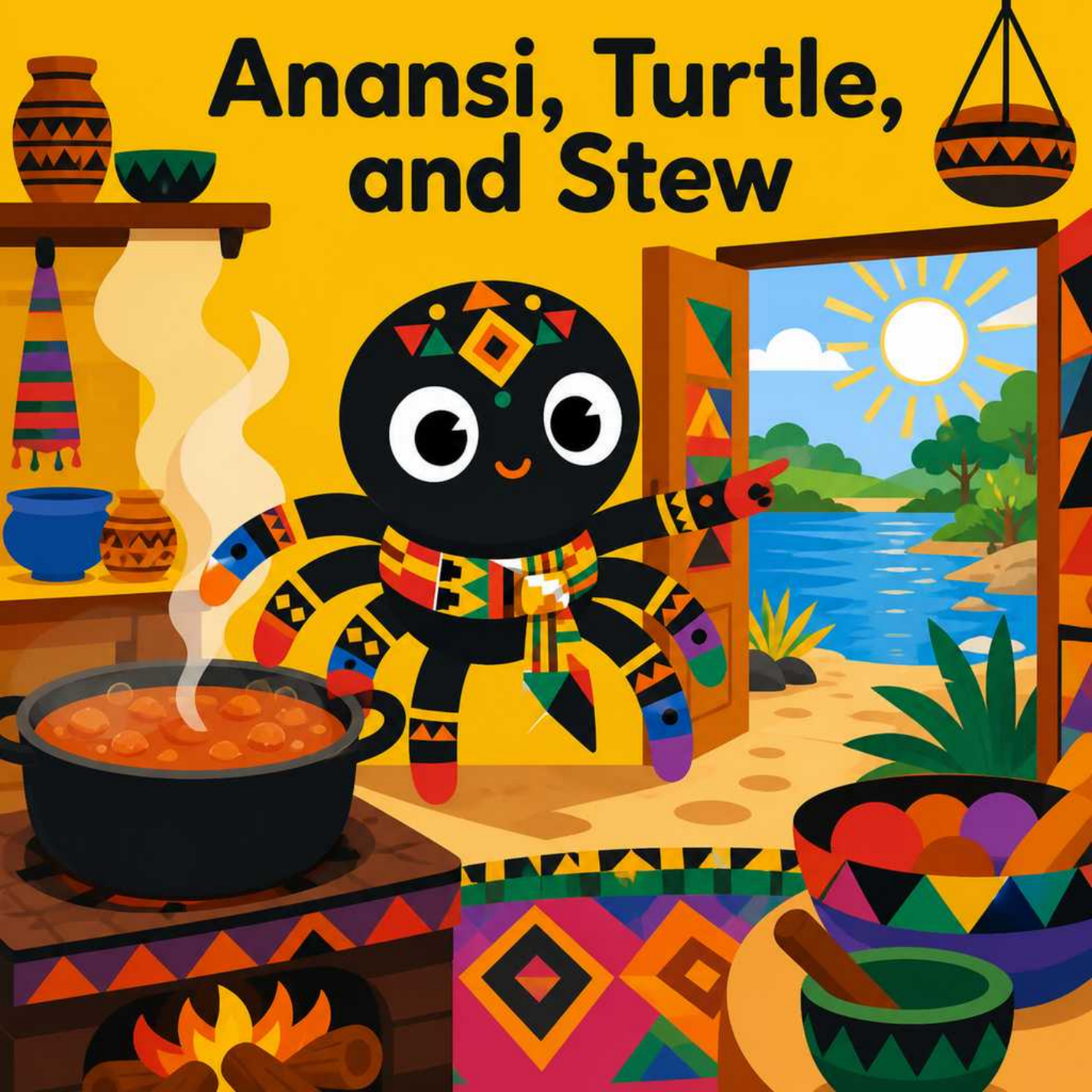


Anansi, Turtle, and Stew



Anansi cooks all morning in his kitchen. By noon the smell of good food fills his home. There is thick stew, golden fried yams, and a big hot pot. Anansi grins at his table, for today he will eat a perfect meal, all by himself. Then, rap, rap, a slow rap at his door!





It is Turtle, dusty from a long road. 'Anansi,' says Turtle, 'I have been on the road since sunrise. That stew smells like a dream.' Anansi looks at the pots, then at Turtle, then at the pots again. 'Sit and eat,' he says with a wide, sneaky grin. 'But first, a good guest must scrub his hands at the river.'

The river is far, and Turtle's legs are not long. When Turtle gets back, Anansi is deep in the yams. 'Sit, sit!' says Anansi. 'But look at these dusty hands! Scrub them one more time.' Turtle looks, nods, and treks back to the river.



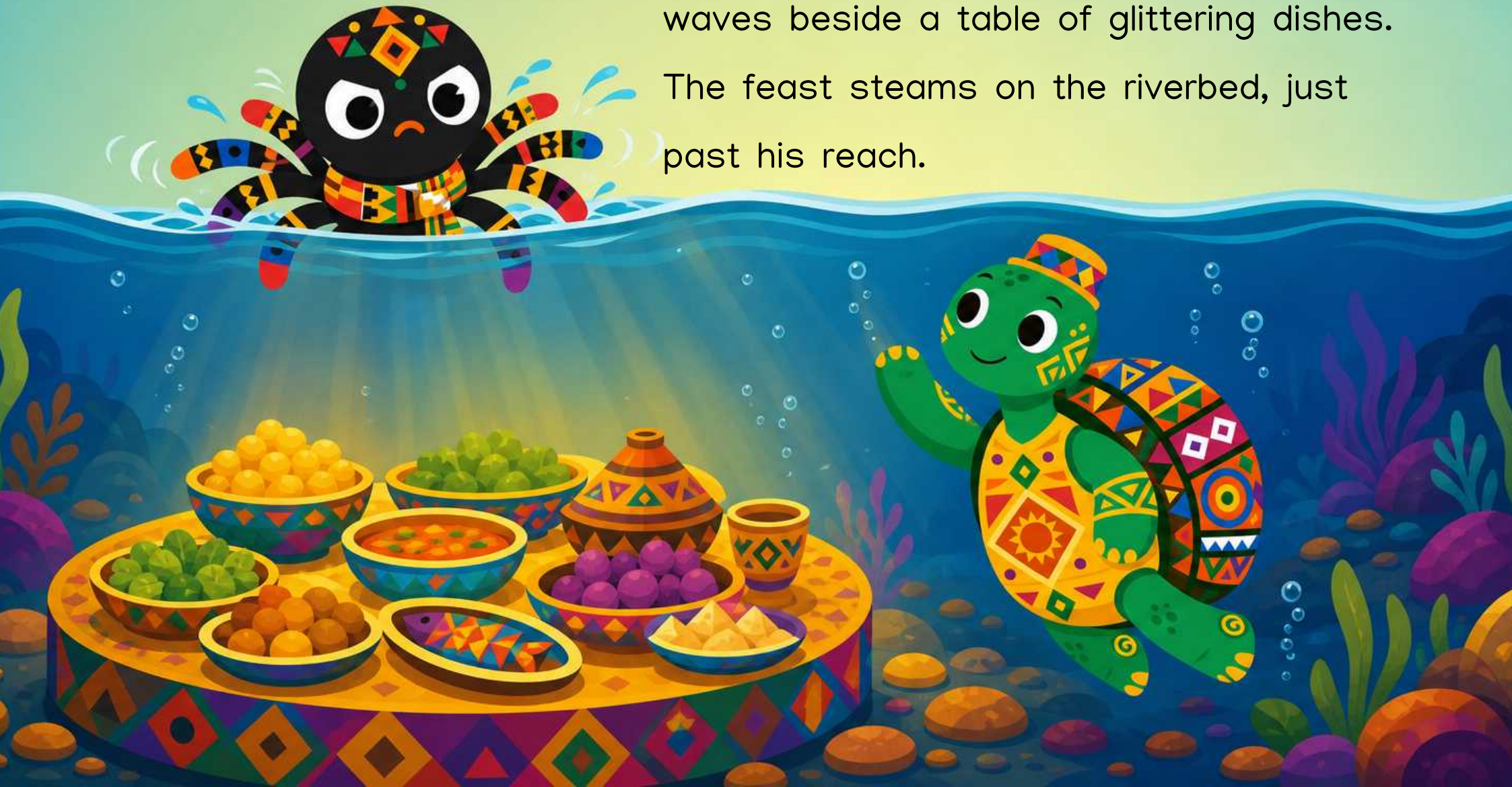
Turtle gets back, but the pots are empty. Anansi sits back, very full. 'I am sorry, my friend,' he says, not sorry at all. 'I am just too full. Come back some day soon.' Turtle looks at the empty pots and nods a slow nod. He has a plan. 'A guest keeps in mind the way he is fed,' he says, and walks back up the road.



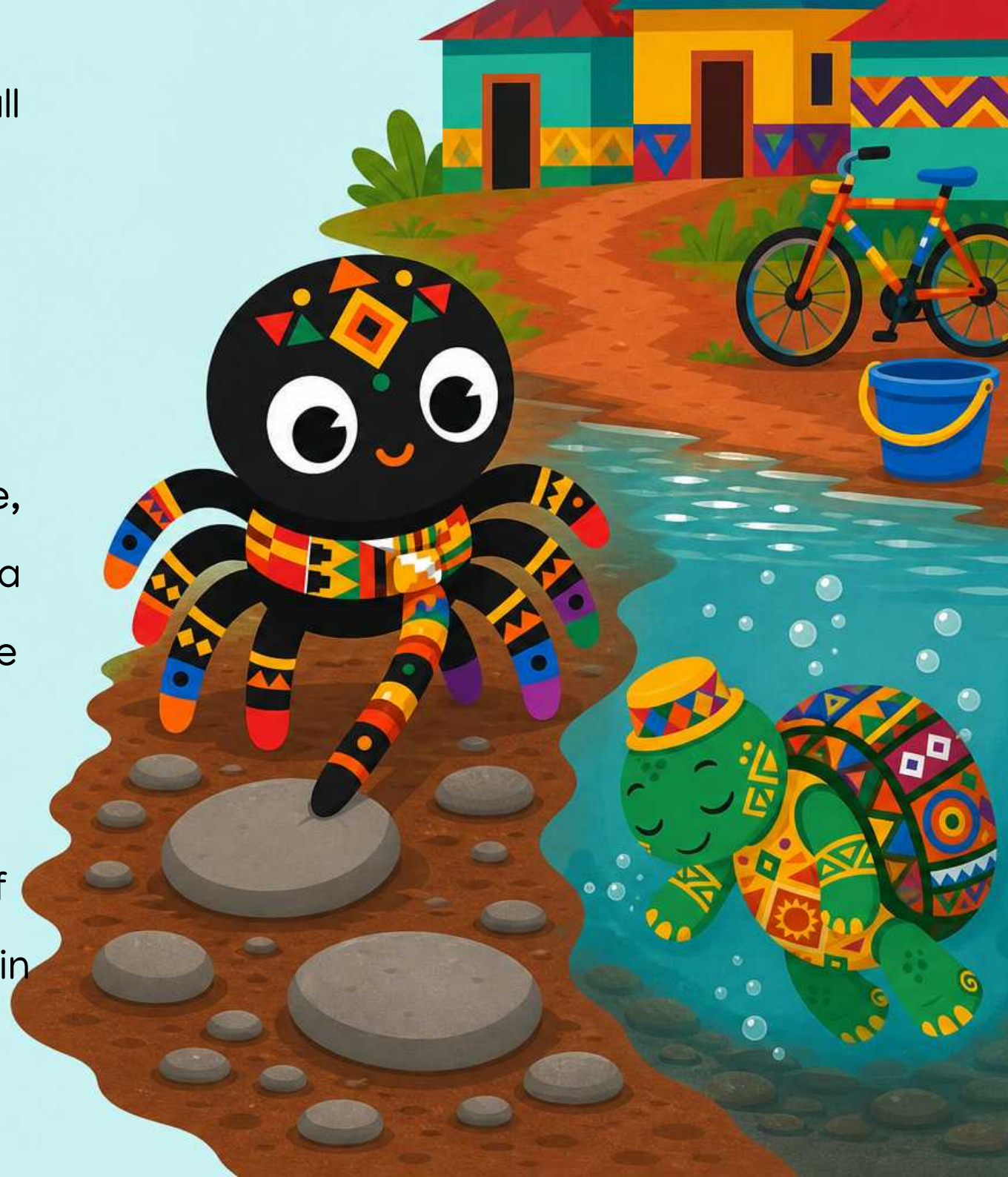


Three days later, Anansi finds a leaf note from Turtle at his door. It says: Come to my home at the bottom of the river for a feast at noon. I have been cooking since the new moon. Anansi grins a big grin, for river food is a true treat. He is at the riverbank before the mist lifts.

At noon Anansi jumps in, but he floats! He kicks and spins his legs, and pop, he bobs back up every time. In the deep, Turtle waves beside a table of glittering dishes. The feast steams on the riverbed, just past his reach.



Turtle rises to the top. 'Is all well?' he asks, very polite. 'This water is **too** strong,' says Anansi, which is not **true**. 'Maybe tie a stone to my leg?' 'Oh no,' says Turtle, 'that **would** not be nice for a guest. Dive in when the time is right.' Then Turtle sinks again. Anansi **looks** at the riverbank. There are a lot of stones there, big flat ones in the mud. Hmm.





Anansi scurries up the bank and finds a stiff reed jacket that a fisher left on a post to dry. He puts six big stones in the pockets, three on each side, and pulls the jacket on. The pockets are full, and the jacket is hard to lift. But when he jumps in, he sinks right to the riverbed! Turtle smiles and serves the feast. Clams, shellfish, sweet treats, and more.

Anansi reaches for a dish. 'First,' says Turtle, 'we take off jackets and hats. It is the **rule** of my home.' Turtle sets his own small hat on the table. Anansi **looks** at the reed jacket. If he takes it off, he will float to the top. If he keeps it on, he can't reach past its stiff sides. Anansi must **choose**. The clams steam. Turtle starts to eat.



Anansi pulls at the jacket.
He can't reach past it. He
tips his bowl, and the bowl
flips over. He shifts one arm,
the jacket tilts, and, zoom,
he zips to the top! He pops
from the water, spins, and
lands on the bank with a
thump. Wet stones drop all
over. Far below, Turtle eats
the last of the shellfish and
smiles.





Turtle comes up, looking very full. 'I am sorry, my friend,' he says. 'Come back some day soon.' Anansi looks at Turtle. These are his very words! Anansi sits on the bank, wet and empty. He thinks of the empty pots and the two treks to the river. 'A guest keeps in mind the way he is fed,' says Turtle, and he slips under the water.

Anansi goes home and sits by his cold stove for a while. Then he **cooks** a big pot of **stew** and a lot of yams. **Soon** Guinea-fowl raps at the door, dusty from a long road, and Anansi feeds him at once, at the table, with no trip to the river. It is not because Anansi is so nice. It is because Anansi keeps things in mind. A guest keeps in mind the way he is fed, and so does a host who has been a guest.





Anansi, Turtle, and Stew

Anansi has cooked a feast fit for one, and he plans to keep it that way, until a dusty, hungry Turtle knocks at his door. Anansi sends his guest to wash up again and again, but will Turtle get any food at all, or will he simply remember how a host treats a friend? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 92: Vowel Teams Review 2), this book practices words like 'stew', 'cook', 'good', 'soon', 'food'.

Phonics Focus: Vowel Teams Review 2

choose, cook, cooking, cooks, food, full, good, look, looking, looks, moon, new, noon, pull, pulls, put, rule, soon, stew, too, true, would, zoom

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