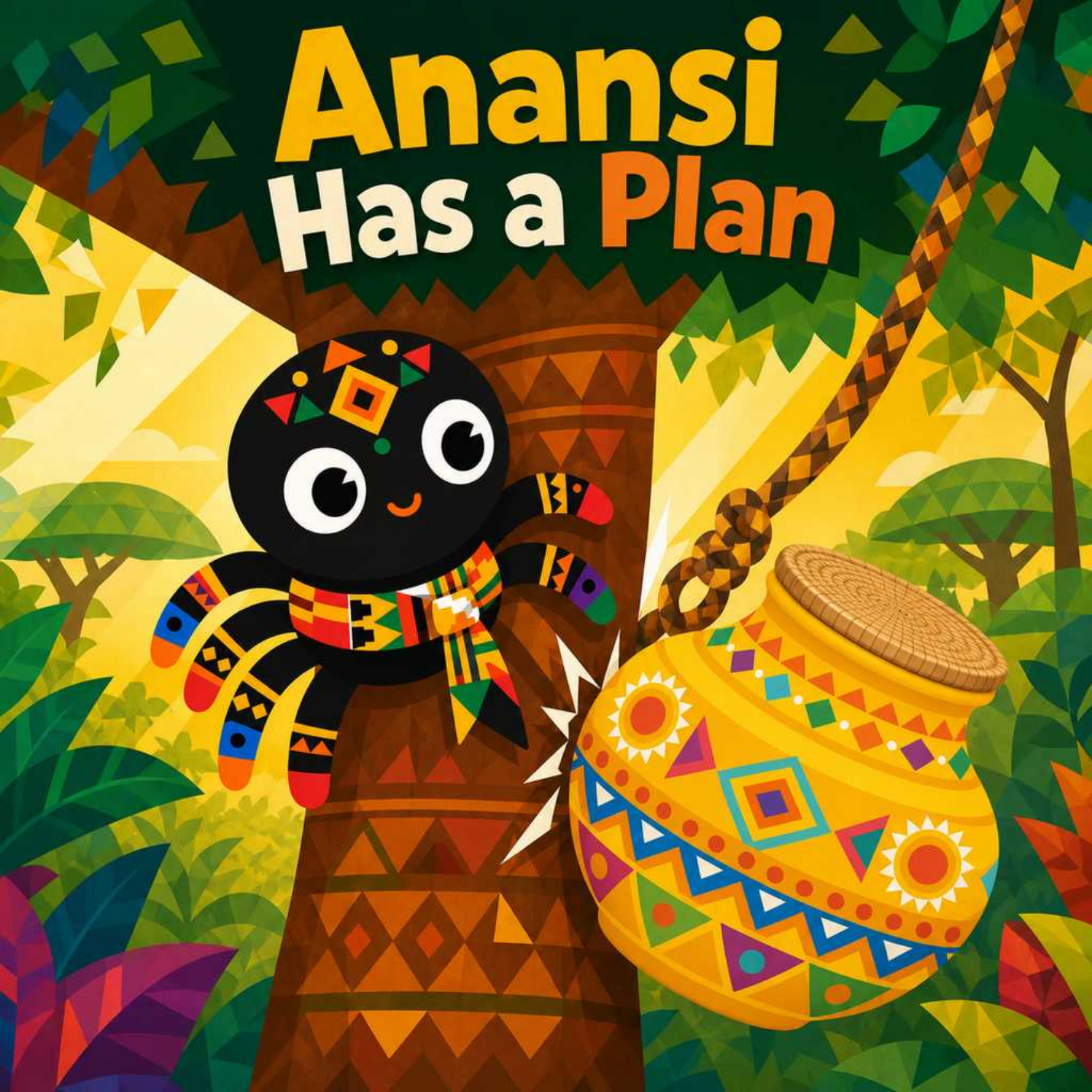
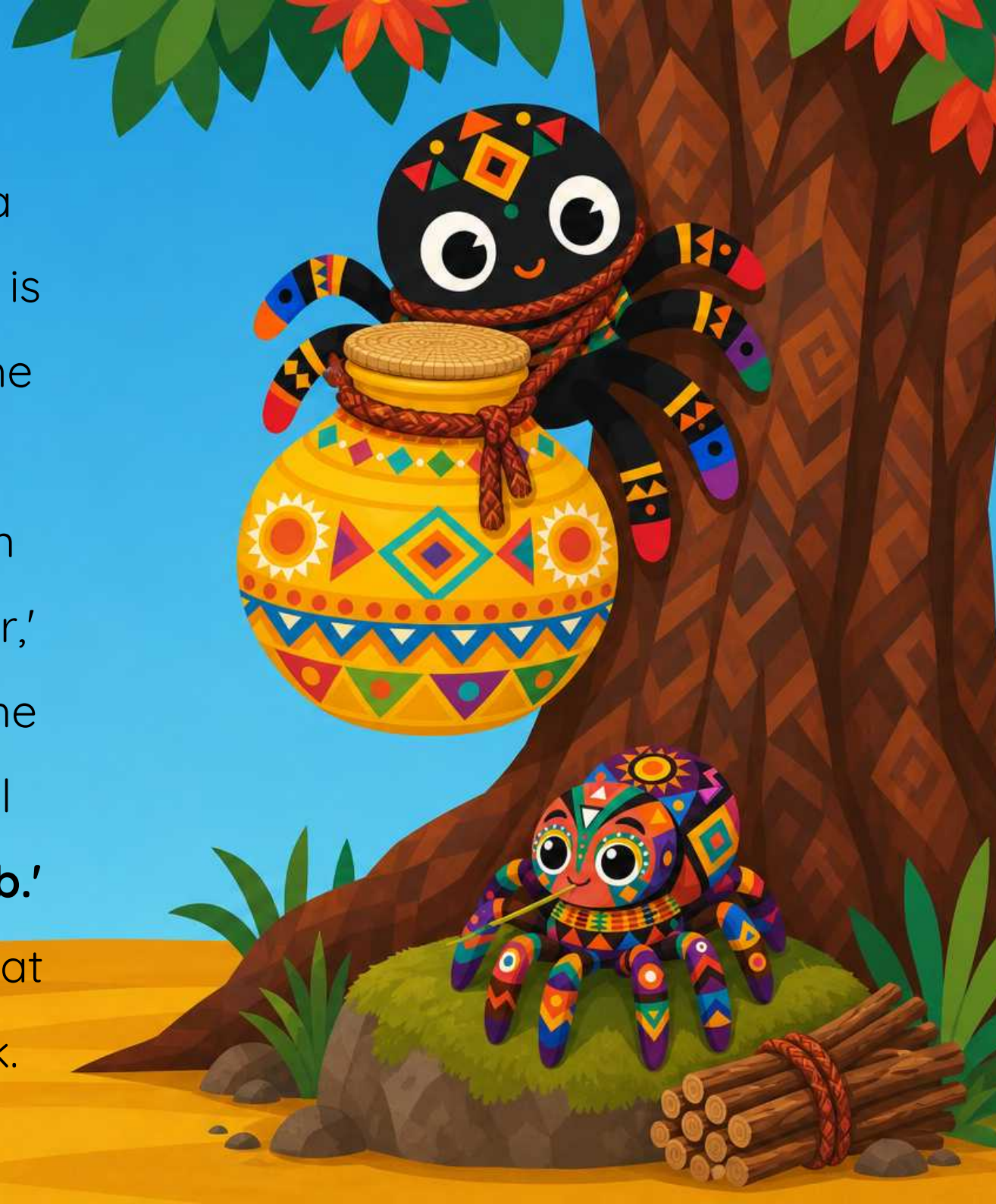

Anansi
Has a Plan

Anansi has a plan so big it makes all his eyes shine. He will walk every road and gather all the wisdom in the world into one big pot. Every clever plan, every trick, every fix will go inside. Then he will be the wisest beast alive, and all people must come to him for help. Anansi grins at the pot and ties the lid down with a tight **knot.**

Anansi sets off in the forest. At every road fork he stops the beasts and asks for their best wisdom. Grey Hornbill gives him the skill to wait. River-crab gives the wisdom of moving sideways to get ahead. Old Tortoise mutters the wisdom of taking what matters on your own back. Anansi puts each bit in the pot, claps the lid on, and ties the **knot** tight. No one holds all the wisdom, but Anansi intends to be first. By the tallest tree at the edge of the forest, the pot feels very heavy, and very full.

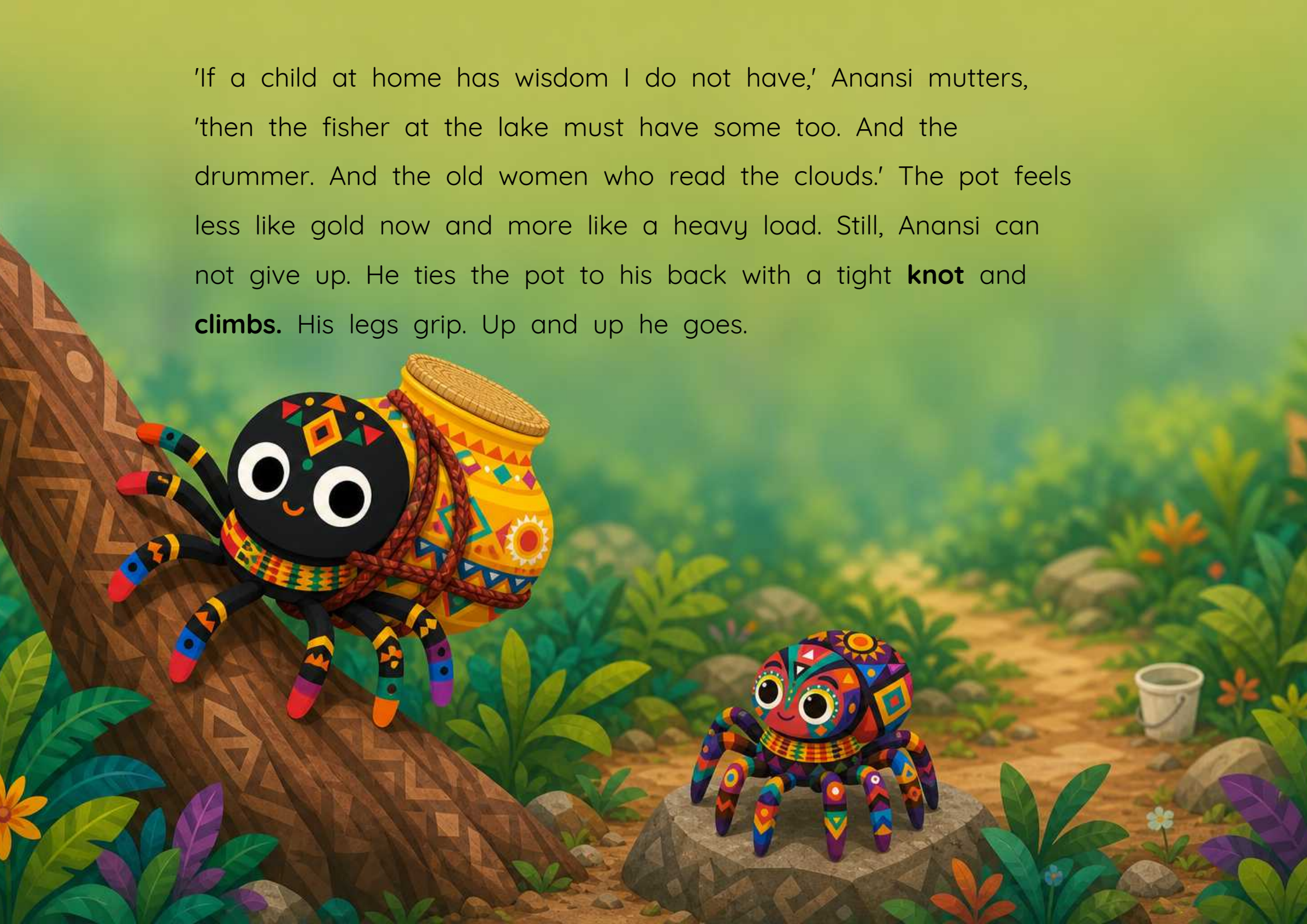
'I will hide this pot at the top of the tallest tree,' says Anansi, 'where no one can reach it.' He ties a strong rope to the pot with a tight **knot,** hugs the pot to his chest, and **climbs.** But the pot swings and bangs on the bark, and Anansi slides back down to the roots. He tries again. Slide! Again. Slide! The smooth trunk is no help at all.

Anansi has a small son, Ntikuma. Ntikuma sits on a low rock and watches. He is out gathering wood, but the sliding show is much more fun. Ntikuma chews a stem of grass and thinks. 'Father,' he calls up, 'why not tie the pot to your back? Then all your legs are free to **climb.'** It is such a simple plan that Anansi freezes on the bark.



Anansi goes hot with shame from his first leg to his last leg. He feels a bit **dumb.** He hunts all morning for every wise bit in the world, and now his own small son gives him the best one for free. The pot should hold it all. But this plan comes from outside the pot. The pot is not full at all.

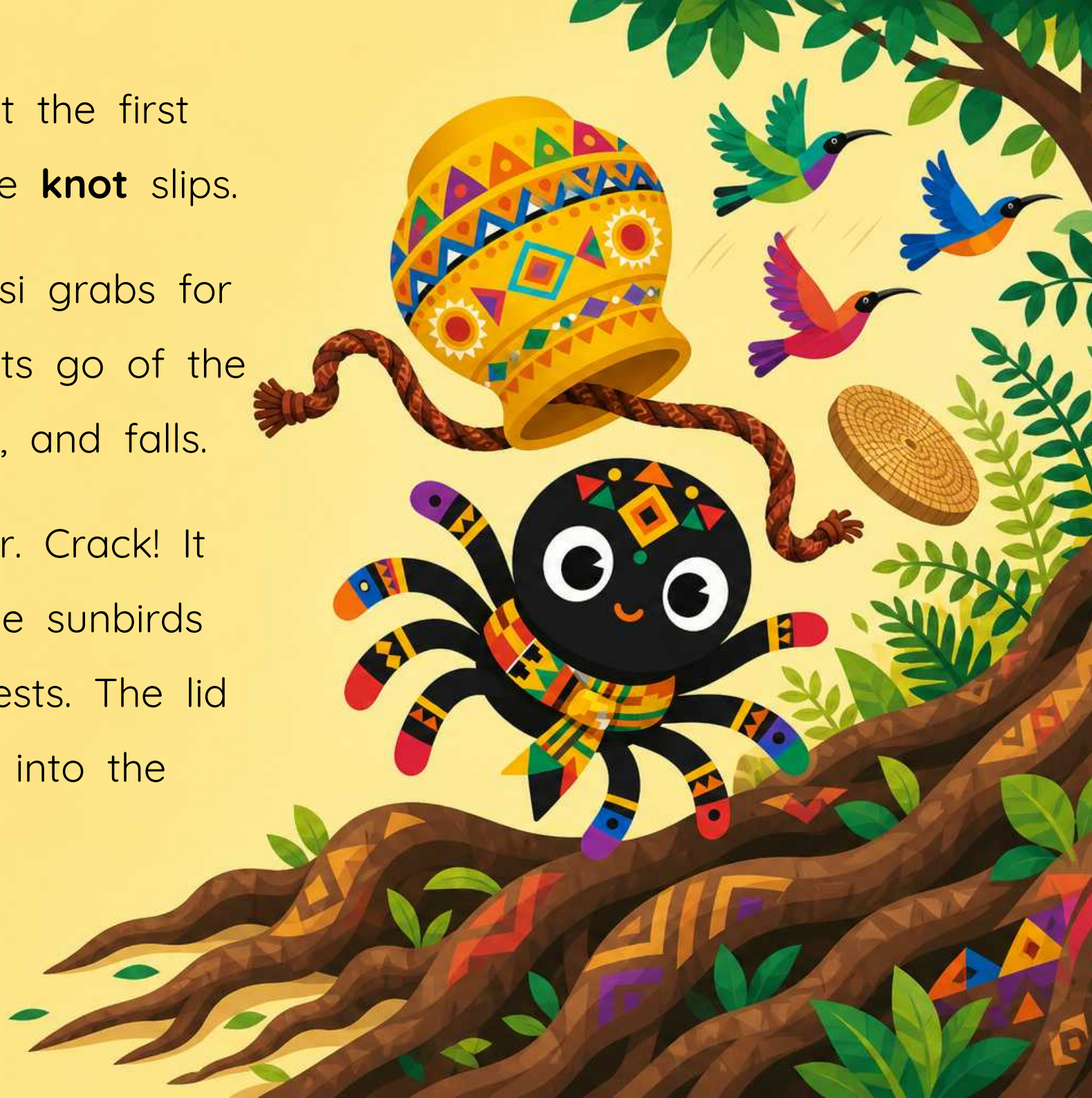
'If a child at home has wisdom I do not have,' Anansi mutters, 'then the fisher at the lake must have some too. And the drummer. And the old women who read the clouds.' The pot feels less like gold now and more like a heavy load. Still, Anansi can not give up. He ties the pot to his back with a tight **knot** and **climbs.** His legs grip. Up and up he goes.



Anansi is almost at the first high **limb** when the **knot** slips.

The pot tilts! Anansi grabs for it with two legs, lets go of the trunk with the rest, and falls.

The pot falls faster. Crack! It hits a root, and the sunbirds burst from their nests. The lid spins off and rolls into the ferns below.



The wisdom bursts out of the pot, shining, scattering on the wind. Some settles in the lilies by the stream. Some drifts into the dreams of sleeping children. Some blows far beyond the hills. Anansi lands in the ferns with a soft thud. He is not hurt, but his fine plan is a **wreck.** The pot sits in two parts, and the wisdom is out in the world for good.

Anansi sits in the ferns for a long time. Ntikuma sits beside him and says nothing. He **knows** that sometimes it is the wisest thing to do. Then Weaver-bird lands on the broken pot and sings three bright notes. Anansi looks at his legs, all empty, and for the first time all day he feels light.

'Grey Hornbill taught me the skill to wait,' Anansi says slowly, 'but I did not wait. River-crab said to move sideways, but I just **climbed** up the trunk. Tortoise said to take what matters on the back, and I did not.' He counts his **wrongs** on four legs, and still there are more. 'The wisdom was never in the pot,' Ntikuma says. 'It was in the using of it.' Anansi opens his mouth to argue, and then shuts it.

Now wisdom lives in the wind, in the water, in old songs and new riddles, and in small boys who watch from rocks. When people think they **know** it all, a little wind scatters their plans, and a small child smiles. Anansi tells this story on himself in the town, with a **wry** grin. A spider who can chuckle at his own plan is very hard to beat.

Nyame looks down from the sky and is glad. Now the wisdom spreads to every part of the forest, and it does not sit sealed in one pot under one tree. And sometimes, when a child pulls free a **knot** that stumps every elder in the room, people see Ntikuma in the fix. No one holds all the wisdom, not even Anansi. And that, it turns out, is very wise indeed.

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Anansi Has a Plan

Anansi the spider has a plan so big it makes all his eight eyes shine: gather every scrap of wisdom in the world and seal it in one pot. But hauling that pot up the tallest tree in the forest turns out to be much harder than he expects. Will his clever plan survive the climb? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 98: kn /n/, wr /r/, mb /m/), this book practises words like 'knot', 'climbs', 'dumb', 'limb', 'wreck'.

Phonics Focus: kn /n/, wr /r/, mb /m/

climb, climbed, climbs, dumb, knot, know, knows, limb, wreck, wrongs, wry

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