

Anansi Wants It All



Anansi the spider
has a fine round
belly, smooth and
fat. He is proud of
that belly, and he
wants to keep it full
for all time. Then a
big feast comes,
and Anansi's trouble
begins.





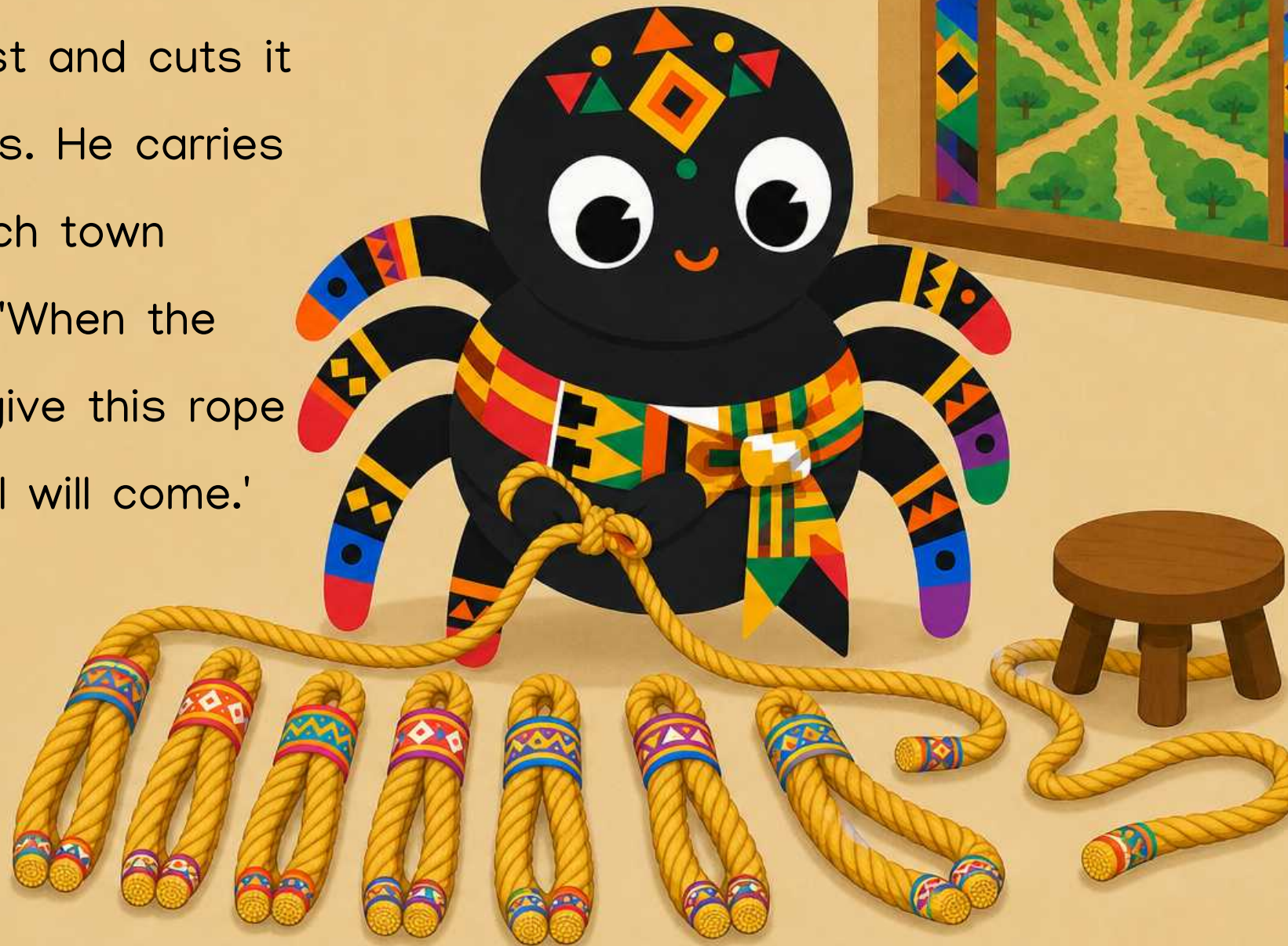
The big feast comes just once every **seven** years. Each town in the forest holds its feast on a different day. There is yam, and pea soup, and palm-nut stew, and corn, and much more. The good smell rides on the wind for five days.

Anansi wants to eat at every feast. That is the problem. Each feast **begins** at the same hour, and no one can get from one town to the next in time.

Weaver Bird calls down, 'Eyes bigger than the belly, Anansi.' Anansi waves her **away**. He is thinking.



By morning Anansi has his plan. He gets the longest rope in the forest and cuts it into **seven** pieces. He carries one piece to each town boss and says, 'When the feast is ready, give this rope a hard tug, and I will come.'





Anansi carries the ropes from town to town with his best smile. 'What an honour,' each boss says, glad to have such a guest.

By the time Anansi gets back to the middle of the forest, he is tired. He ties all **seven** rope-ends around his waist and sits down to wait.

Anansi waits all morning. He plans his run: hill town first, then river, then valley. 'I will eat a little at each one,' he says. Then he stops. 'No. I will eat the full feast at each one.' He laughs, **quiet** and proud. He does not know how close to trouble he sits.



Here is what Anansi does not know. This year the crop is the best in years, so every town finishes cooking early. Each boss looks at the feast and smiles. All seven bosses reach for the rope at the same moment.





Yank. Yank. Yank. **Seven**
ropes go tight at once.
Seven towns pull in **seven**
ways, and it hits Anansi's
round middle hard. He flies
up. He spins like a top.

The ropes do not break,
for Anansi ties good ties.
And that, it turns out, is
the problem.

Anansi is pulled east and west and north and south, all at the same time. Every rope is tight. Every boss tugs, and wonders why the guest is so slow. Anansi tries to shout, but his voice comes out a tiny squeak. The ropes squeeze tighter. And tighter.



At last the ropes go slack,
for all **seven** bosses let go
at the same **moment**.

Anansi drops to the ground
like a stone.

His belly, so round before,
is now squeezed thin in the
middle. It looks like two
round bulges on the
thinnest thread. He sits up
and sighs.





By the time Anansi gets to the hill town, they have eaten. At the river town, the pots are packed up. At the valley town, the babies are asleep. Every table is empty.

At the last town, Weaver Bird spots him and says it again, 'Eyes bigger than the belly.' She means his waist. Now everyone can see his waist.

Anansi goes home hungry. His round belly is gone for all time, squeezed into the thin waist that all **spiders** carry to this day. It is why you cannot be in **seven** places at once.

When a child piles a bowl too high, grandma sets it down and says, 'Eyes bigger than the belly.' And now you know where that saying came from.





S3

Anansi Wants It All

Anansi the spider is proud of his round belly, so when the great feast comes only once every seven years, why can't he simply eat at every village at once? He ties seven ropes around his waist and waits. What happens the moment all seven villages tug at the same time? Read on to find out how this clever spider changes forever. This Bookbot level practises open syllables in longer words, with lesson words like 'spider', 'seven', 'moment', 'begins', and 'tiny'.

Reading Skills: Open syllable

around, asleep, away, babies, begins, honour, moment, quiet, seven, spider, spiders, table, tiny

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