

Anansi Fancies Seven Feasts



Anansi the spider has a big round belly. It is fat and smooth, as red as clay. He thinks it is the **nicest** belly, and he is proud. He aims to keep it that way forever. Then the chiefs set a big feast, and bad luck starts for Anansi.



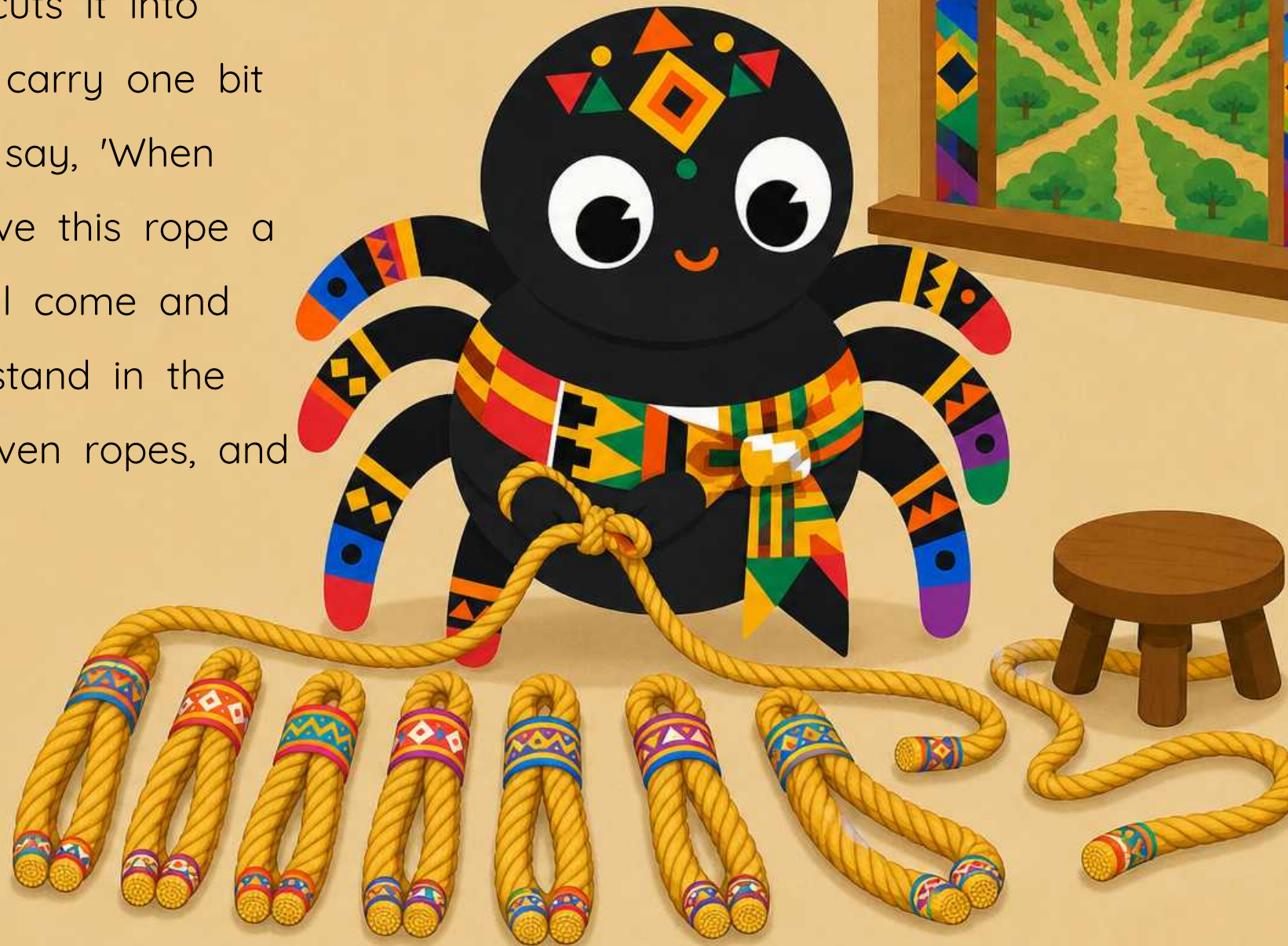


The big feast comes just one time in seven springs. All the towns have a feast, one town each day. The hill town first, the river town next, the low land town after that, and on and on. There is yam and hot nut stew and corn and so much more. Anansi **fancies** it all. The good smell is on the wind for days.

Anansi aims to eat at all seven feasts. That is the problem. The towns sit far apart, and all the feasts start at the same time. No one can get from one to the next in time. So the beasts pick one town and eat there. But Anansi can not **decide**. 'Eyes bigger than your belly,' says Weaver Bird. But Anansi just waves her off. He sits and thinks up a plan.



By morning, Anansi **decides** on a plan. He gets the longest rope in the forest and cuts it into seven bits. He will carry one bit to each chief and say, 'When the feast is set, give this rope a hard tug, and I will come and eat.' Then he will stand in the **center**, hold all seven ropes, and wait.





Anansi takes the ropes from town to town, with his best smile. 'What a treat,' says each chief, and takes the rope. It is **nice** to have such a fine spider stop by. By the time Anansi gets back to the **center**, he is tired. But the plan for seven feasts **excites** him. He ties all seven rope ends round his waist and sits to wait.

Anansi waits and waits. He plans the order he will run: hill first, then river, then the low land. 'I will just taste a bit at each feast,' he tells himself. Then he grins a big grin. 'No! I will eat the full feast at each one!' He is so **excited** that he claps, thinking how each chief will look. Anansi has no clue what is coming his way.



Anansi has no clue that this harvest is the best in a long, long time. All the towns finish the cooking fast. Each chief looks at the hot, hot food and thinks: if we tug first, Anansi comes to us first. All seven chiefs **glance** at the feast. All seven chiefs grin. All seven chiefs grab the rope at the same moment.





Tug, tug, tug! All seven ropes go tight at the same time. Seven chiefs pull seven ways, and the **force** hits Anansi hard in his round belly. He flies up. He spins like a top. He makes a sound no spider will make **twice**. The ropes do not snap. They hold fast, **since** Anansi ties them so well. That is the problem.

Anansi is pulled east and west and north and south, up the hills and to the river, all at one time. Each rope is tight. Each chief tugs hard. Anansi tries to yell for help, but it comes out as a tiny squeak, **since** his belly is pinched in so tight now. He **winces** as the ropes squeeze him. Tighter. And tighter. And tighter still.



At last the ropes go slack. All seven chiefs let go at the very same moment. Anansi drops to the ground like a stone. He lies there a long, long time, looking up at the sky. His belly, so round and fine before, is now pinched in at the **center**. It is just a round bump at each end and the thinnest waist. Anansi sits up. He **notices** his new shape. He sighs.

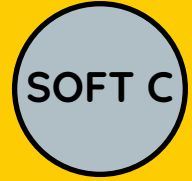




By the time Anansi gets to the hill town, they have eaten. At the river town, the pots are packed up. At the low land town, the kids are in bed. He finds empty stands and full, sleepy beasts patting round bellies. At the last town, Weaver Bird **notices** him come in late. She **glances** at his waist and says it one more time: 'Eyes bigger than your belly.' She means his waist now.

Anansi goes home hungry, **since** there is nothing left to eat. His round belly is no more, pinched into the thin waist all spiders carry. It tells us that no one can be in seven **places** at one time, and that greed can get you nothing. When a kid piles a bowl too high, Gran sets it down and says: 'Eyes bigger than your belly.' Now you have a clue where that saying comes from.





Anansi Fancies Seven Feasts

Anansi the spider has the nicest, roundest belly in the forest, and he plans to keep it that way. But when a once-in-seven-years feast comes to all seven villages on the very same day, he can't decide which one to choose. What happens when a clever spider decides he doesn't have to choose at all? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 2: soft c as in city), this book practices words like 'decide', 'excited', 'fancies', 'nicest', 'notices'.

Phonics Focus: <soft> <c>

center, decide, decides, excited, excites, fancies, force, glance, glances, nice, nicest, notices, places, since, twice, winces

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