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Anansi and Turtle

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Anansi and Turtle

African Storybook

Wiehan de Jager

English



One day, Anansi the spider picked up some yams in his garden. They were very beautiful and very good yams.

He cooked them carefully on the fire. Then he sat down to eat them.



As Anansi was about to eat the first bite, he heard someone knock on the door. "Oh no !" Anansi thought. "Who could it be?" But he opened the door.

It was Turtle who looked very tired. "Anansi, please let me in. I've walked so far today and I'm so tired and hungry," Turtle said.

So what could Anansi do except let him in?



But without the stones in his pockets to hold him down, Anansi immediately rose to the surface of the river and found himself out of the water.

Anansi sadly put his head in the water and watched Turtle eat all the delicious food!



Anansi was too selfish to share his beautiful and good yams with anyone. So he came up with a nasty plan.

As Turtle sat down at the table and started reaching out to grab some yams, Anansi shouted at him, "Turtle, your hands are all dirty! You can't eat with your hands all dirty! Go wash them."

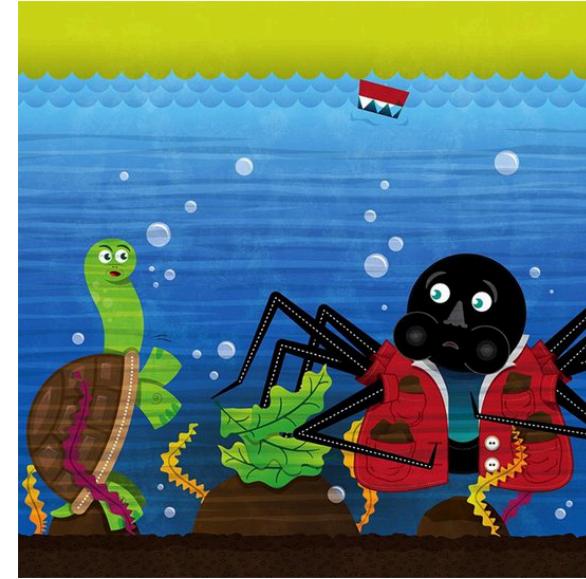
Turtle's hands were really dirty. So he crawled gently towards the river, washed his hands and then crawled back to the table.



But meanwhile, Anansi had started swallowing the yams. When Turtle returned, he saw that the yams were gone.

Turtle looked at Anansi. "Thank you for inviting me to dinner. If you ever come near my house, come see me and let me make this dinner for you," he told him.

And Turtle started crawling slowly towards his house.



But just as Anansi grabbed some of that delicious food, Turtle stopped him. "Anansi, aren't you going to dinner with your coat on? We don't do that at home."

Anansi, without thinking, replied, "Oh, of course you're right, Turtle, what was I thinking?" He took off his coat.



Finally, Anansi had an idea. He put many stones in his coat pockets and was heavy enough to sink to the bottom of the river. How clever he was!

He saw Turtle's table, full of juicy green leaves and lots of other delicious foods. Anansi's mouth was watering.



After some time, Anansi began to think more and more about the free dinner promised by Turtle. So one day he went to visit.

Anansi arrived at Turtle's house at dinner time as the sun was setting over the river. Turtle was lying on a rock in the sun, warming himself like turtles do.

When Turtle saw Anansi, he said, "Hello, Anansi, did you come to eat with me?"

And Anansi replied, "Yes, that would be very nice, thank you." He was getting hungrier and hungrier.



So Turtle dived to the bottom of the river to set the table for dinner and get everything ready. Anansi waited on the rocks on the bank.

Soon Turtle came swimming back and said, "Oh Anansi, it's ready now, come have dinner with me."

And Turtle dived again and started eating the green leaves prepared for dinner.



Anansi tried to dive to the bottom of the river, but he was a spider, not a turtle, and he couldn't dive that deep. He always came to the surface.

He tried to jump into the river, he tried to dive, but nothing helped. He couldn't come down to eat that dinner.