

### **Grade 3: Unit 4, Week 1** What's Cooking

#### **Read Aloud: Anansi and Turtle Share Dinner**

An Ashanti Folk Tale retold by Della Rowland

Wonderful Words: *proceed, anticipation, famished, measly, immerse*

#### **Anansi and Turtle Share Dinner**

“Ahh! Dinner time,” said Anansi the spider, “my favorite time of the day.” He opened his oven to sniff the yams he was baking. “Umm!” he cried. “These yams smell just right.”

Anansi's table was set with a pewter plate, knife and fork. As he was about to place the yams onto the table, he spied his friend Turtle out his window. Turtle was crawling and wending his way very slowly up the road.

Now, Anansi's house sat right smack on a lofty hilltop and the road going up to it was treacherously steep. So Anansi knew it wasn't by accident that Turtle was passing by. He was coming with expectations of being invited to dinner.

Quick! Zip! Anansi pulled his curtain shut so Turtle wouldn't realize he was home and preparing to dine. For you see, the greedy Spider didn't wish to share his delicious yams.

Now, Turtle had been traveling all day. His feet were sore, his throat was parched, his eyes were dusty, and his stomach was empty. However, his nose was absolutely perfect, and his nose told him that Anansi was home and cooking yams for dinner. So Turtle proceeded up the walk to his friend's house.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Anansi stuck his head out his front window. He had a mean expression on his face, hoping Turtle would be frightened and go away. Then he pulled his head back in quick before Turtle could say hello.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

This time Anansi stuck his head out the door. He looked up at the setting sun on the horizon and pretended he didn't see Turtle standing there on the ground.

"It's me," said Turtle. "Over here."

"Oh," said Anansi. "Hello, Turtle. What are you doing here?"

"My friend . . ." began Turtle, "I've been traveling on that hot dusty road all day, and I was hoping I could . . ."

"Oh, it is a hot day, today," interrupted Anansi. "A hot day, yes indeed! Of course, you can sit under my porch for a while. Go sit in the shade and cool yourself off." And with that remark, Anansi shut the door quickly.

Inside Anansi laughed to himself at the confusion he had caused Turtle. You see, he realized that Turtle didn't want to sit in the shade. He knew what Turtle wanted, but he didn't want to give Turtle the opportunity to say it. For, in Anansi's culture, it was a custom to share your food with anyone who showed up at dinnertime. If Turtle asked to stay, Anansi had to let him.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Anansi frowned. Then he opened up the door and talked really fast before Turtle could open his mouth. "Oh, you are so right. The porch isn't cool enough on such a hot day. Go sit in the lodge where I keep my vegetables. It's always nice and cool in there.

Why, it gets so cool in there you might just freeze!” And he slammed the door and waited for Turtle to disappear.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Anansi sighed. He opened the door. “Can’t you find the vegetable lodge, Turtle?” he inquired.

“I was about to ask if I could have some dinner with you, friend,” said Turtle politely.

Anansi felt defeated. Turtle asked the question. Now there was nothing he could do, but open the door wide and welcome Turtle to his house.

“Sit down and eat,” Anansi told Turtle. Turtle crawled up to the table and placed a napkin on his lap. He was just about to scoop some yams onto his plate when Anansi had a brainstorm and bellowed out. “Wait! In my culture, a guest is expected to come to the table with clean hands. Go down to the creek and wash up.”

Well, of course Turtle’s hands were dirty—he’d been crawling on them all day. So he trekked down to the creek behind Anansi’s house to wash. When he was finished he crawled again to the hilltop and returned to the table where Anansi was already eating. With great anticipation, Turtle started to spoon some yams onto his plate.

“Turtle! How can you be so rude!” scolded Anansi. “Didn’t I tell you it’s not polite to come to my table with dirty hands? Didn’t I ask you to wash them? Please do that!”

Turtle looked down at his hands. Indeed, they were dirty again because he had crawled back from the creek on the dusty path. What could he do? He got up and crawled

back down to the creek to wash again. Meanwhile, Anansi was devouring the yams as fast as he could.

This time when Turtle crawled back from the creek, he made sure not to wander off the grass so his hands would remain clean. When he returned to the table, he was just in time to see Anansi stick the last yam into his mouth, chew it, and swallow it. Disappointed, Turtle looked down at his empty plate.

*Hmmm.* An idea dawned on Turtle. He smiled and praised Anansi's scrumptious yams. "Thank you for sharing your delicious dinner with me, friend. You must have dinner with me at my house soon." Then Turtle bid goodbye and left.

Anansi smiled and rubbed his bulging belly with satisfaction as he watched Turtle crawl slowly down the road.

Three days later Turtle sent a messenger to Anansi's house with an invitation for dinner the following Sunday at seven o'clock.

On Sunday, Anansi was up bright and early. Turtle lived quite a distance away, and he wanted to arrive for dinner on time. He decided to wear his best jacket and set off whistling. It was a very demanding trip. It took him all day to reach the river where Turtle lived. It was very hot, and when Anansi arrived he was quite exhausted, and thirsty, and very, very hungry.

Turtle was sunning himself on a rock. "Welcome, Anansi," he said. "Are you ready for dinner?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed a famished Anansi. "I've traveled far to be here with you. And it is such a hot day today."

“Oh, it sure is,” agreed Turtle. “A hot day, yes, indeed! Well, just sit down in the shade and cool yourself off while I set the table.” And with that Turtle dove into the river and swam down to his house.

Anansi settled himself under a shady palm leaf to wait for Turtle to beckon him. While he waited, he got hungrier and hungrier as visions of a grand feast danced in his head. Finally, Turtle poked his head out of the water and said, “The table is ready, Anansi, come and eat.” Then he dove down again.

Anansi jumped into the water after Turtle, but he barely went down one measly inch before he bobbed back to the surface. He attempted to dive again, and again he floated back up. Each time he tried to immerse himself, he popped up out of the water like a cork.

Anansi stuck his head under the water to see what Turtle had cooked. The table was crowded with big bowls heaped full of wonderful food—clams and crayfish, sardines and scallops, eels and watercress, and fiddle ferns—his absolute favorites. Anansi’s eyes and mouth popped open.

Turtle was already eating. He waved to Anansi to come down and pointed to a plate that had been set especially for him.

Anansi crawled up on the bank and took a running leap into the river. PLOTT! He sank down an eensy bit, then SHRIPP! he floated back up.

He dove off a rock in the middle of the river. Again the results were the same. PLOTT! SHRIPP! He floated back up.

He climbed a tree next to the river and jumped off a branch. His frustration continued. PLOTT! SHRIPP! Up again!

Each time he tried to get under the water, he came right back up. He could not get himself to sink. Finally, he sat down on the bank of the creek in disgust.

He picked up a stone and threw it into the river. PLOP! It sank right down. Anansi picked up another stone. He looked at it. Then he looked at the river. Hee! Hee! He filled the pockets of his jacket with stones and leaped into the water once more.

Down, down he sank with the stones in his pockets! Down, down to Turtle's wonderful table! Down, down right into the chair sitting in front of his empty plate. He reached for the bowl of eels.

"Wait!" demanded Turtle.

"In my culture it is polite for a guest to remove his jacket before coming to the table," Turtle said. "Please don't be rude, and take off your jacket instantly."

Anansi's heart sank when he heard Turtle. Slowly, he took off his jacket. When he did, his jacket went down and SHRIPP! Anansi went up, straight to the surface. And there he floated, watching Turtle eat his fabulous feast below.

So remember this: when you try to outsmart someone, you just may be outsmarted instead.

## **proceed**

**Define:** To **proceed** is to move on or continue.

**Example:** The parade **proceeded** past the park and ended at the stadium.

**Ask:** Why might you be happy if your team **proceeded** to the next round in a tournament?

## **anticipation**

**Define:** **Anticipation** is the act of looking forward to something.

**Example:** We cooked a feast in **anticipation** of the holiday.

**Ask:** What is something you might do in **anticipation** of a spelling test?

## **famished**

**Define:** **Famished** is when you are very hungry.

**Example:** After being stuck in the tree for two days, the **famished** cat was finally rescued.

**Ask:** Would you be **famished** after a long hike or after eating dinner? Why?

## **measly**

**Define:** **Measly** is a very small amount.

**Example:** I was annoyed because my brother saved only one **measly** piece of pie for me.

**Ask:** Why might a waiter be upset with a **measly** tip?

## **immerse**

**Define:** To **immerse** is to cover completely with water or another liquid.

**Example:** I **immersed** the dishes in water so they could soak.

**Ask:** Why wouldn't you **immerse** a computer in liquid?