

More about Anansi

According to the Akan, the tribe Anansi comes from, Anansi is a magical animal.

Anansi can spin a web that goes all the way to heaven.

This means he can go up and down between heaven and earth, forming a connection between God and people.

Anansi tells God what happens on earth.

Anansi is a magical creature, but he's not just good.

He's also very cunning.

He's always preoccupied with getting precisely what he wants: food, sleep, peace and quiet, money.

He doesn't mind stealing or cheating for it.

At the same time, he's very honest about this, and he's brave and clever.

Anansi is a little hero who always wins against those stronger than him.

You can read the Anansi stories, but they're really meant for telling out loud.

The tales are still told regularly, especially in Surinam.

In Surinamese the stories are called Anansitoris.

The people sit in a big circle together, and a storyteller starts the Anansitori.

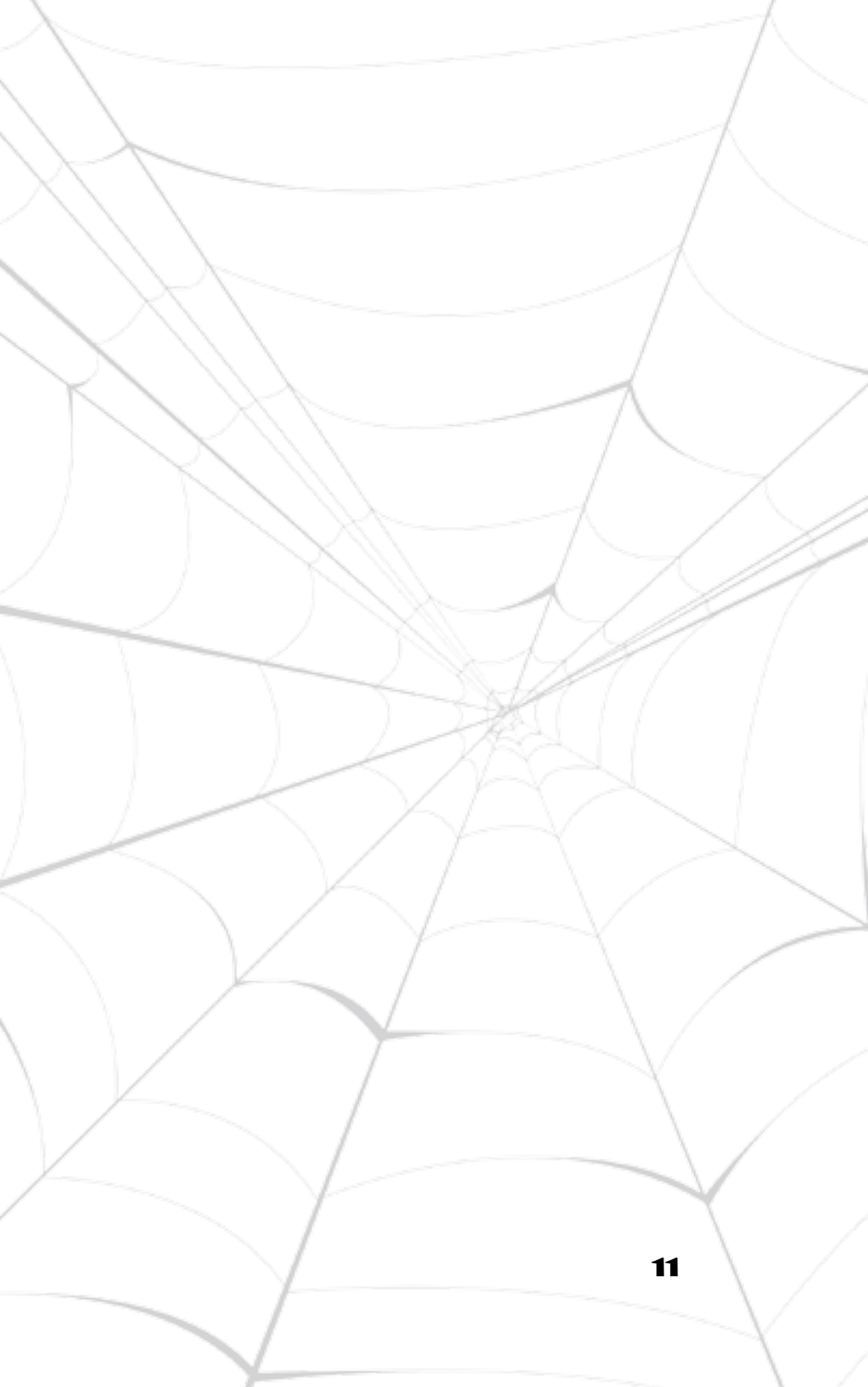
The listeners join in enthusiastically.

They let everyone know what they think of the story.

Sometimes one of the listeners starts another Anansitori too.

Anansitoris are really meant to be told in the evenings, when your eyes are drooping and sleepy.

If you want to tell an Anansitori during the day it is said you have to pull out an eyelash first, because that makes your eyelids flutter as if you were sleepy.





How Anansi became clever

Everyone knows that Anansi the spider is clever.

Anansi is very clever indeed.

This is about the day he becomes clever.

That day Panther is lying in the sun eating and thinking.

This morning he ate a fish, a duck and a pig, but he's still hungry.

Panther comes up with a plan.

He wants to eat lots of animals at the same time.

Suddenly he starts screaming and roaring.

Everyone can hear the sound.

Then Panther lies down under a palm tree.

He's stopped moving.

He's pretending to be dead.

Lots of animals come and take a careful look.

The animals are pleased that Panther is dead.

Everyone was afraid of him.

The monkeys begin to dance for joy.

The other animals dance with them.

After a while the animals summon up the
courage to come close to Panther.

A parrot tugs at his whiskers.

The monkeys pull on his tail.

The ants crawl into his ears.

A turtle gnaws at his feet.

Anansi sits in the palm tree.

He's seen it all.

Taking his flute he lowers himself down on a
thin thread.

He plays a cheerful tune.

All the animals dance around Panther.

Panther's plan is going well.

His eyes are open a tiny crack, so that he
can see exactly what's happening.

Some deer are digging a big hole.

The hole is deep enough now.

The animals want to lift Panther up.

Anansi watches and gives them tips.

'One, two....'

Suddenly Panther jumps up.

He strikes out with his strong claws.

He strikes all the animals dead.
Even the quick monkeys can't get away.

Only Anansi manages to escape in time.
Without his flute he quickly climbs up the
thread.

He's soon safe, high up in the palm tree.
Panther eats up all the animals.
Finally his stomach is completely full.

Anansi feels sorry for the animals, but he
also thinks they should have thought more
carefully.
Panther has taught me an important lesson,
he thinks.
I'm quick, but now I'm clever too.

