

# Anansi's BAD HAIR Day

by Dina McClellan

Anansi the Spider was once a very handsome fellow. He had a beautiful head of thick, glossy hair.

But he was very lazy. If it was up to him, he'd lounge around in his web all day while his wife worked picking corn.

"I'm tired of doing all the work around here," Anansi's wife said to him one day. "Why don't you pick corn for a change? Besides, I'm making bean stew."

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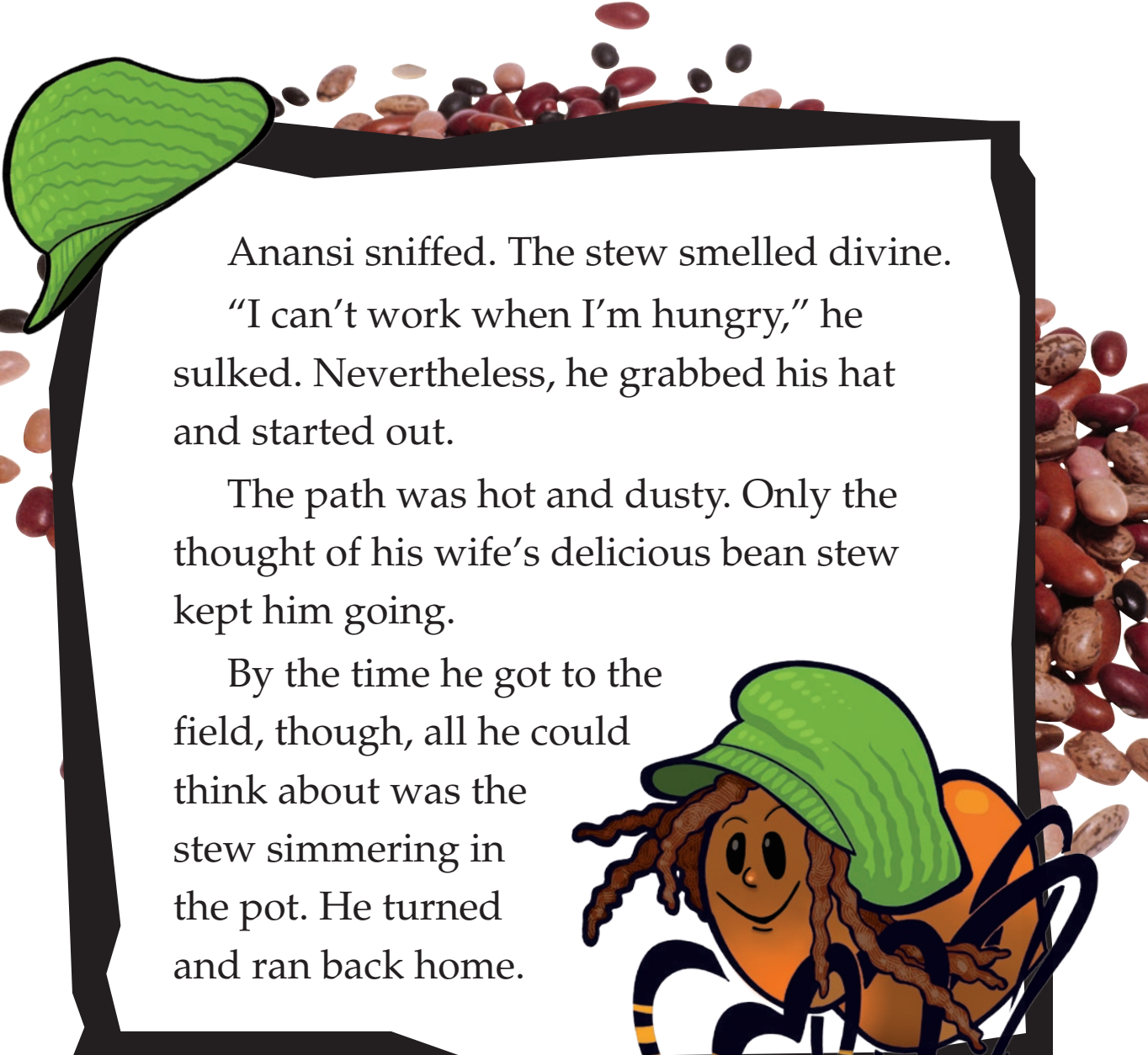
## READ & RESPOND

Make and Confirm Predictions

Think about the details on this page. What lesson might this story teach? Do you think Anansi will still have hair by the end of the story?

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Anansi sniffed. The stew smelled divine. “I can’t work when I’m hungry,” he sulked. Nevertheless, he grabbed his hat and started out.

The path was hot and dusty. Only the thought of his wife’s delicious bean stew kept him going.

By the time he got to the field, though, all he could think about was the stew simmering in the pot. He turned and ran back home.



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### READ & RESPOND

Literary Elements

**What makes Anansi run back home?**

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“When do we eat?” Anansi hollered as he came into the kitchen.

“When you finish picking the corn.” Anansi’s wife scowled.

Anansi sighed. He returned to the field. He started working. But soon enough the delicious smell of the stew drifted across the field.



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### READ & RESPOND

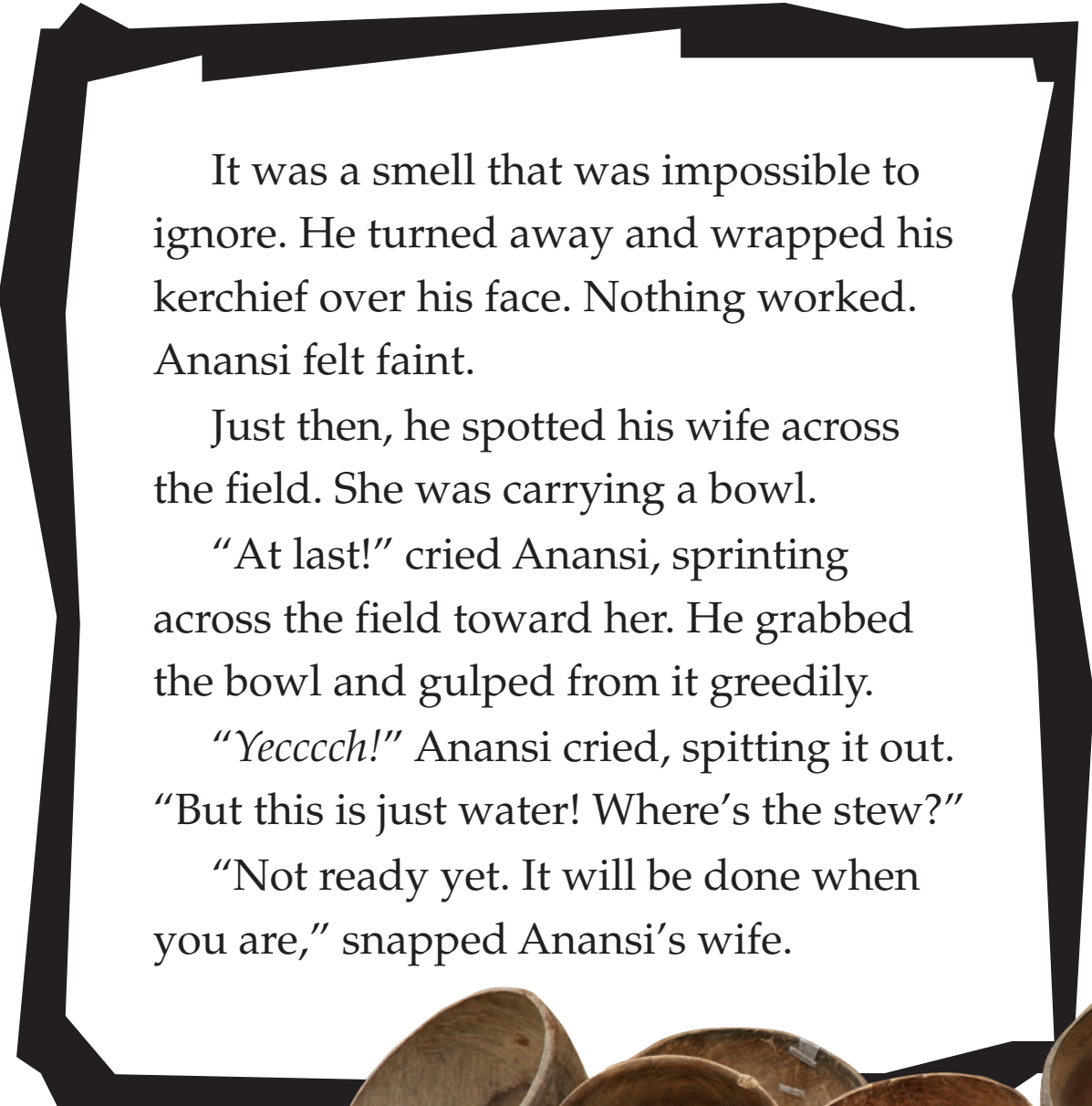
Make and Confirm Predictions

**Do you think Anansi will stay in the field or go back home? Explain.**

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It was a smell that was impossible to ignore. He turned away and wrapped his kerchief over his face. Nothing worked. Anansi felt faint.

Just then, he spotted his wife across the field. She was carrying a bowl.

“At last!” cried Anansi, sprinting across the field toward her. He grabbed the bowl and gulped from it greedily.

“Yecccch!” Anansi cried, spitting it out. “But this is just water! Where’s the stew?”

“Not ready yet. It will be done when you are,” snapped Anansi’s wife.



**READ & RESPOND**

Literary Elements

**What is Anansi’s problem? How does he attempt to deal with it?**

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“Go back to work. I don’t want to see you until suppertime.”

As soon as the coast was clear, Anansi scurried back home. The kitchen was deserted, save for the bean stew bubbling in the pot.

“Yum!” Anansi cried. He grabbed a wooden spoon and started slurping hot soup. It was risky, but it was worth it.

After a few slurps, Anansi decided that spoonfuls were not enough. He pulled off his hat and filled it to the brim with steaming soup.

Just then his wife walked in.

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**READ & RESPOND**

Make and Confirm Predictions

**What do you think Anansi will do with his hat full of soup?**

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Anansi froze. Then, without thinking, he tugged the bean-filled hat onto his head.

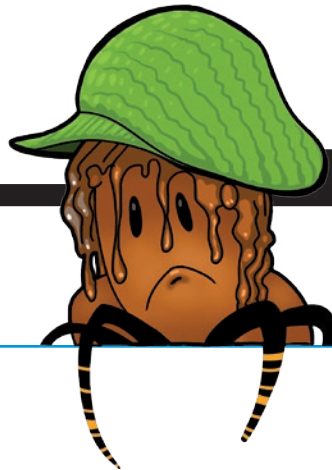
Anansi's wife looked at him suspiciously.

Underneath Anansi's hat, the soup started to burn his head. He shook his hat a little, then shook it a little faster. It didn't help. His head was really burning now. Anansi jumped. He danced. He jiggled.

"What in the world is wrong with you?" Anansi's wife said.

"Why," Anansi cried, "you don't know today is Hat-Shaking Day?"

"Nope. Never heard of it," she said.



**READ & RESPOND**

Literary Elements

**What is happening to Anansi?**

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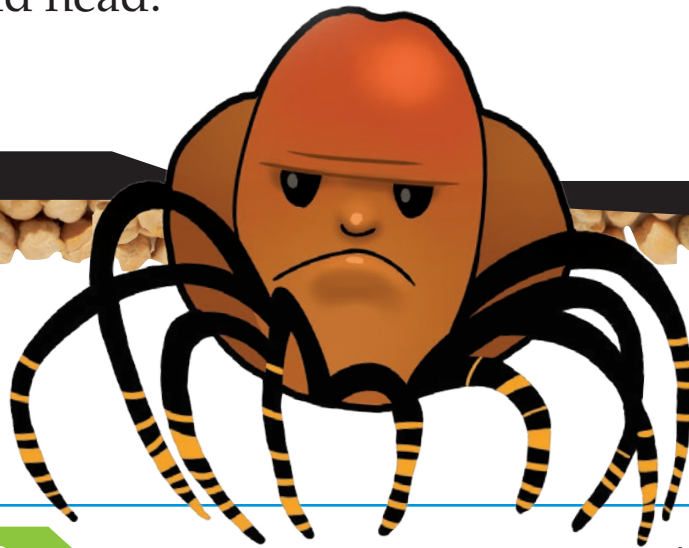
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When Anansi could stand it no longer,  
he ripped off his hat.

*“YEEEEEEEEeeeeow!”*

Anansi went hooting and hollering  
down the path. He was quite a sight. The  
stew had completely burned off his hair.  
He was as bald as a kernel of corn.

Anansi’s hair never grew back. That is  
why, to this day, he can be seen hiding out  
in the tall grass where no one can see his  
big, bald head.



**READ & RESPOND**

Literary Elements

**What is this story meant to teach us?**

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# Reread and Respond



**1** Why is Anansi bald at the end of the story?

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**Hint**

For a clue, see page 184.

**2** How are Anansi and his wife different from one another?

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**Hint**

Think about their attitudes about work.

**3** Make up your own title for the story.

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**Hint**

Think about the story's lesson.

**4** How does the dialogue help you understand the characters?

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**Hint**

Think about what the dialogue reveals about the relationship between Anansi and his wife.