

How Anansi Brought Wild Animals into the World

Again there was famine in the land.

Everyone was hungry, including Anansi and his family. His son, Kweku Tsin, walked through the forest looking for whatever he could find. His sharp eyes fell upon palm nuts. They were small, but they were something. He took a big stone and tried to crack one open - but oh - instead of splitting when he hit it, the nut went shooting off and fell down a great hole. Kweku Tsin examined the opening in the ground. It looked like it might belong to a fierce beast, but the pangs of hunger were sharper than his fear and so he jumped down into it.

Wow! It was big! And it was deep.



Who are the characters in the story?

Respond here: ...

What is the current problem in the story according to the section above?

Respond here: ...

Explain what happened to Kweku Tsin

Respond here: ...

He landed at the bottom.

A little bruised, and a little shaken, he rose to his feet and adjusted his eyes. He had not been expecting this. The underground layer was lit by lanterns. In fact, it was not so much a layer, as a town, with streets and buildings. But it was empty - or almost. On he wandered, calling out to ask if anyone was there. Eventually he came to an old woman sitting in a garden.

"Hello, good woman," he said. "I come from the land above where there is nothing to eat. Have you anything down here to fill an empty stomach?"

What did Kweku Tsin find at the bottom of the tunnel?

Respond here: ...

Who did Kweku Tsin meet in the garden?

Respond here: ...

"Certainly, my boy," said the old woman. "Just go into the garden around the back of the house, and visit the yam patch. Listen carefully to what the yams say and ignore those that call out: 'Dig me up!' When you hear one that says: 'Don't dig me up!' do dig it up, and bring it back to me."

Yams by the way are a vegetable that looks a bit like a red skinned potato and are sometimes called sweet potatoes.

Kweku Tsin was a well mannered boy, and he listened carefully and did exactly as he was told. He went into the garden where the yams were indeed very talkative. Most of them begged him to dig them up, and only one called out in a whiny voice: "Don't pick me up! I don't want to be picked up! I don't want it. Don't pick me up!" And that was the one he picked up and brought back to the old lady who said:

"Now peel the yam, throw away the inside, boil the skin in the pot and then give it to me."

The boy thought that this was a very strange upside down sort of request but he did as he was told. He gave the boiled yam skin to the woman and she commanded: "Now I shall eat my meal but do not look at me as I eat."

What is ONE thing the old woman told Kweku Tsin to do? Respond here: ...

Did Kweku Tsin listen to the old woman or not? Respond here: ...

"Yes Ma'am," said the boy, and he covered his eyes with his hand while she ate. When she had finished her meal she said: "Go back into the garden and choose a drum, but be sure not to take the one that says 'ding dong'. Instead make sure you choose a drum that says 'dong ding'."

Again the boy did exactly as he was told and returned with a drum that said "dong ding".

The old lady said: "Take this drum home. Any time you feel hungry, just beat it."

The boy thanked the old lady and hurried back to his village. He placed the gift in the middle of his hut with his hungry family gathered all around. Next he beat the drum and all sorts of wonderful food appeared.

What was the gift given to the boy from the old lady?
What did the gift do that was special? Respond here: ...

Kweku Tsin was keen to share his good fortune with the whole village. He called everyone to the meeting place and beat the drum once more. Enough food for a feast appeared by magic. The hungry people ate their fill and sang the praises of Kweku Tsin. Everyone rejoiced except for one - and that was Anansi who was jealous of his son's instant popularity.

"If I had a drum like that I could be rich," he thought, and every day he badgered his son to tell him how he found it. Eventually Kweku Tsin was worn down by his persistent father and he told him the story of the old lady who lived below the ground. He showed him the hole that he had fallen into, and Anansi jumped down into it. Just as his son had done before him, he wandered around calling out: "Is anyone here?" until he came upon an old woman sitting in a garden. Most unlike his son, he spoke rudely to her saying:

What is the relationship between Kweku Tsin and Anansi?
Highlight the correct answer.

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Brother | Mother |
| Father | Friend |

Why did Anansi want a drum like the one the Kweku Tsin has? Explain. Respond here: ...

"What are you waiting for? I haven't got all day. Get me some food!"

The old lady took no offence. She said: "Just go into the garden behind the house and visit the yam patch. Listen carefully to what the yams say. Don't pick the ones that say: 'Pick me up!'; but do pick the ones that say: 'Don't pick me up!'"

And Anansi, who was a very suspicious sort of person, replied: "Don't take me for a fool. I see right through your tricks you old witch. If a yam warns me not to pick it up, and I just root it up regardless, something nasty is going to happen to me." And since that was his line of thought, he went to the yam patch and seized one of the yams that were crying out to be taken, and he ignored the one that said: "Don't take me!" He brought it back to the old lady, and just as with his son, she told him to boil the skin of the yam and throw away the centre.

"What foolery!" declared Anansi and he did the opposite of what he was told. When he boiled the centre it turned into a stone but he gave it to the old lady to eat anyway.

"Please don't look at me while I eat," said the old lady. But the arrogant Anansi replied: "I would not want to miss seeing you eat that stone," and he sat and watched while she ate her strange meal. When she had swallowed the stone, the old lady said: "Now go back to the garden and fetch a drum, and be sure to choose the one that says 'Dong ding' not 'Ding dong.'"

"Dong ding! What kind of drum goes dong ding?" exclaimed Anansi, and he went to the garden and chose one that went 'Ding dong'. When he showed it to the old lady she told him to take it to his village and beat it whenever he felt hungry.

Did Anansi listen to the old lady?

Respond here: ...

What is one difference between the actions of Kweku Tsin and Anansi? Explain.

Respond here: ...

How would you describe Anansi based on his actions?

Respond here: ...

"Now you're talking!" said Anansi, and this time he did as he was told. He ran back to his village and called everyone to the meeting place. As his son had done before, he beat the drum but this time no feast appeared - no food, not even a few crumbs. Instead, wild animals came out of the woods, the likes of which the villagers had never seen before. For the magic drum had only just called them into the world. There came lions, crocodiles, rhino, all colours of snakes, and scary dangerous fierce looking animals - and all the villagers ran away as fast as they could, cursing Anansi for his tricks. As for Anansi, he climbed a tall tree to escape the beasts, and from there he looked down at the empty village and the magical drum, and he called the old woman every bad name under the sun.

And that was how Anansi was tricked by his own bad temper into bringing snakes and wild animals into the world.

What happened when Anansi beat the drum that was given to him? Was it the same or different than when Kweku Tsin beat his drum?

Respond here: ...

Anansi was tricked by his own bad temper, what was the

Respond here: ...

result of this? Read the last sentence of the story.

Final Question:

What is a central idea or theme of the short story, “How Anansi Brought Animals into the World”? Be sure to use evidence from the story to support your answer.

Respond here: ...