

Ananse and the Pot of Wisdom

Ananse is a very special spider, well known for his wit and wisdom. He lives, like other spiders, in corners and on ceilings. Everybody knew that Ananse was wise, for he boasted loud and clear. In his high-pitched voice he laughed at fools and spoke louder than everyone else.

One very sunny day, Sky God called Ananse up to the skies to have a chat. Sky God said in a quiet voice, "Could you do some work for me? Go about the earth and collect all wisdom for me. When you have brought it up to me, I will name you the Sage of All Time."



Ananse hid a smile. "That's easy, sir," he said. "I will be back in three days with the wisdom of the world."

Now, Ananse, as selfish as he was, had already travelled the length and breadth of the earth and collected every shred of wisdom. He kept it all in a giant pot in his secret hiding place.

The next day he started out to take the pot full of wisdom to Sky God way up in the skies. It was a huge pot and very heavy. As Ananse tugged it behind him, he was more than filled with pride. To get up to the skies where Sky God lived, you had to climb a tall coconut tree that grew beyond the clouds right up into the heavens. Ananse strapped the pot tightly to his back and made his way slowly up the tree

A great crowd was gathered below, waving and cheering him on. He pressed on, never mind his aching muscles. He had an appointment in heaven, and he was going to make it there.

Below, the crowd let out a cheer. It was a great moment for Ananse and, as pride filled his chest, he raised all his arms in a victory wave.

It was a shocking moment when he plummeted down to earth. He hit the ground with a bang and the pot broke in a million pieces. Wisdom scattered left and right, to the very ends of the earth. Ananse lay there in a heap, sobbing his heart out. Now everyone and every fool had a little bit of wisdom. He could not claim that all wisdom was his alone.

Then Sky God whispered in his ear, "I gave you eight arms, Ananse. If you really had all wisdom, you would not have waved them all."

Adapted from The Pot of Wisdom by Adowa Badoe

