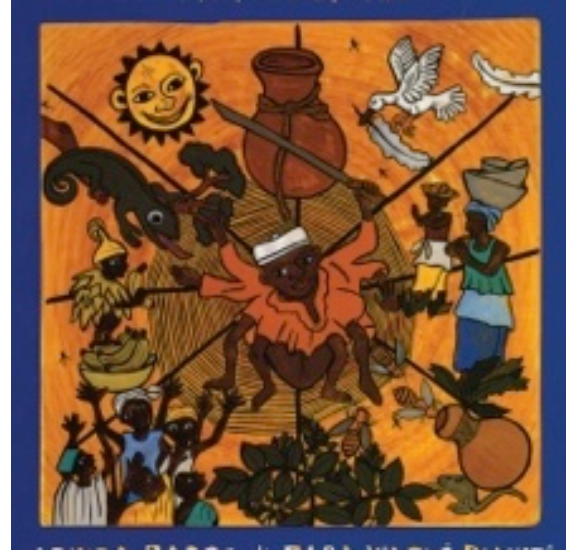


Ananse, the forgetful guest – Part 1

This is a West African story about Ananse. The mythical half-spider/half-man character.

Ananse had journeyed for miles and miles. Now after several days of tracking through the forest, his journey was almost at an end. Ananse could think only of one thing—food. On the nights he had spent in the forest, he had dreamed of food—hot steaming rice and spinach sauces, or crab and palm nut soup. Now he was



at last in the great town of Po-Ano, a guest of none other than the king of the coast lands. The king was a kind man, and after making sure that Ananse had been given a room, water to bathe and a change of clothes, he instructed his servants to prepare a meal for him. Imagine the pleasure Ananse felt as the smell of cooking food filled his nostrils.

"Let me guess," he chuckled to himself. "This will be rice and chicken stew that's cooking." Unable to wait any longer, Ananse dressed quickly and followed his nose to the kitchen.

"Ah, Mr. Ananse, you are most welcome," said the servants.

"You must be very hungry after your long journey."

"Yes, indeed," replied Ananse. "Right now, with the smell of your food filling this room, it is my pleasure to be hungry."

With a flourish, the servants lifted the lid off Ananse's bowl. But at the sight of the food, Ananse collapsed, for in the bowl was the most despised of foods—dried cassava mash. He couldn't face eating it! He pretended to faint and the servants called for help.

By the time help arrived, Ananse had emerged from his sudden faint. "It is nothing," said Ananse weakly. "It's just that I'm allergic," he lied. "Cassava is forbidden to me. Even the sight of it affects me."

"Oh, dear," said the king. "I am afraid this is going to be a difficult visit for you. In this town we eat cassava at every meal."

Impossible, thought Ananse. This must be a trick to test me. Why would people eat cassava at every meal? But they did! In the mornings they ate cassava porridge, in the afternoons they ate cassava mash, and in the evenings they ate their cassava roasted. Ananse had to go out each day to find moist leaves and bugs to eat, for the news had spread that cassava was forbidden to him.



Part 1 Questions

1. What food had Ananse dreamt about?
2. What was the name of the city he came to?
3. What did he hope for when he arrived in the city?
4. What did Ananse think he had smelt?
5. What food had been prepared for him?
6. Why did Ananse pretend to faint?
7. What lie did he tell?
8. What problem did this leave Ananse?
9. What did Ananse have to go and eat?