



A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
David A. Naff



**SPIDER'S AND
MONKEY'S FEASTS**



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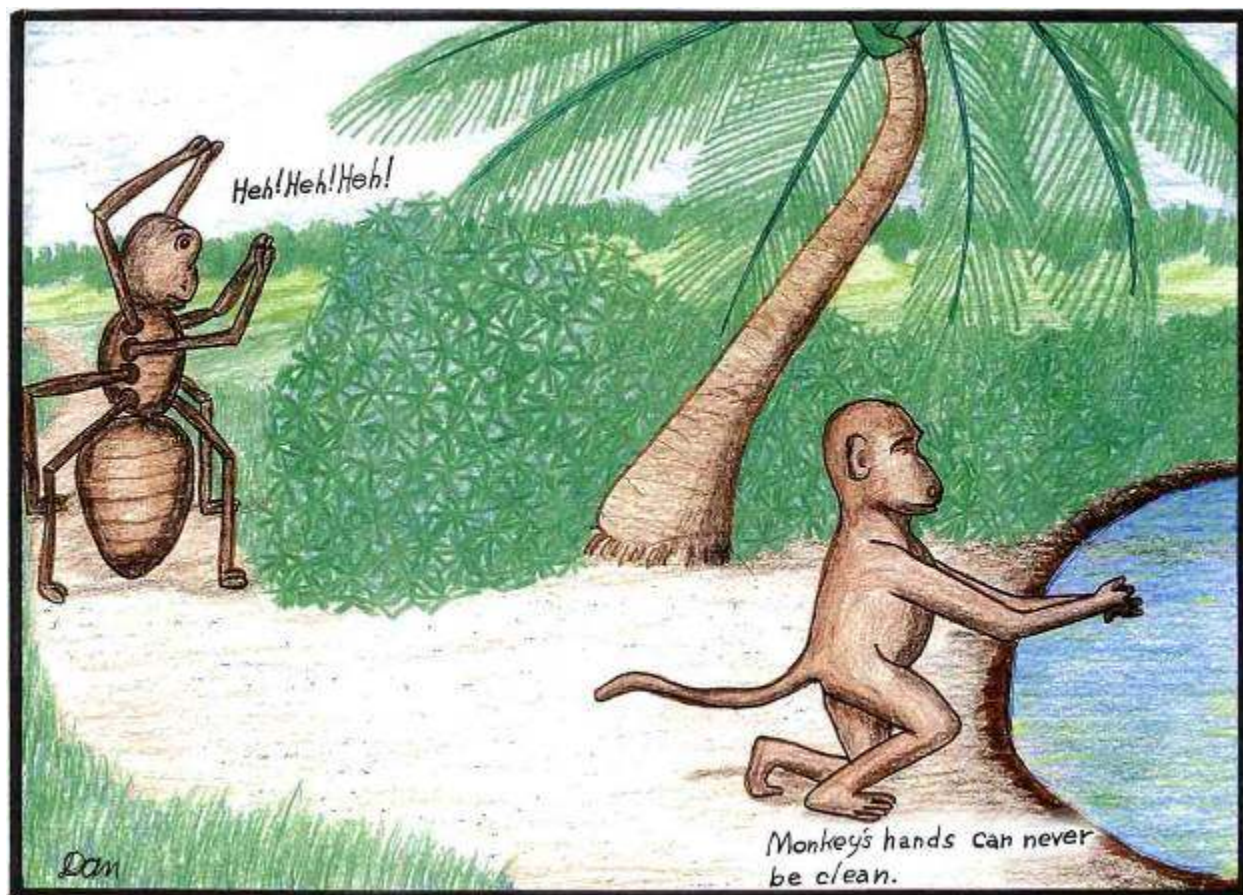
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By Spark Team



SPIDER'S AND MONKEY'S FEASTS

Note to the reader: words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics.

“What goes around comes around.” (Liberian saying)

Spider loved feasts; the food, the fun, the stories. Often, just for something to do, he would make a feast and call all his friends. However he also liked to play tricks on them. So you never knew what might happen when Spider called you to a feast.

One time Spider called all the animals to come to a big feast he was preparing. All the animals came; Deer and Hippo, Monkey and Crocodile, Rabbit and Leopard. Everyone came!

It was almost time to eat. Ah-h-h-h it smelled so good. There were sweet smells of rice and eddo and cassava; and the soups of

chicken and fish and cow and goat. It made everyone's mouth water *plenty*.

Spider stood up to make an announcement. "My friends, what you smell tastes even better than it smells. Now at my feasts we want everything proper. So everybody must have clean hands to take part in my feasts. Everyone go down to the water and wash his hands. Come. *Let we go.*"

Everyone jumped up and ran down to the water. Oh, what a splashing and good-natured pushing and shoving. The water flew everywhere. Soon, everyone had washed and they were walking back to the feast.

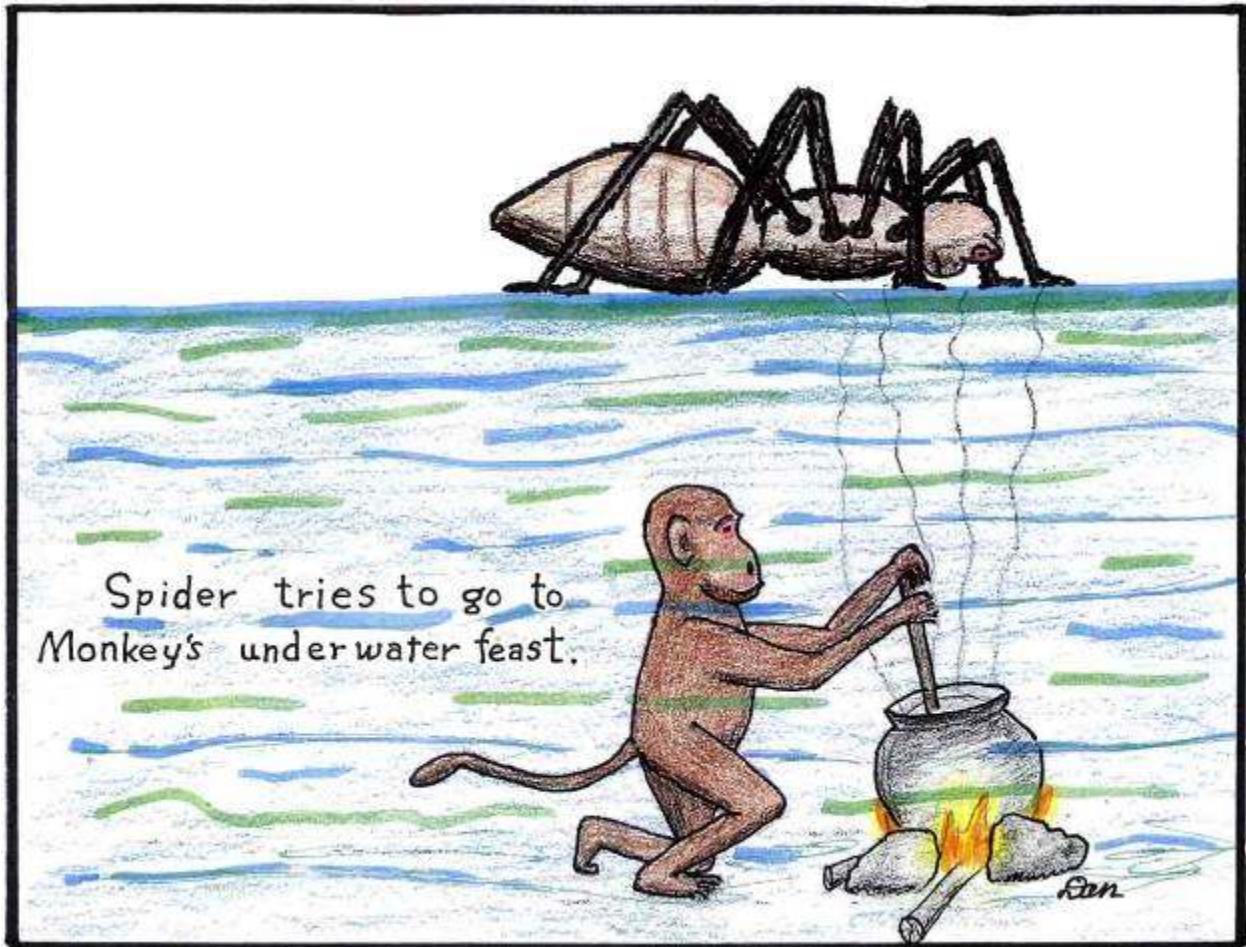
But Monkey had a problem. He walked back to the feast trying to keep his hands clean; but every once in a while he would forget and put his hand down to the ground. Monkey just could not help it. It is just the way monkeys are. When you see a monkey, watch how he often puts his hand on the ground as he walks.

Spider was watching and would say, "Monkey, you put your hand on the ground. Now go back and wash."

Monkey would go back to the water and wash again, but before he could get back to the feast he would forget and put his hand down to the ground again. Spider sent him back to wash again and again. Monkey just could not keep his hand off the ground.

Spider sent Monkey back to wash so many times that he never had any chance to eat any of the feast. Spider just laughed and laughed at Monkey. Monkey was hurt and angry.

Monkey's hands can never be clean," sobbed Monkey. "Spider knows that. He does not want me to eat any of his feast. Spider is being mean to me." So Monkey went home without even tasting any of Spider's feast, for he knew that Spider would never let him have any of his food.



It was mean of Spider not to let Monkey have any food at Spider's feast. Do you know what God says about making joke of people? In Proverbs 26:18,19 we read "Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows, is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I was only joking.'"

Later, Monkey made a big feast and invited all his friends to come. Now, Monkey's feast was under the water. Hippo came and went splash! splash! splash! right down into the water to Monkey's feast. Leopard, Bush Cow, and Rabbit came, and all just went splash! splash! splash! down into the water to Monkey's feast. Even Squirrel, Raccoon, and Snake went splash! splash! splash! down into the water to Monkey's feast.

Then along came Spider. He went right onto the water, but he could not go down. He just floated around on the top of the water.



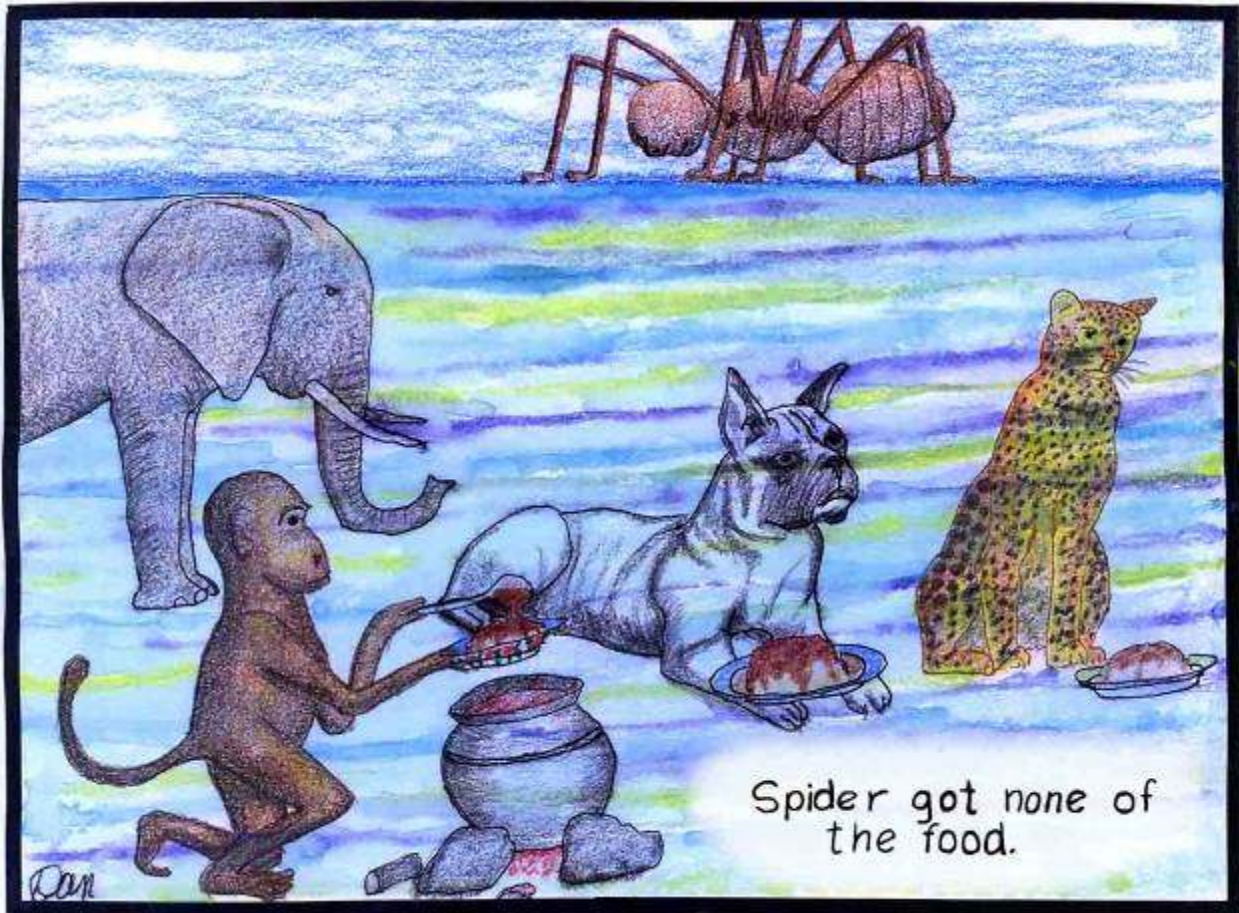
He could skim along on the surface of the water. He could see the other animals down there laughing and talking and having a good time. He could see the food cooking in the pots. He could even smell the delicious food. But he could not get down into the water.

Then along the path came a Mandingo man. He had on a huge robe with a very large pocket on the front.

"Hey, *my good friend*," called Spider, "I am on my way to a big feast. Please lend me your robe to wear to the feast. I would look too fine in a nice robe like that."

"Yes, Spider, you may wear my robe to the feast. Please keep it clean and bring it to me tomorrow."

"Thank you, *my good friend*. I will bring it in the morning," answered Spider as he put on the robe. Then he filled the big pocket with stones and went splash! splash! splash! down into the water to Monkey's feast. He was there just in time, for Monkey was standing up to announce that the food was ready.



"My friends," said Monkey. "The food is ready and I am sure that everyone's nose is telling him that it is very good. I have cooked some very good palm butter soup with cow, goat, fish, and chicken. Now we must all be very careful with palm butter as it is very hard to wash it out of our clothes if we should get it on them. So we must take off our fine robes so we will not get them dirty."

"All robes off!" shouted the animals. "Take off all robes!"

"Spider still has on his robe. Take it off!"

"Hey somebody! Pull it off!" "Nobody can wear robe while we eat."

All the animals took hold of Spider and pulled off his robe. Oo-o-o-ps - there went Spider up toward the surface of the water.

"Oh, Spider, do not go so soon," called Monkey. "It is just time to eat. Come, have some palm butter."

But poor Spider, he just kept going higher and higher up until, POP! he was on the surface again. He looked down. He could see the people eating. He could smell the good food. But he could not get down to eat any. All he could do was to skim around on the water and look down at the people eating below and having such a good time.

Now I am sure that you have seen Spider doing just this very thing on some pond or creek or river. He is looking down at Monkey's feast but he cannot get down there to eat.

Monkey was mean to Spider. Do you know what we call what Monkey did? We call it revenge. What does God say about revenge? He says, "...It is mine to avenge; I will repay, ..." (Heb. 10:30). God also says, "Do not say, 'I will pay you back for this wrong!' Wait for the Lord and He will deliver you" (Prov. 20:22).

But, you know what? Jesus wants us to do more than just sit and wait for Him to pay back those who wrong us. He wants us to forgive and bless those who do bad to us. Matthew 5:44 tells us how Jesus wants us to act. It says, "...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ..."

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