TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 243

Short Stories with Peter: Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

79 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Welcome to Short Stories with Peter.

Today's story is a traditional Akan tale from West Africa, about Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom.

Listen to the forest, and listen to what Anansi wants to do with all the wisdom in the world.

Long ago, the village was quiet, and the sun was warm.

There lived a man called Father Anansi.

He had all the wisdom in the world.

Every day, people came to him for advice and help.

But one day, Anansi had a selfish idea.

Why should I share my wisdom with everyone?

I will keep it all for myself.

So Anansi gathered all the wisdom he had.

He put it carefully into a big clay pot, and he closed the pot tightly.

Then he thought, "Where can I hide it?

I need a place that nobody can reach."

He looked around the village, and then he looked up.

There was a very tall tree, with branches high above the ground.

The tree was tall, and the sun was hot.

Anansi tied the pot to a string, and he hung it in front of his stomach.

Then he began to climb.

But the pot was heavy, and it hit the tree again and again.

Anansi slipped, and he fell back down.

His arms were tired, and the string hurt his hands.

He tried again.

He slipped again.

His young son, Ntikuma, was watching from below.

Father, why don't you tie the pot on your back?

Then your hands will be free, and you can climb.

Anansi stopped, and he looked at his son.

At first, he said nothing.

He looked at the pot, and then he looked at his son again.

I thought I had all the wisdom in the world in this pot.

But my son has found something I did not think of.

Anansi tied the pot to his back and climbed the tree.

At the top, he remembered that his son had seen a solution he had missed.

Anansi felt angry and ashamed at the same time.

He held the pot high above his head.

If wisdom cannot even help me, then I do not want to keep it!

He threw the pot with all his strength.

The pot hit a great rock, and it broke.

All the wisdom came out, and it flew over the forest, the villages, and the fields.

It spread throughout the world.

That is how wisdom came to be shared among people.

Since that day, every person has a little wisdom, and nobody has all of it.

End of the story.

Now, let’s dive into the language and break down some of the key vocabulary from the story.

Today we look at four words: wisdom, climb, break, and spread.

First, wisdom.

Wisdom is the ability to make good decisions, because you have knowledge and experience.

For example, "My grandmother gave me wise advice, and I learned from her wisdom."

We also say words of wisdom for a short and useful piece of advice.

The adjective is wise.

Second, climb.

To climb means to go up something, like a tree, a hill, or a ladder.

For example, "Anansi tried to climb the tall tree."

We often say climb up and climb down.

The b is silent in this word, so we say climb.

Third, break.

The past tense is broke, and the past participle is broken.

For example, "The pot broke," and "The pot is broken."

We use break for things that separate into pieces, or stop working.

Fourth, spread.

To spread means to go over a wider area, or to reach more people and places.

For example, "The news spread quickly through the village."

We also say spread the word, for example, "Please spread the word about our event."

The past tense is also spread, so the form does not change.

Now a short challenge.

Which word means the ability to make good decisions, because of knowledge and experience?

The answer is wisdom.

Complete this sentence: "Yesterday, the glass fell, and it ..."

The answer is broke.

Complete this sentence: "The story ... across the whole world."

The answer is spread, and notice that the past form is the same.

Complete this sentence: "The boy wanted to ... the tree."

The answer is climb.

Anansi wanted to keep wisdom in a pot, but in the end, it reached everyone.

That is why the story still makes us think.

You can find the key words from this story on our website, yourenglishtoolbox.com.

There you can review the vocabulary, and the link is in the description.

Thanks for listening to Short Stories with Peter.