

## HUNGRY SPIDER

Spider was hungry! He was always hungry. Spider was greedy as well. All the animals knew that when it was mealtime, Spider had many tricks, and for Spider, it was always mealtime. One day Turtle left his home in the pond and went on a long journey. He traveled slowly through the jungle and finally arrived at Spider's house. They had never met each other before this, and Spider reluctantly invited Turtle to stay for dinner. Spider liked to talk to strangers, as they had interesting stories to tell. But he hated to feed them because they ate food that he wanted for himself.

"Friend Turtle," said Spider, "you must be tired after your long trip. Go down to the river and refresh yourself I'll prepare our dinner while you are gone." "How kind of you," said Turtle. "I'll hurry as I'm quite hungry." Turtle followed the trail to the water's edge and scrambled in. It was good to cool down and feel clean again. He crawled out of the river and hurried back to Spider's house. Delicious odors filled the air. It was time to eat! Turtle walked in and saw the food on the table. "Thank you for inviting me to stay for dinner, Spider," said Turtle. "I haven't eaten all day."

"You are most welcome, Turtle," said Spider with a frown. "But in this part of the country, we don't sit at the table with muddy feet." Turtle looked at his feet. Indeed, they were muddy. His feet were wet from the river and the trail was thick with dust. He was most embarrassed. He excused himself and walked all the way back to the river to wash them off. He dried them carefully on the grass and hurried back to Spider. But he was too late. Spider had eaten all the food. Turtle was disappointed, but too polite to complain. He slept hungry that night and left for home in the morning even hungrier!

Several months later, Spider went on a long journey. He arrived at Turtle's house and asked if he could spend the night. "Of course, friend Spider," said Turtle. "I remember how good you were to me." "I'm famished!" exclaimed Spider. "Could we eat right away?" "I'll dive to the bottom of the pond and prepare a feast," said Turtle. "Wait here and I'll call you when all is ready." Turtle gathered his best-tasting food and set it on a long table at the bottom of the pond. Then he swam to the surface and said, "Please join me, Spider. Dinner is served."

Spider leaped into the water and tried to dive down. But he weighed so little that he couldn't stay underwater, let alone sink to the bottom. Turtle had already started to eat, so Spider kicked and jerked and splashed with all of his strength. And he stayed right on top. Turtle swam to the surface and said, "Friend Spider, come down and enjoy the meal. It's quite good, if I do say so." Spider had an idea! He scrambled back to shore and picked up several heavy pebbles. He stuffed them in his coat pockets to weigh him down. Spider then hopped back into the pond and sank quickly to the bottom. The food was half gone, but what was left looked delicious! He had started to take a big bite when Turtle said, "Friend Spider, in this part of the jungle, it's considered bad manners to eat with your coat on."

Spider didn't want to be impolite. So he slipped out of his coat and reached for another morsel of food. But before he could grab hold of it, he bobbed to the surface like a cork! Spider cried as he floated about, watching Turtle down on the bottom of the pond eating the rest of the food. It is said that one kindness deserves another.