

Anancy and Friend

It's holiday time, you see. Everybody is dressed up, out in the village square. Out there too are cakes newly baked, sweets newly made, other things freshly roasted and friend and cool drinks wonderfully brewed. All have a strong sweet smell in the square.

Everybody eats and drinks and talks and laughs. Anancy has more than one drink of rum in his head. Dog has more than one drink of rum in his head too. The truth is, Bro Dog is tipsy. Every time Bro Dog drinks a little too much he becomes the biggest boaster you ever hear.

Anancy has to say, "You know, Bro Dog, you can go on as if you're really the wisest man."

"I'm no fool," Dog says, staring at Anancy. "I'm no fool. Not like some folks I could name. I can't help that. Can't help it if I'm no fool, can I?"

"Perhaps you have more senses than everybody else, Bro Dog," Anancy says.

"I have," Dog says. "I always know I have more senses than most people."

"How many senses do you have?" Anancy asks.

"Every worker-part of my body is a sense," Dog boasts. "My nose is one sense. My mouth is another sense. My legs are two senses and my arms another two. My ears are two. My eyes are two. And my voice is another sense."

"So, Bro Dog, you have eleven senses," Anancy says.

"Bro Dog counts up on his fingers. "Yes," he says, staring at Anancy. "Eleven!" Dog laughs. "And I know people with none at all."

"Well, Bro Dog," Anancy says, "I have only two senses."

"Well I'm sorry for you." Dog laughs and asks, "Which ones are your two senses then?"

Anancy says, "My first sense is, I KNOW ME; my second sense is, I KNOW MY FRIEND."

"Then I beat you," Dog says laughing. Dog counts up and laughs out loudly. "I beat you by nine! By nine, Bro Nancy!" Dog rolls about laughing and repeating, "By nine, Bro Nancy! By nine....!"

Bro Nancy doesn't say a word.

Everybody says, "Never mind, Bro Nancy. Never mind. Your day will come. You'll have your laugh another day."

The very next afternoon, coming round a corner into a lane. Anancy gets a big surprise. There is Bro Dog frightened out of his wits! Tiger is holding him. Tiger has a firm grip on Bro Dog, ready to eat him.

Anancy goes to walk past, talking to Tiger like the best neighbour, all easy and carefree. "Good morning, Bro Tiger. So good to see you on a good afternoon with a good meal in hand."

Tiger is irritated. Tiger stares at Anancy with all his hate in his worst looks.

Anancy stands looking pleased, "Oh Bro Tiger," Anancy says, "you do have a meal that calls for a respectable man's thanksgiving. You must at least make the sign of the cross. And say grace for this good-good thing you're about to receive. Then, Bro Tiger, a passer-by like me can go his way in peace, feeling blessed."

Anancy has meant to make Tiger confused. And suddenly Tiger does look confused, and even shamefaced. Tiger always hates looking silly or stupid or just ignorant. So Tiger lets go of Dog and makes the sign of the cross on himself.

Oh, Dog makes such a big, desperate leap from Tiger that he knocks him over. Bro Dog breaks away like a frightened thief.

Anancy and Tiger don't become better friends. But from that day, dog respects a sense of friendship.