

# Spenser's First Web

by Elizabeth Trach

Spenser was a small black spider. Like all of his brothers and sisters, he had eight legs to help him walk and run. He was now big enough to know how to move all his legs together and not trip over them. Spenser was getting bigger every day.

Today Spenser felt nervous. It was time for him to learn to spin a web on his own. He had watched his mother build beautiful, soft webs from the silk she made herself. His mother's webs were lovely. They took a long time to make, and in the morning, they were speckled with glistening drops of dew that made them look like crystal castles.

"Okay, Spenser," said Ms. Spinney. "It's time to spin your first web. Let's begin by making a big plus sign." Ms. Spinney was Spenser's teacher. She was old and small but very strong. She quickly used her silk to make a plus sign between two nearby leaves.

Spenser was able to make silk, but he had trouble attaching it to anything. No matter how hard he tried, the threads slipped away and fell to the ground. Spenser tried hard, but he was getting tired.

"Take a break, Spenser," said Ms. Spinney. "You're trying very hard, but I can see that you're getting frustrated."

"I'm not frustrated!" said Spenser. "I'm mad that I'm not good at it, and I'm sad that I can't do it." Spenser felt like he was going to cry.

Ms. Spinney smiled kindly. "That's what being frustrated feels like, Spenser," she explained. "It's okay to feel that way, as long as you don't quit trying. Rest a bit and try again after lunch."

Spenser sat down in a shady spot to eat lunch. As he chewed his food, he began to feel calmer. He took a deep breath and spun just a little thread to attach to a nearby leaf. It stuck!

Spenser went back to his web-making spot to see if he could do it again. He closed his eyes and spun. This time the thread stayed where he put it on the leaves, and he was able to make his first plus sign.

"Very good, Spenser!" said Ms. Spinney. "We're out of time for today, but you can learn the next step tomorrow."

Spenser looked back at his plus sign. It wasn't a whole web, but he didn't care. He felt very proud.

**Questions**

1. Who is Ms. Spinney?
2. According to the story, what does the word *frustrated* mean?
3. Why is Spenser upset?
4. Is Spenser successful at building a web?