

THE SEVENTH HOUR

TAKE TIME BACK

THE FIRST BOAT



WHO IS SPEAKING?

Every voice has its own color.
See the color — you know who is talking.

ELI — the fix-it kid — this is his story

"I fix things. That's what my hands do."

ELI, TELLING THE STORY — the story boxes

"There are two kinds of things in the world..."

TOCK — the penguin watch — Eli's teacher

"Hands first. The knowing follows."

AYA — the girl from the First Age

"Kah."

MR. RIGGS — the pawn-shop man

"Wind the past, not the clock."

Now — the story begins.
THE SEVENTH HOUR: TAKE TIME BACK

There are two kinds of broken in the world. The kind that stops a thing. And the kind that sinks it.

Okay, buddy. Wood floats. Mostly. Let's find out which kind you are.



Still got your
penguin, kid?

Still got him. He
owes me dry
socks, though.

He ain't done with you. The old
things never are.



Okay, buddy.
Again?

Again.

You ever gonna tell
me first, or—

We're going back
in time.

Didn't think
so.



**In the Beginning, only first things
can hold their shape. So he folded
into the next-best thing.**

Put me on.



**Fire in the hearths. A cart on the
path. The Beginning was
starting to look like a place that
worked.**

Walk in, Fixer.

Choose who you will be
where we go.

Him. Always him.

And your
ranks?

Two. Flame
and wheel.
Earned.

Two ranks. The river has
read neither.

The
river?



**Eli! Eli — you
came back!**

**Flame. Wheel.
Two!**

**Orra pointed at the water the
way you point at bad weather
coming.**



**Grandmother says...
the river is awake now.
Angry-awake.**

Kah!

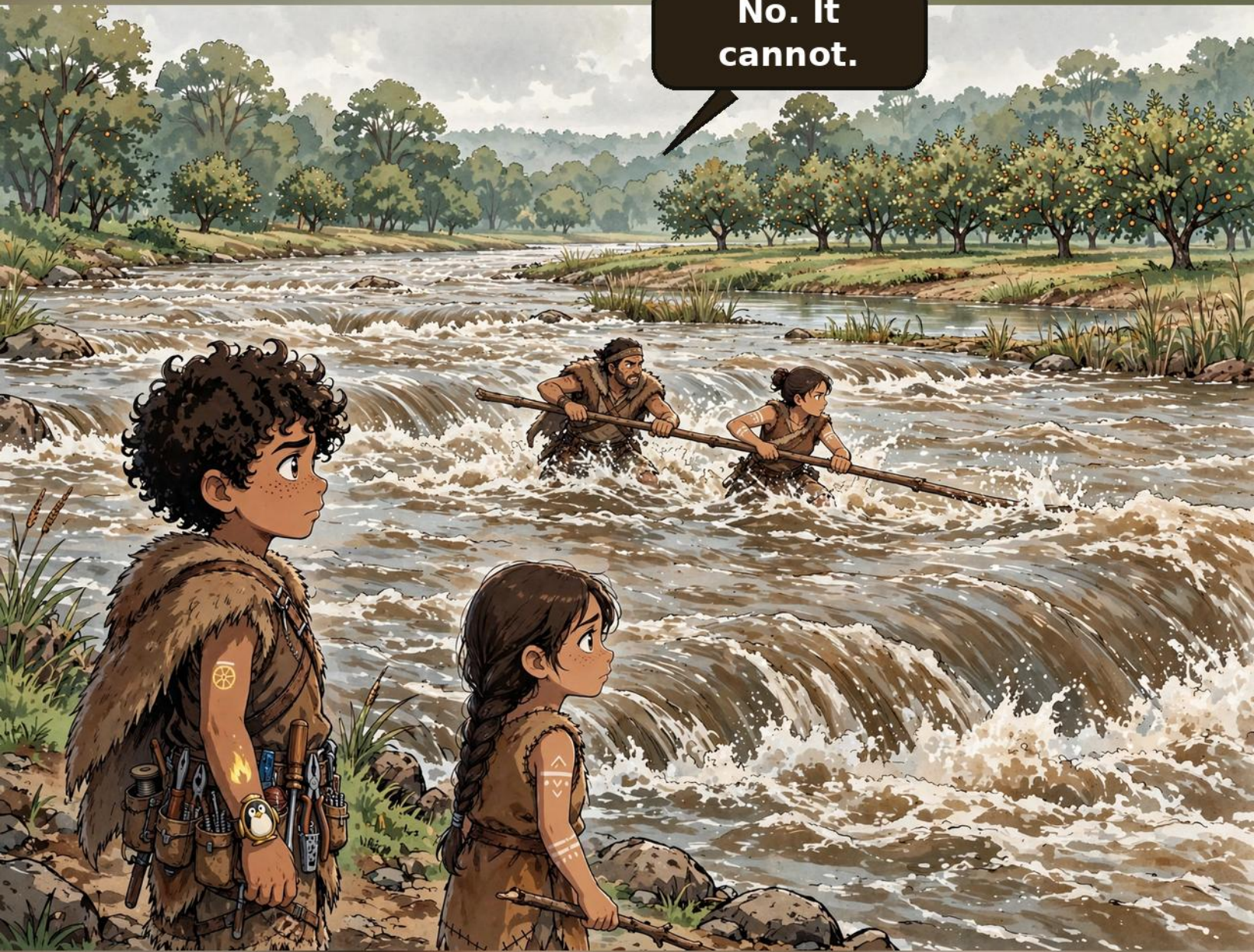
The sweet trees. The fish
pools. All there. All... gone.

Can't we just — walk
around? Up the bank, cross
where it's—

Far walk. Days. The water
says no — everywhere.

The wheel can't
roll on water,
Tock.

No. It
cannot.



**Pot! Pot
go!**

**Got it — got it — nobody's hurt.
Just wet. Just... wet.**

**The logs are round. Round
rolls. Even tied.**



Tied round is still round. Huh.

**Remember that
shape, Eli.**

Wait.

It's a log — but the middle is GONE. It's light. It's dry inside. The bird lives in it like a... like a house that floats.

What if the round part had a DENT to sit in? What if the water can't roll it because WE'RE the inside?

Empty-middle tree.



My hands were on the wood before my mouth finished asking. That's how the blueprint knows.

One blueprint, Eli. Burn a little. Scrape the char. Again, and again. Build what your hands found.

**Little fires. Little bites.
The fire eats — we steer.**

**Fire digs now. Fire
learned a new job.**

Stone.



**Thank you. Best
tool-man in the
Beginning.**

**Grandmother says — it
sings hollow. Good hollow.**

Floating is **NOT** the same as working. Noted. Noted forever.

What did it teach you?

We sat too **HIGH**. All of us up top, like birds on a branch. The heavy part has to be **DOWN**.

Sit like a **STONE**, Eli. Not like a bird.

...Wider belly. Sit on the bottom. Aya — you're quicker than me.

Yes.



There. It pushes back now. It argues — but it stays up.

Things that float must be allowed to argue.



When Orra trusts your work with what matters, you don't argue either. You paddle.

It floats. Eli — it floats
WITH us.

Easy... easy... let it
argue...

Steady hands, Fixer.



We can make it back and forth — two more loads — Tock, tell me there's time.

There is exactly as much time as you use.

Boat! Boat!



The water had said no for a hundred generations. It just hadn't met a hollow tree before.

**Your third rank,
Fixer.**

**A wave. Flame, wheel,
wave. ...I earned that.**

Tova.

**Orra read my arm like a river
reads its banks. Three marks.
She nodded like the story was
going somewhere good.**

**Count the
sand, Eli.**



**Nine grains rose back. That's what a
first crossing is worth.**

The fire keeps them warm. The wheel moves their loads. The boat crosses their river. But the roof, Tock... the roof still leaks.

Then you know what the rain is asking.

Time to go home, Fixer.

Next time, Aya.

Next time!



Some loads you carry. Some you roll. And some... you float.

TOCK TEACHES THE FIRST BOAT

The real burn-and-scrape way — how the first people really hollowed a boat.

1 CHOOSE A FALLEN TRUNK

Take a big trunk already down — never a living tree. A hollow heart is a head start. The bird's nest showed Eli.

2 BURN A LITTLE

Light a small fire INSIDE the hollow. Burn a little, let it die. Little bites, never a blaze. The fire eats; you steer.

3 SCRAPE THE CHAR

Scrape the soft black char away with stone tools. Under it: clean wood, a little deeper than before.

4 AGAIN, AND AGAIN

Burn a little. Scrape the char. Again, and again — for days. The whole secret: small fires, patient hands.

5 THE CLAY FIREBREAK

Where the wall is thin enough, smear wet clay on the wood. Clay is the fence: the fire cannot bite where clay stands.

6 CHECK WITH YOUR PALM

One palm in, one palm out — feel the wood left. Too thin breaks. Too thick floats heavy. Hands are the measure.

7 FINISH SMOOTH — SIT LOW

Rub the inside smooth with a rough stone. Then sit LOW, like a stone — never up high like a bird. Low stays up.



Eli and Aya burn a little, scrape the char — just like page 10.

TOCK'S BLUEPRINT — THE DUGOUT, FROM ABOVE

ONE FALLEN TRUNK



- HOLLOW — scraped wider, flatter
- CLAY (rust-red) — the firebreak
- WALL — one palm thick
- FLAT FLOOR — sit low

"Hands first. The knowing follows. Burn a little, scrape the char — that is how the first boat was really made." — TOCK

TOCK'S RULE: fire and deep water are only ever tried with a grown-up beside you.

THE SEVENTH HOUR

TAKE TIME BACK



A NOTE FOR PARENTS

This comic teaches real first things — fire, the wheel, the boat, the house — the true way they were first made, step by step. Every build inside is a build to try together: parent and kid, hands first. Tock's rule stands on every page — real builds are only ever made with a grown-up beside you.

— Tock

INSIDE THIS BOOK

Issue #3 — "The First Boat"

The river says no — so Eli hollows a fallen trunk with fire, scrapes it wide, sits low like a stone, and earns the WAVE, his third rank.

Plus the TOCK TEACHES page: the real burn-and-scrape dugout, step by step.

BY MIGUEL MEDINA