

THE SEVENTH HOUR

TAKE TIME BACK

THE FIRST HOUSE



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."

ORRA — Aya's grandmother — keeper of the stories

"A house is where the rain gives up."

NILO — Aya's little brother

"Stone. I am the stone road."

Now — the story begins.

THE SEVENTH HOUR: TAKE TIME BACK

**It rained on the Beginning the way
it rains on my street. All night.
Without asking.**

**A lean-to is a roof that says
maybe. That night, every maybe in
the village gave up at once.**

**Again. It always finds
a new way in.**

**Sleep. The sky is only
talking. ...It talks too
much.**



One fell in the night.
Nobody was under it.
This time.

The big rains are
coming, child. The
season when the sky
does not stop.

Grandmother... the
shelters won't hold.

No. A shelter is not a
house.

What is a house,
then?

A house is where the rain
gives up.



On my side of the world, it was raining too.

Okay, buddy.
Again?

Again.

You ever gonna tell me
what it is first, or—

We're going back in
time.



Choose who you will be
where we go.

Him. Always him.

And your
ranks?

Three. Flame, wheel,
wave. Earned.

Three ranks.
The rain has
read all three.

First crossings are falls.
Turns out, so are fourth
ones.

I have
you.



**Eli! You came back! Flame.
Wheel. Wave. THREE!**

**Three. Good. The
Beginning has work for all
three.**

**It followed them inside.
Even the baby's corner is
soaked.**

**Grandmother says the
big rains come soon.
She says—**

**A shelter is not a house. So,
Fixer. Build us the other thing**

**A house. Okay. A
house.**



Clay. It holds a shape... for a minute.

And this one BENDS. It wants to go around things.

What does rain do to mud alone, Eli?

...It moves in. Okay. Hands first. I've felt all of it. Now I see it.



One blueprint, Eli. Posts to stand. Weave to hold. Mud with a backbone. A roof steep as a hill.

That's not a lean-to. That's a FORTRESS with a fireplace.

See? Mud IS a wall. Fast, too. Who needs all the—

By the time the sun came out, my wall had wrinkles. By the time the rain came back, it had a new job: mud puddle.

It gave up, Eli.

What did your mud hold on to?

Nothing. Itself. And itself wasn't enough. But Tock — the riverbank is mud too, and it DOESN'T melt. Why not?

Roots! The bank is mud with **ROOTS** in it. The grass holds the mud. The mud holds the grass.



Mud needs hair. And something to **GRAB**. ...The weave isn't the slow part. The weave is the **BONES**.

A house starts underground.
Nobody told me that. The
ground did.

It doesn't move. Last
week a lean-to post
moved if you LOOKED at
it.

Not there. That ground drinks
first. Here. The house stands
on the dry shoulder.

Stone. I am the
stone road.



Packed stone and earth,
Fixer. The post cannot
argue.

**Over, under, over, under. It is
only a basket that stands
still.**

**Yours is a wall.
Mine is a noodle.**

**Then
un-noodle it.**

**A basket you live in. Okay. Even
all the way around. No shortcuts
in a circle.**



**Now the wall has
bones. Give it its skin.**

In my world, we do NOT mix with our feet. In my world, we are WRONG.

Push, Eli. The mud has to shake hands with itself.

Both sides. It GRABS now. Mud with a backbone.

...Mine.

Leave it. A house should remember whose hands raised it.

Your hands were right, Fixer. I only asked.



Flat is faster. Flat is—

The rain voted. It voted through the roof.

That's the drip. That's THE drip. I built the drip a new house?!

Eli. Look at the reeds. Do they lie flat? The rain would live in them.



They stand STEEP — and every leaf over the one under it, like feathers on a duck. The water slides off their backs. It never gets in.

Steep. And scales. The roof is a hill and the grass is feathers. AGAIN — but right.

Bottom row first. Every row covers the last one's ties. Scales on a fish. Feathers on a duck.

Steep as a hill, Fixer.



Wrong spot! The smoke can't find the top. The fire has to stand UNDER the peak—

Fire in the middle, Fixer. Smoke climbs home.



I dragged one stone ring six steps across a dirt floor, and the whole house learned how to breathe.

The cart carried them. The boat carried them. Let the house keep them.

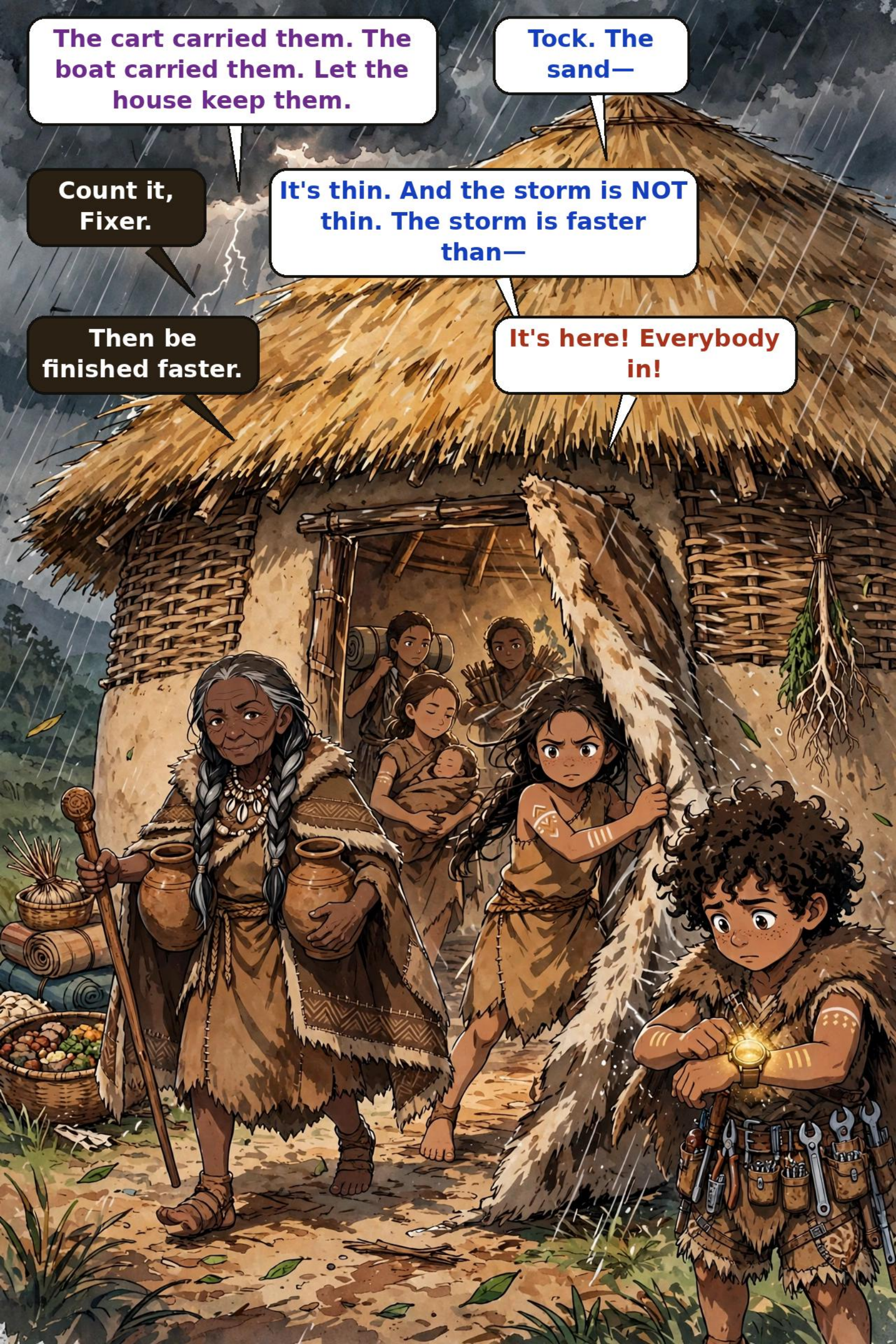
Tock. The sand—

Count it, Fixer.

It's thin. And the storm is NOT thin. The storm is faster than—

Then be finished faster.

It's here! Everybody in!



The storm did everything it knew.
The roof turned it into music and
poured it off the edges.

One thin place. Fine.
Walls can be
reminded. Hold...
hold...

Eli. Look.

The rain knocked all night.
It did not come in.



**Your fourth rank,
Fixer.**

**A house. Flame, wheel,
wave, house. Four.**

Tova.

**Count the
sand, Eli.**

**Fourteen grains rose back.
That's what a roof over a whole
tribe is worth.**





One house. Next rain... two houses?

Next rain, Aya, I teach YOUR hands the walls. Then it isn't mine anymore. It's the village's.

Eli. Smoke. Over there. Somebody is cooking.

Somebody over there knows we're here now.

This ground had a tribe, Fixer. Now it has a village.

Next time, Aya.

Next time!

Some loads you carry. Some you roll. Some you float. And some — you build walls around, and a roof over, and call it home.

TOCK TEACHES THE FIRST HOUSE

The first houses were not invented in a day. They were learned in the rain.
Here is the true way, step by step.

1 CHOOSE THE DRY SHOULDER
Build on ground that sheds water — near the river, but above where it floods.

2 DIG THE POST HOLES
Deep holes for strong posts. A flat stone goes in the bottom; the post's foot is charred so it rots slowly; stones and earth are packed **TIGHT** around it. A house starts underground.

3 WEAVE THE WATTLE
Bendy switches — hazel, willow — woven over and under between upright stakes, even all the way around, like a basket that stands still. The weave is the wall's bones.

4 MIX THE DAUB
Clay mud + water + chopped straw (dung works too — it is full of grass fiber). Stamp it with your feet until it is tacky. Mud alone cracks and melts. Mud with fiber holds.

5 PRESS IT IN FROM BOTH SIDES
Knead the daub into the weave so it locks through, then smooth it with wet hands. Two thinner coats are stronger than one thick one. Let it dry slowly.

6 RAISE THE ROOF STEEP
A roof of grass must stand steep as a hill. Flat grass holds water and lets it in. Steep grass sheds it.

7 LAY THE THATCH LIKE SCALES
Bundles tied on in rows from the bottom edge up, every row lying over the row beneath it, thick as your arm is long, the edges hanging past the walls so the drips fall clear. Rain runs down the stems, one to the next, and never gets in.

8 FIRE IN THE MIDDLE
A ring of stones at the center of the house. The smoke climbs and slips out through the roof grass. No chimney. Just patience.



Eli stamps the daub, Aya presses it home, and Nilo leaves his handprint by the door — just like page 10.

TOCK'S BLUEPRINT — THE ROUND HOUSE



- STEEP THATCH — layered like scales, drips fall clear
- DAUB — clay + straw fiber, pressed from both sides
- WATTLE — the woven bones of the wall
- POSTS — feet charred, packed tight with stone
- FIRE IN THE MIDDLE — smoke slips out through the grass

"People built houses this true way for thousands of years. Mud alone cracks. A flat roof leaks. Woven walls, fiber in the mud, and a steep grass roof — and the rain gives up."

TOCK'S RULE: a real house is only ever raised 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 #4 — "The First House"

The rain gets in through every roof in the village — so Eli raises posts, weaves wattle, mixes daub with straw, and thatches a roof steep as a hill. The storm comes the very night it is finished. Inside: everybody dry. Fourth rank: the HOUSE.

Plus the TOCK TEACHES page: the real wattle-and-daub house, step by step.

BY MIGUEL MEDINA