

The Tall Man



Adaeze sits by
the big lake.

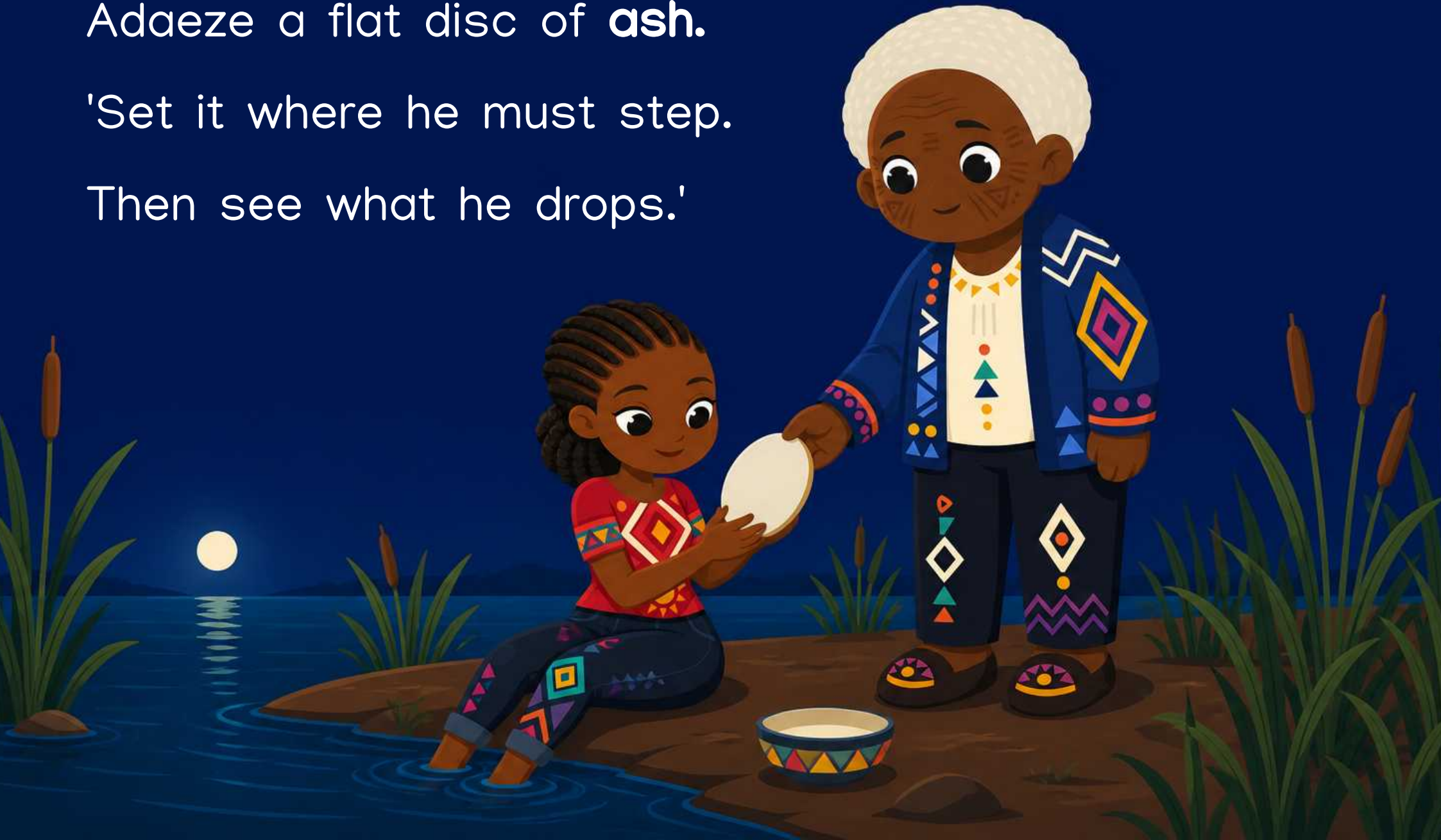
She is quick
and sharp,
and she can
find all.





A tall man
wants Adaeze.
His black suit
gives a swish.
But Adaeze is
not sure.

At dusk, old Mama Nhaji hands
Adaeze a flat disc of ash.
'Set it where he must step.
Then see what he drops.'



Next day Adaeze
sets the ash
flat in the door
path. The man
steps on it and
will not stop.





No shoe print
sits in the ash.
Adaeze finds
two long lines.
What has a
big flat gut?

At the meal Adaeze tells the man,
'Lake folk must wash the hands.' The
man holds both hands flat.



Adaeze tips
water on his
hands. One
hand shifts. The
skin gets dark,
flat scales.





'Adaeze finds not a thing,' the man tells her. But Adaeze holds up the ash disc. 'I find this.' Then the man starts to rise.

The black coat falls off with a swish.

A big snake stands up, as tall as the hall. 'I find this snake,' Adaeze tells it.



The snake
stares at Adaeze
for a long bit. 'I
will go,' it tells
her. 'And do not
come back,'
Adaeze tells it.





The snake
slips to the
lake with a
splash. It is
gone in a
flash. The king
holds Adaeze's
hand.

Adaeze still sits by the lake
at dusk. **She** tells all who ask,
'See, and trust what is
found.' **She** holds a ring of
ash at the door.





The Tall Man

Ash blew in from the reeds when clever Adaeze meets a tall, smooth-voiced suitor whose fine suit gives a faint 'swish' with every move. Why does no shoe print show in the ash she lays across his path? Can she unmask him before the whole court, or will his charm win? Wade into a lake-country mystery where truth hides in plain sight. This Bookbot level practices the // sound with words like 'swish', 'flash', 'sharp', 'shift', and 'splash'.

Reading Skills: <sh>

ash, flash, sharp, she, shift, shoe, splash, swish, wash

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