



# Akai's special mat

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When Akai was a little girl, her mother used to put her to sleep on a beautiful mat.

Akai's aunt made this special mat from palm leaves.



The mat had bright pink, blue and green colours.

It was different from other mats that Akai's mother had in the hut.



The land around Akai's home was very dry, hot and full of stones. There were many scorpions, spiders and snakes too.

But Akai was never in danger of being bitten by these dangerous creatures.



Her mother said, "Her special mat protects Akai from any harm."



Akai was a clever child.

She discovered where the nearest shallow well was.





Akai also knew where her grandmother's manyatta was located.

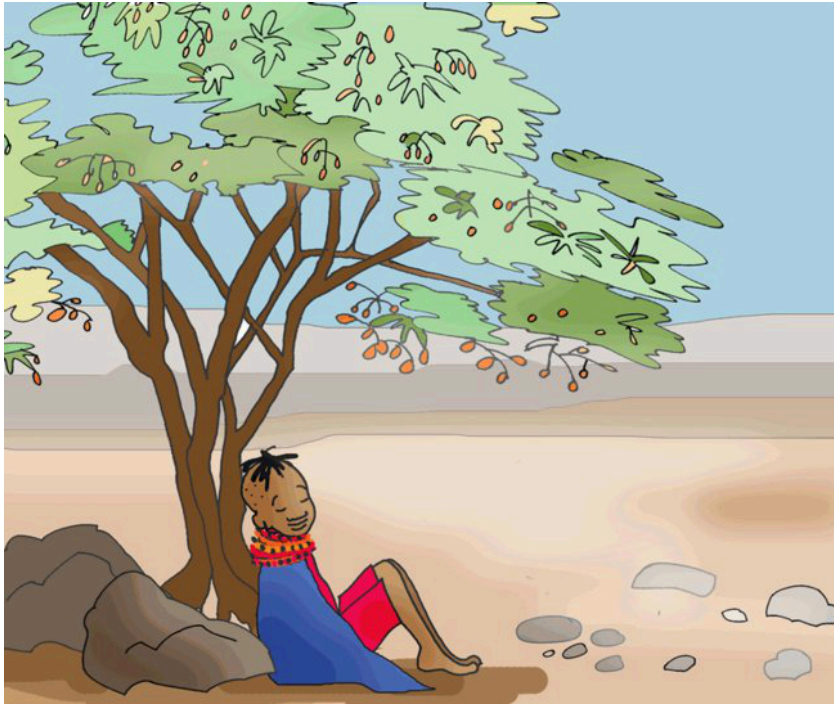
She often went to drink camel milk with her grandmother.



One day, Akai was not so lucky. She left to go to her grandmother's manyatta, but she got lost in the hills.

Akai was afraid.





She sat under an edome tree and waited for help.

Soon she fell asleep and had a dream.

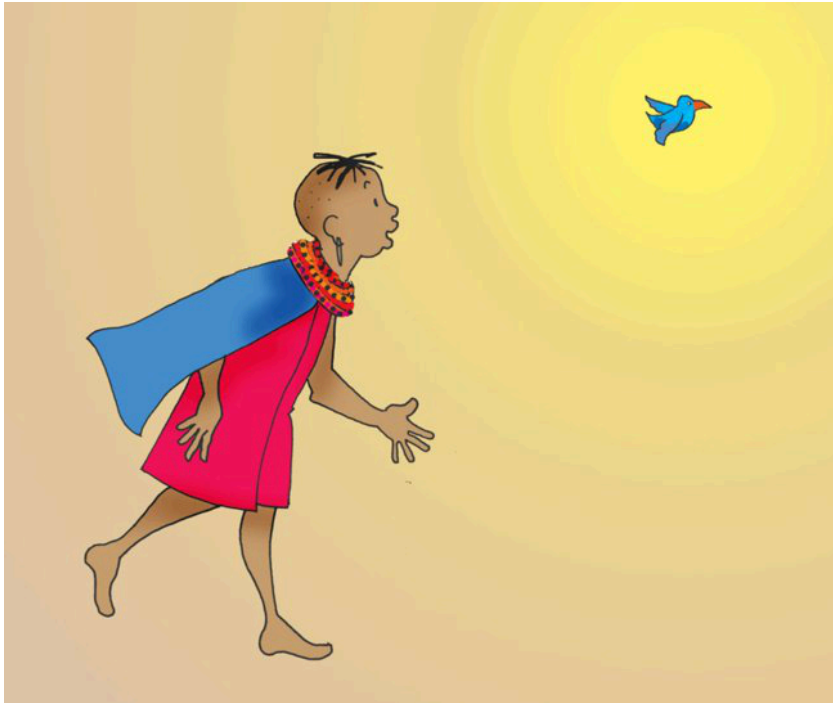


This is what Akai dreamed:  
She was lying on her  
special mat. A woman who  
looked like her  
grandmother was  
watching over her. The old  
woman smiled and gave  
her a bowl of camel  
milk. Just when Akai  
stretched out her hand to  
take the milk, she woke up.



Akai opened her eyes slowly.

When she looked up, she saw a small blue bird on a branch above her.



When Akai got up, the small blue bird flapped its wings and led the way for Akai.

She followed the bird.



Akai came to a place where the path went in two different directions.

The blue bird dropped a piece of a mat that was like Akai's own mat.



Picking up the piece of mat, Akai saw footprints that she knew were her mother's.

Soon she saw the shallow well from where they fetched water.





Akai's family sang and danced to welcome her home.

They slaughtered a goat, roasted the meat and celebrated their child's safe return.



Akai sat on her special mat and enjoyed eating a big piece of roast meat.

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