

The Wish-Swish Hoop



This story is a fun way to
honor a real boy whose name
was **Jonah**,

a boy who loved to
play basketball,
who loved to laugh,
who wanted to grow up
someday.

Dear Jonah,
you are missed and
you will never be
forgotten.



Max loved basketball.

He loved the

**BOUNCE
BOUNCE
BOUNCE**

of the ball on
the driveway.

He loved the
squeak of
his sneakers.



But most of all,
he loved the sound
of a perfect shot.

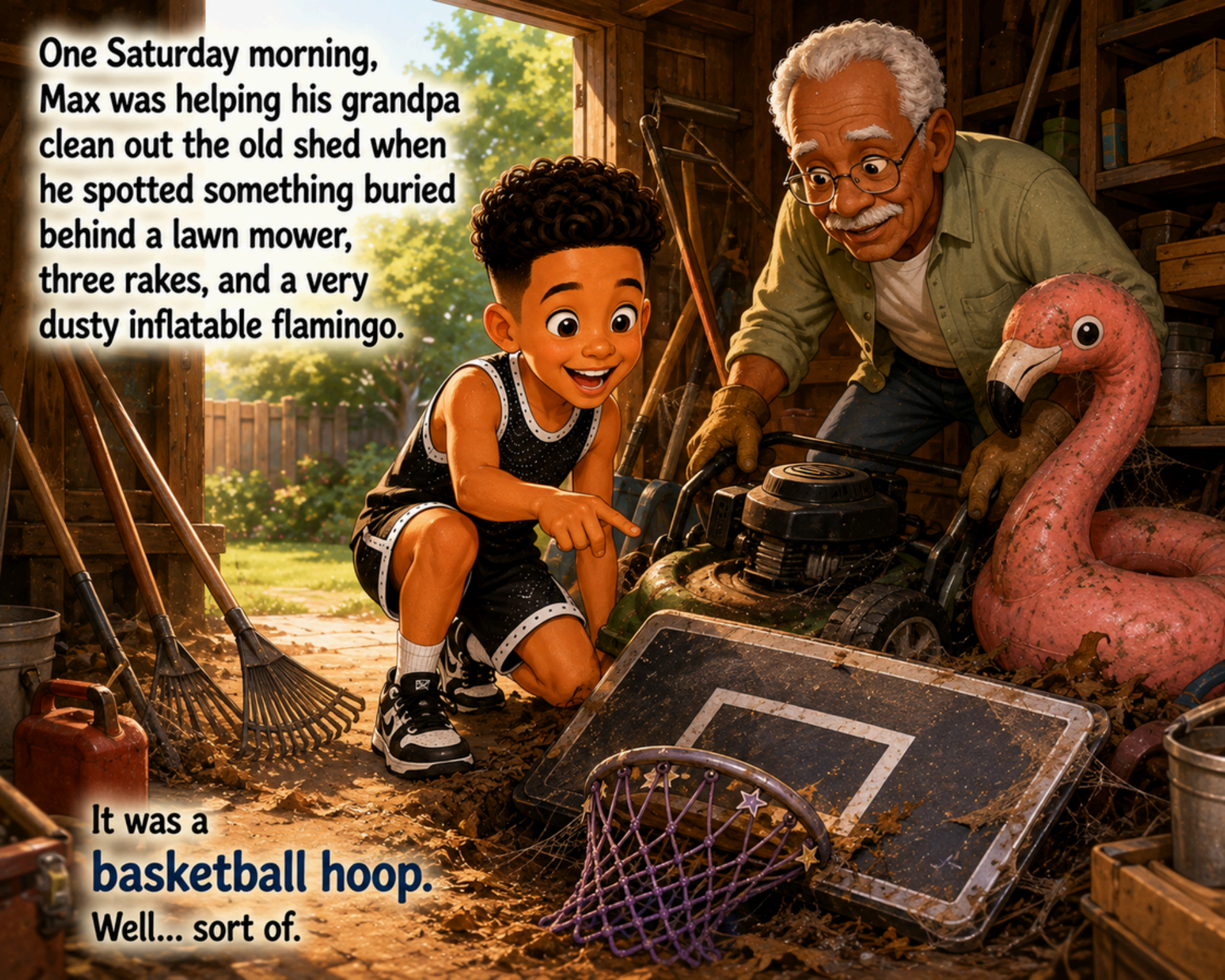
★ **SWISH!** ★



★ **SWISH!** ★

One Saturday morning,
Max was helping his grandpa
clean out the old shed when
he spotted something buried
behind a lawn mower,
three rakes, and a very
dusty inflatable flamingo.

It was a
basketball hoop.
Well... sort of.



The backboard was **crooked**.

The net was **purple**.

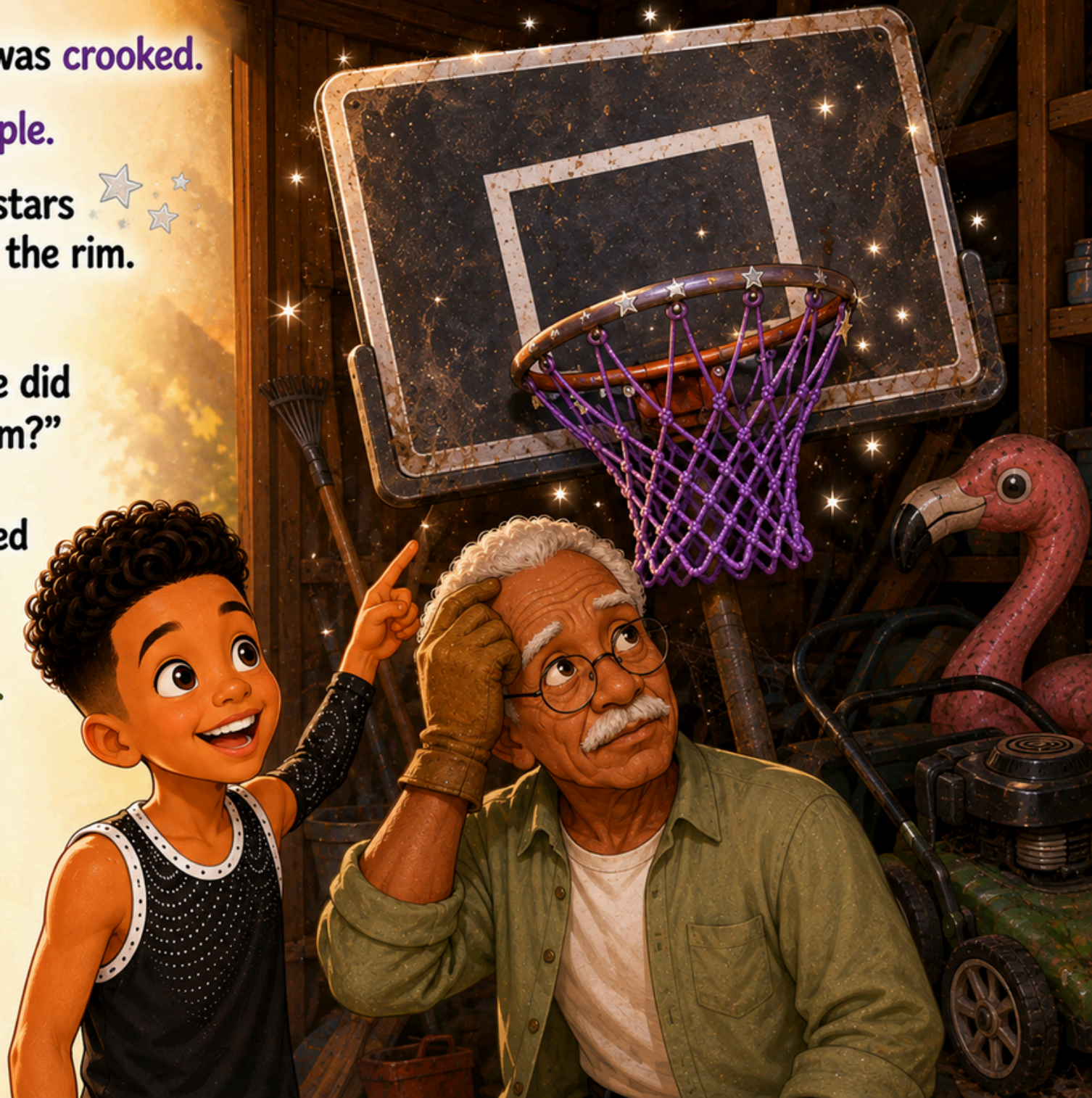
And tiny **silver** stars
sparkled around the rim.

“Grandpa, where did
THIS come from?”

Grandpa scratched
his head.

“Hmmm. I don’t
remember ever
seeing that
before.”

That should
have been
Max’s **first clue**.



They carried the hoop outside and set it beside the driveway.

Max grabbed his basketball.

“First shot!”

He bounced the ball twice.

He aimed.

Just before he threw it,
his stomach growled.



*Boy, I could really
go for a giant stack
of pancakes.*

He shot.

SWISH!

POOF!



A plate appeared on the driveway.

On it was the biggest stack of pancakes Max had ever seen.

Twelve pancakes.

Whipped cream.

Blueberries.

And **syrup** dripping everywhere.

Max stared.

Grandpa stared.

The dog stared.

Then the dog ate **three** pancakes.

“Did that hoop just make pancakes?”
whispered Max.

“There is only one way to find out,” said Grandpa.



Max grabbed the ball again.

This time he concentrated.

"I want a brand-new
red bicycle."

He shot.

SWISH!

POOF!

A shiny red bicycle
appeared in the grass.

Max's mouth fell open.

"GRANDPA! IT'S MAGIC!"

Grandpa's eyes grew wide.

"Max, I think whatever you're
thinking about when the ball
goes through that hoop...
comes true."

Max grinned.

This was going to be
the greatest day **EVER.**



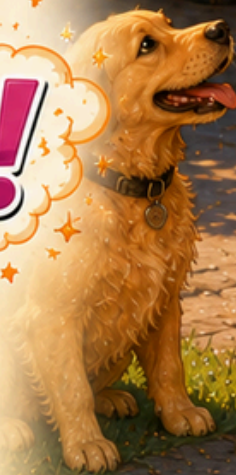
He thought about
a mountain of
ice cream.



SWISH!

POOF!

Ice cream!



He thought about
a trampoline.



SWISH!

POOF!

Trampoline!



He thought about
having one hundred
basketballs.

100



SWISH!

BOOM!

Basketballs poured
across the driveway.

"Maybe ninety-eight
too many," Grandpa said.

Then Max had an idea.

"I could wish for
ANYTHING!"



But just as he shot,
a bee buzzed past his nose.

SWISH!

POOF!

BUZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

A bee the size of a refrigerator hovered over the driveway.

"MAX!" yelled Grandpa.

**“I DIDN’T
MEAN IT!”**



Max grabbed another basketball.

"Tiny bee! Tiny bee!
Tiny bee!"

SWISH!

POOF!

The giant bee disappeared.

A teeny bee buzzed happily
toward the flowers.



Max wiped his forehead.

"Okay. I have to be
VERY careful what
I think about."



Unfortunately, telling yourself
not to think about something
is a very good way to
think about it.

Max took another shot.

“Don’t think
about elephants.”

SWISH!

POOF!

An elephant appeared
in the driveway.

“Uh-oh.”

The elephant trumpeted.

BWAAAAAAAAAH!



Max grabbed another ball.

"Don't think
about cougars!"

SWISH!

POOF!

Three cougars appeared
on the roof.

"Definitely worse,"
Grandpa said.

One cougar stole Grandpa's hat.
Another jumped onto the trampoline.
The third found the leftover pancakes.

Soon the yard was complete chaos.

- An elephant was drinking from the garden hose.
- Cougars were bouncing on the trampoline.
- Basketballs were everywhere.
- And Grandpa was chasing a cougar down the sidewalk yelling, **"GIVE ME BACK MY HAT!"**



Max knew he had to
fix everything.

He picked up the basketball.

He closed his eyes.

He took a deep breath.

This time, he didn't think
about **toys**.

Or **candy**.

Or **elephants**.

Or **cougars**.

He thought about his backyard
exactly the way it had been
that morning.

Quiet.



Sunny.

Grandpa beside him. 

His dog lying in the grass. 

And one ordinary basketball
bouncing on the driveway. 



Max opened his eyes.

He shot.

The ball sailed through the air.

SWISH!

A golden light flashed.

POOF!

The elephant vanished.

The cougars disappeared.

The trampoline was gone.

So were the ninety-nine
extra basketballs.

Grandpa's hat floated
gently down from the sky
and landed perfectly on
his head.



For a moment, everything
was quiet.

Then Grandpa looked
at Max.

Max looked
at Grandpa.

They both looked
at the magical hoop.



“We should probably put
that thing back in the shed,”
Grandpa said.

“Definitely,” said Max.

They carried it inside and
buried it behind the rakes,
the lawn mower, and the
dusty inflatable flamingo.



That night, Max climbed
into bed.

He thought about everything
that had happened.

The pancakes.

The bicycle.

The elephant.

The cougars.

And the most incredible
basketball hoop in the world.

Then he smiled.

Because Max had learned
something important.

Sometimes getting
everything you wish for
isn't nearly as wonderful
as appreciating what you
already have.



Down in the shed,
everything was quiet.

Until...

A tiny silver star on the
basketball rim began to glow.

And from somewhere
inside the shed came a sound.

✧ **BOUNCE.** ✧

✧ **BOUNCE.** ✧

✧ **BOUNCE.** ✧

Someone, or something,
was playing basketball.

✧ **SWISH!** ✧

