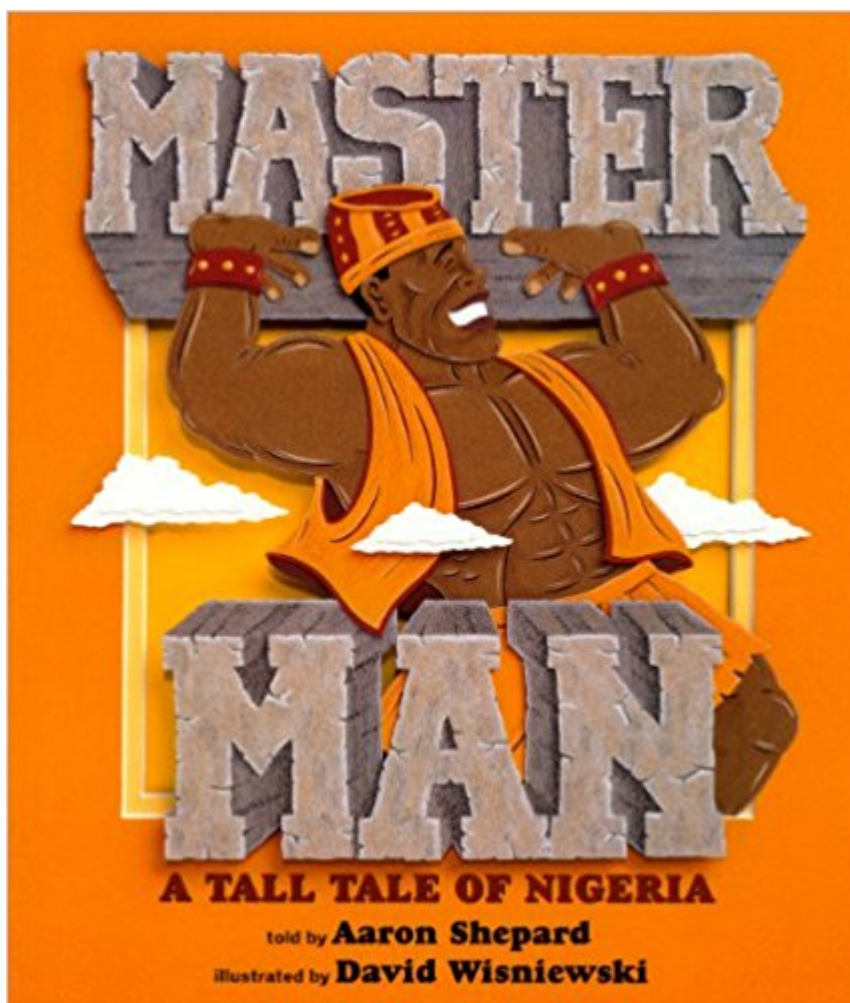


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# Master Man: A Tall Tale Of Nigeria



## Synopsis

Shadusa is strong. In fact, he figures he's the strongest man in the world. He tells his wife, Shettu, "From now on, just call me Master Man." But Shettu says, "Quit your foolish boasting. No matter how strong you are, there will always be someone stronger. And watch out, or someday you may meet him." When Shadusa learns of someone else calling himself "Master Man," he goes out to set the man straight. But the trouble he gets into is far worse than he or even his wife could imagine. Read this rollicking tall tale from West Africa to find out who's the real Master Man.

TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS -- A READER'S THEATER SCRIPT OF THIS BOOK IS AVAILABLE IN AARON'S BOOK "FOLKTALES ON STAGE," OR FREE ON AARON'S WEB SITE.

Aaron Shepard is the award-winning author of "The Baker's Dozen," "The Sea King's Daughter," "The Adventures of Mouse Deer," and many more children's books. His stories have appeared often in Cricket magazine, while his Web site is known internationally as a prime resource for folktales, storytelling, and reader's theater.

David Wisniewski is the illustrator of the Caldecott Medal book "The Golem" and many more picture books.

Starred review, The Horn Book  
Starred review, Kirkus Reviews  
Starred review, School Library Journal

"This tall tale of strength and size packs a double-whammy: while the fresh, funny, and perfectly paced narrative simply screams story hour, the hugely appealing visual presentation will easily win the most reluctant independent reader. With comic-book design and the attendant combination of humor and suspense, Master Man recounts the exploits of a boastful he-man who meets his match -- and then some. . . . The characters in Wisniewski's three-dimensional collage burst through the borders with great animation, and their exaggerated expressions are consistently dead-on. The story's original sources, taken from the Hausa in Nigeria, are documented in a detailed author's note; the unlikely choice of illustrative style for the traditional tale proves unbeatable." -- The Horn Book, Jan.-Feb 2001, starred review

"Caldecott Medalist Wisniewski is clearly the 'Master Man' of paper-cut illustration, powerfully demonstrated again with the delightful illustrations for this traditional tall tale from northern Nigeria. Shepard is a professional storyteller and Wisniewski a former clown and puppeteer, and both understand all the elements of holding an audience spellbound with a successful tall tale. . . . Pull this one out to read to a group of wiggly kids, and show them the power of a masterful picture book." -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review

"Part superhero legend and part pourquoi tale, the lively, well-paced story finds wonderful expression in Wisniewski's cut-paper collages. . . . The characters' bold expressiveness extends the story's humor and farce and will leave kids giggling through repeated readings. Thorough source notes conclude." -- Gillian Engberg,

Booklist "Shepard and Wisniewski have created a book with wide appeal, and reluctant readers will take this title by storm." -- Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books "An oversized good time. . . People, backgrounds, even words spill over the borders of this comic-strip styled layout in reckless abandon. . . . The pacing is excellent and the narrative is vigorous and humorous." -- Carol Ann Wilson, School Library Journal, Feb. 1, 2001, starred review "A rollicking, raucous tale. . . . Aaron's prose is, as always, a gift to storytellers. His tales are clean, clear, lively." -- Katy Rydell, Stories, Spring 2001

## Book Information

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Age Range: 5 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten and up

## Customer Reviews

"Once there was a man who was strong," begins this energetic, comic-strip style adaptation of a Nigerian tall tale. Bragging to his wife one day, Shadusa says "Just look at these muscles! I must be the strongest man in the world. From now on, just call me... Master Man!" His wife Shettu warns him against his foolish boasting: "No matter how strong you are, there will always be someone stronger. And watch out, or someday you may meet him." When he learns that a man from another village calls himself Master Man, too, Shadusa soon rues the day he talked so big. Imagine his surprise when he discovers that the other Master Man eats entire elephants at one sitting, after killing them with his bare hands! Trying to escape from him, Shadusa runs smack into yet another Master Man, who is soon locked in deadly combat with the elephant-eating one until "each gave a mighty leap,

and together they rose into the air. Higher and higher they went, till they passed through a cloud and out of sight." To this day, the two giants still battle in the sky, making the noise that some people call thunder. This traditional Nigerian story is one of many about fighting he-men, starring the stock character Mijin-Maza or Namji-Mijin-Maza, otherwise known as "A Man Among Men," "Manly Man," or "Superman." Caldecott Medal recipient David Wisniewski's playful cut-paper collages, set in comic-strip frames complete with speaking bubbles for dialogue, feature the colorful patterns and textures of Nigerian clothing and landscapes. With this unusual picture book, professional storyteller Aaron Shepherd spins a boisterous, action-packed read-aloud. The author's note in the back explains the story's origins with the Hausa, the largest ethnic group of northern Nigeria. (Ages 4 to 8) --Emilie Coulter

A boastful strongman named Shadusa meets more than his match in this Nigerian story retold in comic-book panels with a slapstick bent. In earth-tone images that suggest the African savanna, the muscular Shadusa hefts giant chunks of firewood. He makes his wife call him "Master Man," even though she warns, "No matter how strong you are, there will always be someone stronger." Inevitably Shadusa hears of a rival Master Man, and when he investigates, he sees a fierce giant who wears cow-skull bracelets and devours elephants whole. Shadusa runs for his life and escapes only because a second giant challenges the first; the men's eternal battle makes a sound called "thunder. But now you know what it really is--two fools fighting forever to see which one is Master Man." Shepard's (The Sea King's Daughter) characters speak in white voice bubbles with bold black lettering, while descriptive words appear in small, sandstone-colored rectangles. Although the passages themselves read seamlessly, the book proceeds awkwardly due to the uneven balance of attention-grabbing dialogue and understated inserts. Wisniewski, whose labor-intensive cut-paper spreads lent gravity to myth in *The Warrior and the Wise Man* and *Golem*, plays for laughs this time. Shadusa flexes his muscles haughtily in the early pages, but his eyes bulge at the sight of his opponent. Some readers may dislike this undignified portrayal of a cowardly African tribesman and the allusions to cannibalism; others will appreciate a few of its similarities to "Jack and the Beanstalk" and Wisniewski's intricate artwork. Ages 5-up. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

The story follows the Nigerian oral tradition and tells the tale of boasting and pride. Growing up in the American culture, we hear explanations of why we have thunder and lightening. Folk tales often say it is the angels bowling, but in Nigeria the story is about Master Man. A delightful look at a

different culture's explanation of daily events.

Fun read aloud!

Foolish Shadusa thinks he's the strongest man in the world and orders his wife to call him "master man". But his wise wife warns him: "Quit your foolish boasting. No matter how strong you are, there will always be someone stronger. And watch out, or someday you may meet him." But Shadusa doesn't listen and when he hears that another man in a nearby village also calls himself "master man", he sets off to confront this imposter and ends up learning his lesson the hard way..... Aaron Shepard and award winning illustrator, David Wisniewski have authored an inspired and creative version of this old Nigerian folktale. The story, told in comic book format, complete with dialogue bubbles, is full of expressive, action packed scenes and colorful, detailed collage artwork that becomes busier and bolder until it almost spills off the pages. The book includes an author's note at the end and youngsters will enjoy learning about the origins and history of this folktale. Perfect for children 4-8, Master Man is a terrific read-aloud story the whole family can share and will make a wonderful addition to all home libraries.

This book was really funny! The illustrations were really creative. The words are put right on the illustrations like a comic book so you feel really involved. I like tall tales, and this one is exceptional. The characters are very entertaining and they reminded me of people I know. Everyone should read Master Man -- even grownups!

I read this book to fourth graders and they loved it! They were excited about the what was happening to the main character. This is a great book to use while talking about exaggeration. There are several examples of exaggeration throughout the book and it's a fun read aloud.

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