

AN INTIMATE FRIEND



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One day, Rugwiro was on her way from school. She saw a child sitting on a log near the street, she approached and greeted him, “Hey there? You dropped your bottle, and all your water spilled.” And the boy picked up his bottle and answered, “Thank you, I hadn’t noticed.” Rugwiro reached in her bag and pulled out a bottle. She poured banana juice in the boy’s empty bottle and said, “My name is Rugwiro, what’s your name?” and the boy replied, “My name is Bigwi.” Rugwiro said, “Nice to meet you Bigwi,” and she said goodbye and went home.



The next day, Rugwiro found Bigwi sitting on the same log near the street as before. She greeted him and asked, “Why are you always sitting here?” and Bigwi replied, “It’s at this time the students pass by here from school. I like to sit here and listen to their discussions, jokes and their songs.” Rugwiro sat next to him and asked, “Why are you always sitting here quietly, and you never even ask us to stop and talk to you?”



Bigwi touched Rugwiro's face and down on her arms he felt crutches and asked, "Why are you carrying sticks like shepherds?" "Most of my friends are shepherds, they carry sticks but yours is unusual," he continued. Rugwiro smiled and answered, "These are not sticks, they are my crutches." Rugwiro exclaimed! "Crutches! Like for injured people? What happened to you?"

"I have a problem with my leg, it had an unusual swelling when I was a baby, the doctors couldn't treat it. But now it's healed, even though I carry crutches, my leg doesn't hurt anymore."



Bigwi said, “Me too, I have a problem, I can’t see. My parents tried to fix it but it didn’t work. There are no schools for people like me around here, I am always waiting for a good Samaritan who will find a school for me.”

This made Rugwiro sad because she hadn’t noticed that Bigwi was blind. She said goodbye and promised to visit him sometime.



During the Easter holidays, Rugwiro and her family visited Bigwi. It was wonderful! The whole house was decorated with different types of flowers placed in beautiful flower pots. Everyone in the family had their statues made in clay and placed on the wall.



Rugwiro's mother wanted to know the genius who made all these pots. She wanted to know if that person would make for her some pots to put in her shop in town. "This is all Bigwi's work, he loves pottery and he does it very well," Bigwi's mother said.

"We arranged a space where he can work from. His big sisters pass by the valley every day after school to fetch some clay for him.

He is good, it's hard to believe that he's only 8 years old," she continued.



On hearing that, Rugwiro approached Bigwi and asked him if he can show her how he does it. Bigwi took her to his workshop, he took some clay and started crafting her face. It didn't take long, Bigwi and Rugwiro came back, with the finished statue made of clay.

After seeing this with her own eyes, Rugwiro's mother asked Bigwi if he can make more pots and statues so that she can take them to her shop in town. Bigwi agreed.



The next day, the whole family got together and went to look for good clay for Bigwi. Bigwi started working harder than he ever did before. He made flower pots, room decorations and statues of people that he knows and different animals.

After a few days, they put all the pottery outside to dry and put in the kiln. When everything was ready, they called Rugwiro's mother to come and take them to her shop in town.



After one month, Rugwiro's mother took all the money she got from Bigwi's handicrafts and took it to his parents. She told them that at Gatagara, there is a school that can teach Bigwi and help him develop his talent. He will also learn mathematics, reading and writing and she told them she will always be there whenever they need help.



Bigwi got an intimate friend, and even their families became friends. During holidays, both families would come together and they would go to Lake Muhazi. The children would show the new plays they learned from school. They would eat, drink and celebrate their friendship.

