

Tooto and The Birds



by Sentamu Aziz

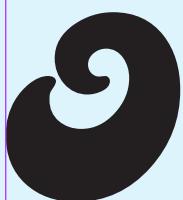
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Email: captainsentamu@gmail.com

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Pictures drawn by Balikuddembe **Joseph** aka **Joez**



nce upon a time, there was a small village called Bwaala at the end of the Mutuba forest.

Once upon a time in the little village of Banga, lived a little girl called Toto. Toto was born with polio and could not walk on her legs like the other children.

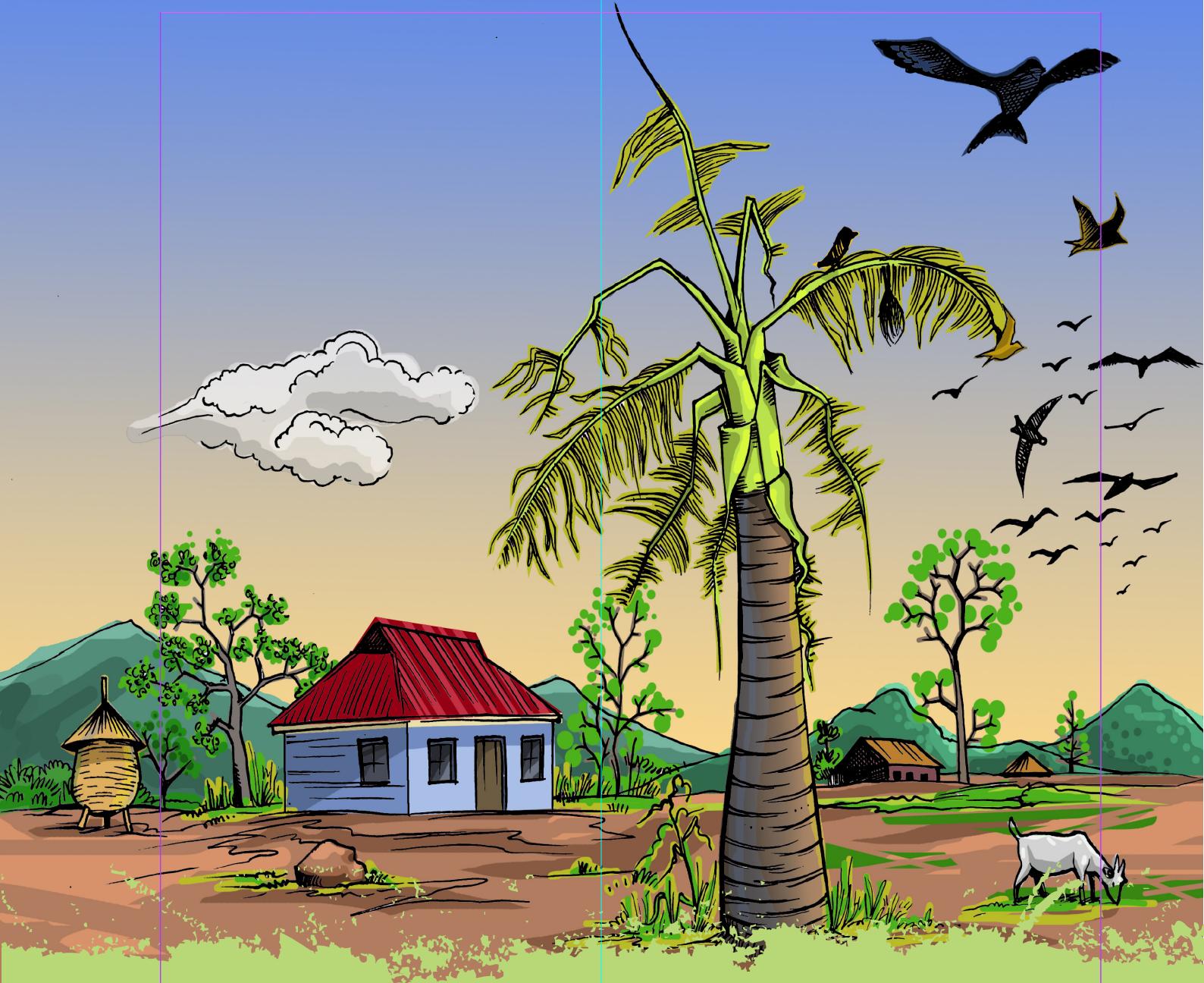


Whenever the other children walked to school every morning, Toto would stay all alone at home. Her parents and the rest of the village elders would be off to the fields the whole day. Banga village would be so silent all day, with only dogs and cats chasing each other through the



small paths and roads that crossed through homesteads. "My dear child, if only we had enough money to buy you a wheel chair so that you could go to school like the other children", her mother would say.

A few meters from Toto's home, there was a very big Kinazi tree with so many old bird nests.



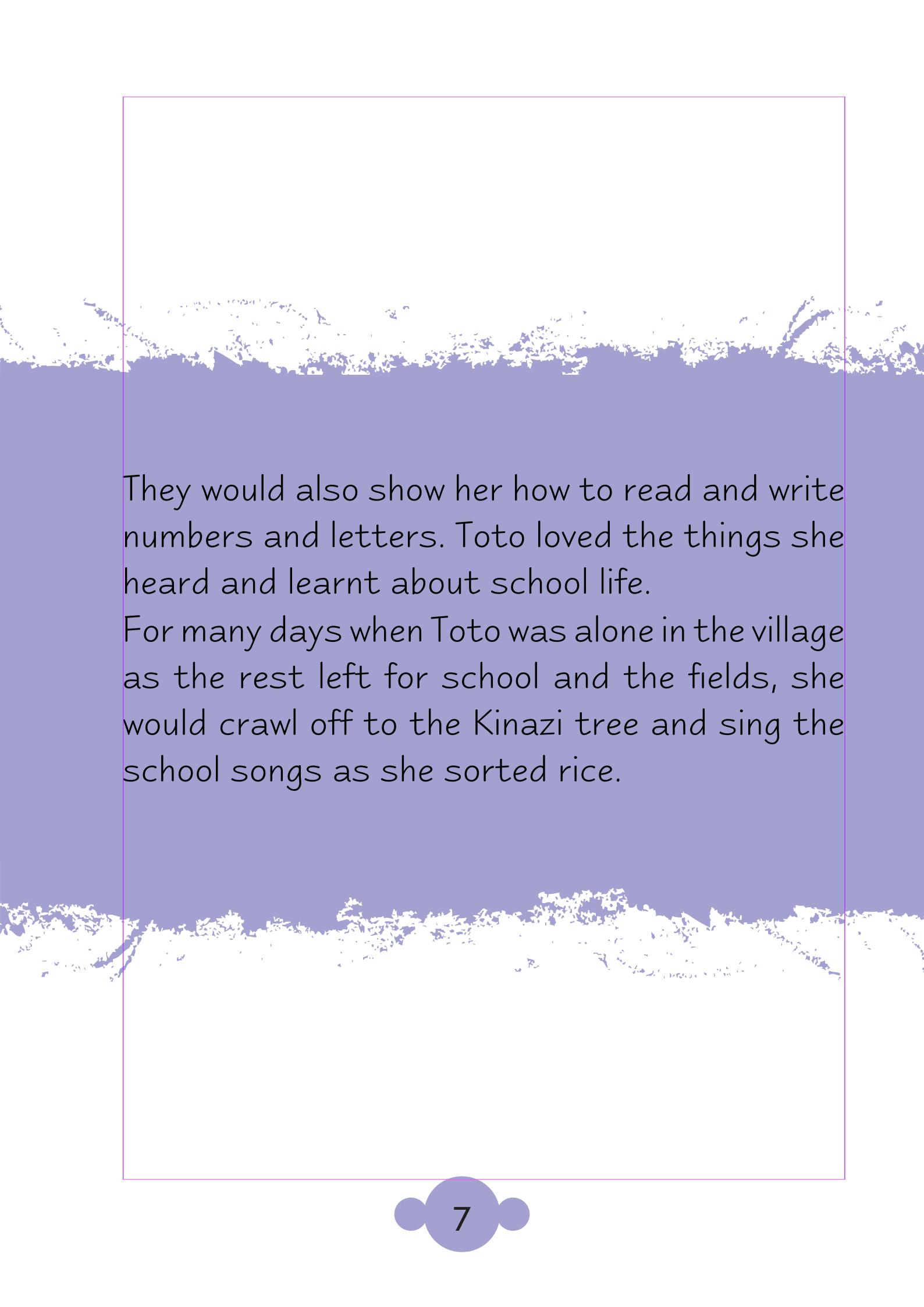
For many years the tree was home to many birds, until one time there was a long famine that the birds left the village to look for food.

Thereafter, there were very few birds which came from the nearby forests. One mid-morning as the entire village was away as usual, Toto crawled out towards the Kinazi tree with a small bag of rice and a folded mat to her back.

She sat under the tree, sorting rice all day as she sang different songs that the children sang on their way from school.



Whenever the children were not at school, Toto's friends Naka and Sewa would play with her and teach her the different songs that they learnt at school.



They would also show her how to read and write numbers and letters. Toto loved the things she heard and learnt about school life.

For many days when Toto was alone in the village as the rest left for school and the fields, she would crawl off to the Kinazi tree and sing the school songs as she sorted rice.



While sorting, she would throw the bad rice at the small birds nearby her mat.

The number of birds that waited for Toto grew bigger every morning until she realized they had become her best friends. Toto told Naka and Sewa about her story of the birds, which they narrated to their teacher at school.

Wed 30 JULY



Mr. Kato was amazed on hearing of Toto's story and the birds that he organized a surprise visit with the whole class, to the child that the birds loved.

On the Day when the students were not at school, as usual Toto crawled to the Kinazi tree where the birds had now made the old nests their permanent homes. As she threw rice the number of birds grew bigger and bigger.

Mr. Kato, his class along with the entire Banga village, walked towards the Kinazi tree and watched Toto and the birds.

As the birds chirped on the rice she threw at them Toto sang the school songs.

For a while the class and village people all watched with smiles and when Toto looked around, she was all smiles at the surprise .



"Do you ever want to go to school? ", asked Mr. Kato. "Oh yes", replied Toto with a beaming smile. "The school will give you a wheelchair so that you can come to school with the other children"



And from that day on , Toto would throw rice under the tree for her bird friends every early morning before riding on her wheel chair to school with the Naka, Sewa and the other village children.