

Tshepo and Sam

Tshepo lived with his mom, dad, sister Lindwe and his granny in the city. A few years ago Tshepo and his family were driving back from visiting aunty Gloria when they had an accident. Tshepo's brain got hurt in the accident. He spent months in the hospital getting better. He now uses a wheelchair to move around and talks by pointing at pictures in a communication book.

Every morning Tshepo's mom took Lindwe to school and every morning Tshepo wished that he could also go to school. One day Tshepo's dad brought a brown box home. Tshepo wondered what it was. His dad opened the box and took out a machine with lots of pictures on it. "This is a talking machine", he said. A talking machine? thought a very puzzled Tshepo. "Let me show you". Tshepo watched as his dad pressed on the pictures and then the machine spoke the message. Cool! Thought Tshepo. "You will soon be going to school Tshepo and you will need a talking machine".

Tshepo went to school everyday. He loved it, but none of the children wanted to play with him. This made Tshepo feel very lonely and sad.

One day Tshepo's teacher Miss Cassey said: "class I have a surprise, tomorrow we will be going to the zoo". Everyone was very excited!

The next day everyone got into a big bus and went to the zoo. They saw the elephants, the giraffes, the lions and even a snake. Suddenly somebody screamed: "Run! everybody run, Sam the gorilla has escaped!"

Everybody was so scared and ran away and forgot Tshepo. "Where is Tshepo?" "He is still inside the zoo Miss Cassey" said Paul. "Oh no!"

Sam looked up and saw Tshepo. Sam started walking towards Tshepo. Tshepo didn't know what to do. He pressed hello and his talking machine said "Hello there". Sam stopped and looked at this strange boy in a chair with shiny wheels.

Sam crept closer and sniffed Tshepo. Tshepo pressed some more pictures and his talking machine said: "my name is Tshepo, how are you today?" Sam got a fright and jumped backwards.

Tshepo pressed some more pictures and his talking machine said, "don't be scared, it's just my talking machine". Sam came carefully closer and sniffed the small boy and his talking machine. Sam looked closely at Tshepo's talking machine. Tshepo said: "look if I press this, it says Hello". Now you try. Sam looked at this strange talking machine and then at Tshepo and again at the talking machine. Sam then pressed hello and the talking machine again said: "hello".

Tshepo then showed Sam all the things his talking machine could say. The two of them sat there for an hour. The next thing Tshepo heard a helicopter and a lady screamed: "Oh no! He is eating him!" and she fainted.

A police man shouted: “Don’t worry son, we will save you”. Behind him stood a big crowd of people, even the television news was there. Tshepo saw all the police men with their guns, he started waving. The police said: “get ready to shoot”. Just then Miss Cassey yelled: “no wait he is okay, look!”

She then walked slowly towards Tshepo and Sam. Everybody held their breath! “Hello Miss Cassey, this is Sam he is my friend” said Tshepo with a big smile. “Sam said he was just very lonely in his cage, he is very sorry for scaring everyone”.

“How do you know that?” asked Miss Cassey. “He told me” said Tshepo. “Don’t be silly Tshepo, everyone knows gorilla’s can’t talk”. Come on let’s go before you get hurt” said Miss Cassey. “No wait I will show you, we talk by using my talking machine” said Tshepo. Sure enough, Sam really did know how to talk. As the three of them talked the crowd slowly and quietly gathered around them. Whispers of “wow”, “awesome”, “cool” and “amazing”, were heard as everybody watched and listened.

That night Tshepo and Sam were on the television news and the next day everybody at school wanted to talk to Tshepo. Tshepo and Sam the gorilla became instant celebrities. Tshepo didn’t care too much about that, he was just happy that now he had friends and people to talk and play with and he visits Sam every Saturday.