

LUCY AND THE GOOD SOLDIERS

A small person's guide to transplant



ANTHONY
NOLAN

saving the lives
of people with
blood cancer



Lucy and the Good Soldiers

A small person's guide to transplant

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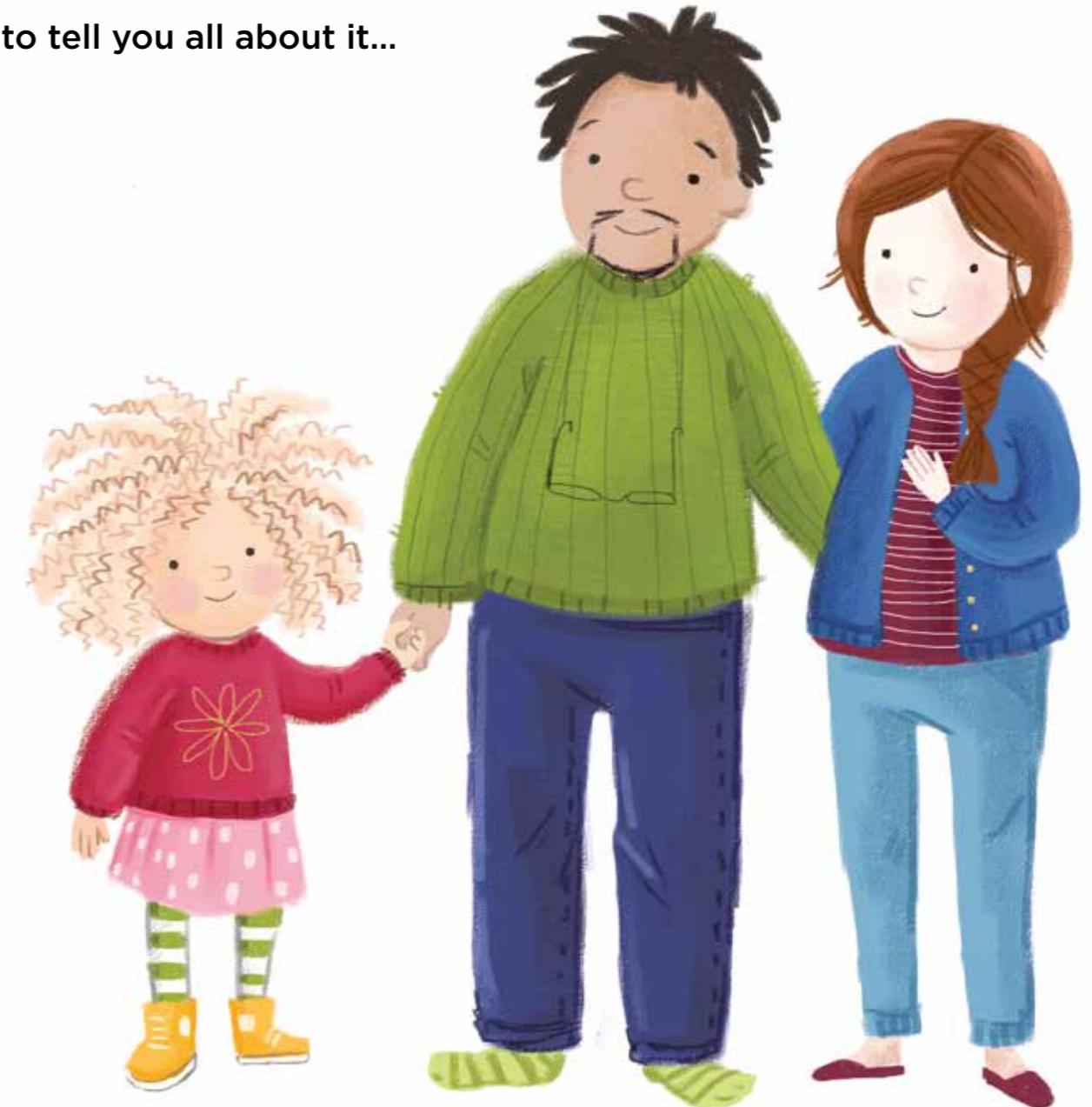
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Written by Sarah Bee
Illustrated by Rosie Butcher

If you're reading this, it probably means someone in your family is going to have a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. We know it's a strange and difficult time. So we wanted to introduce you to Lucy.

A little while ago, Lucy and her family went through the same thing that you're going through now.

Here she is to tell you all about it...





This is my dad. He had cancer, and he's recovering from the treatment that he had to make him better.

He's a bit slower than he used to be, but he's still my dad, and he's getting better all the time.

Nearly a year ago, Dad said he didn't feel well.
Mum was worried. They went to the doctor
and then to the hospital for some tests.



The tests showed that Dad had a type of cancer
called leukaemia (loo-kee-me-ah is how you say it).
It means your blood isn't working quite right.

Mum said it wasn't anybody's fault,
these things just happen sometimes...



Mum and Dad told me that our bodies are made up of cells,
like building blocks. Even our blood is made of cells.

There are three types of blood cells which all work together
and Dad had something wrong with his white blood cells.
There were too many of them, and they weren't grown up
enough to do their job of fighting germs properly.



Dad said it was a bit like me trying to do his job at the office!

I was scared of what the cancer might do to Dad.

It was horrid when he had to go into hospital,
they put a tube into his chest just under his skin
so they could put medicine in.



I didn't like the tube much. It wasn't part of Dad
but we knew it was going to help him get better.

Dad needed new blood cells. But they had to be the right kind, he couldn't make them himself, but the doctors told us they could do something called a transplant. That meant finding special stem cells from someone else. Stem cells are like tiny machines making whatever new cells your body needs.



Mum said we've got good soldier cells inside our bodies ready to fight off anything bad. Cancer cells are bad, they try to fight the good cells. So if Dad's transplant worked, he would get a whole new army of good cells to fight the bad ones and make him better.

The doctors needed to find someone with matching cells to Dad for the transplant.

They needed the help of a charity called Anthony Nolan. The people there have a computer filled with the names and cell types of nice people who want to help people like my dad. They started to search for a match for Dad.



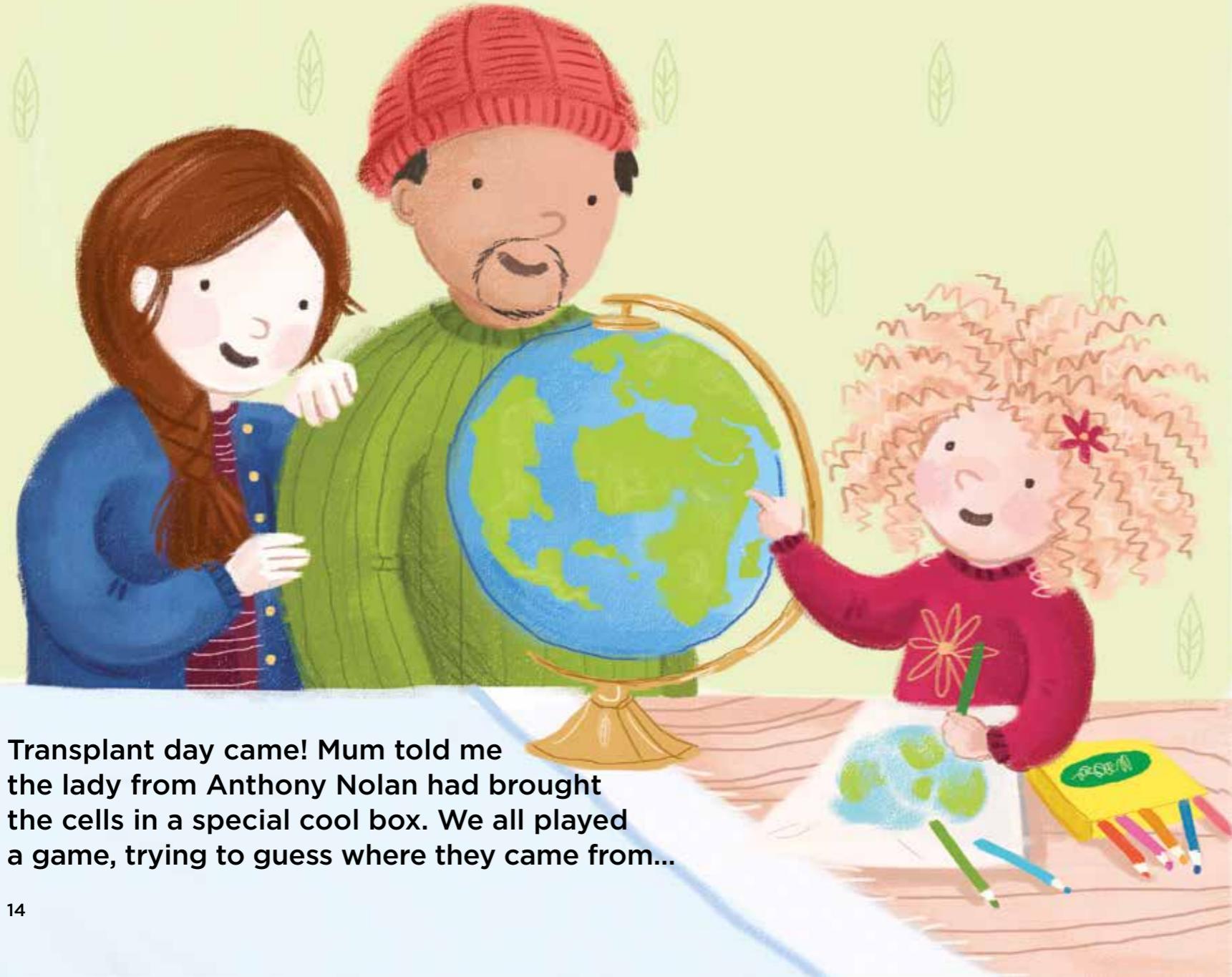
One day, the great news came – they had found a match!



Someone amazing was going to go into hospital and give some of their stem cells, so Dad's body could use them to get better. We were so grateful that someone, somewhere in the world, was going to give some of their cells to help my dad.

Dad started having important treatment in hospital, called chemotherapy (or key-mo for short) and radiotherapy.

It made him even more poorly, but Dad said it was OK because it meant his body was getting ready to get better. He lost all of his hair and even his eyebrows, but he said they'd grow back. I promised to draw some on with my colouring pens if they didn't.



Transplant day came! Mum told me the lady from Anthony Nolan had brought the cells in a special cool box. We all played a game, trying to guess where they came from...

A busy city like New York?



Or maybe a little French village?



Or maybe just around the corner?





Dad was used to having things going into his body through the tube now. But this time was different. The stem cells were finding their way to their new home, so they could get to work making Dad better.

The good soldiers had finally arrived!

We knew Dad still had a long way to go before we could have a party. But we had a little bit of cake when the stem cells came. Mum said we would celebrate it every year forever.



Dad didn't feel better right away.

The doctors said he needed to rest a while longer. He needed to be in something called isolation, where he had to be by himself in a special room so he didn't get any nasty germs.

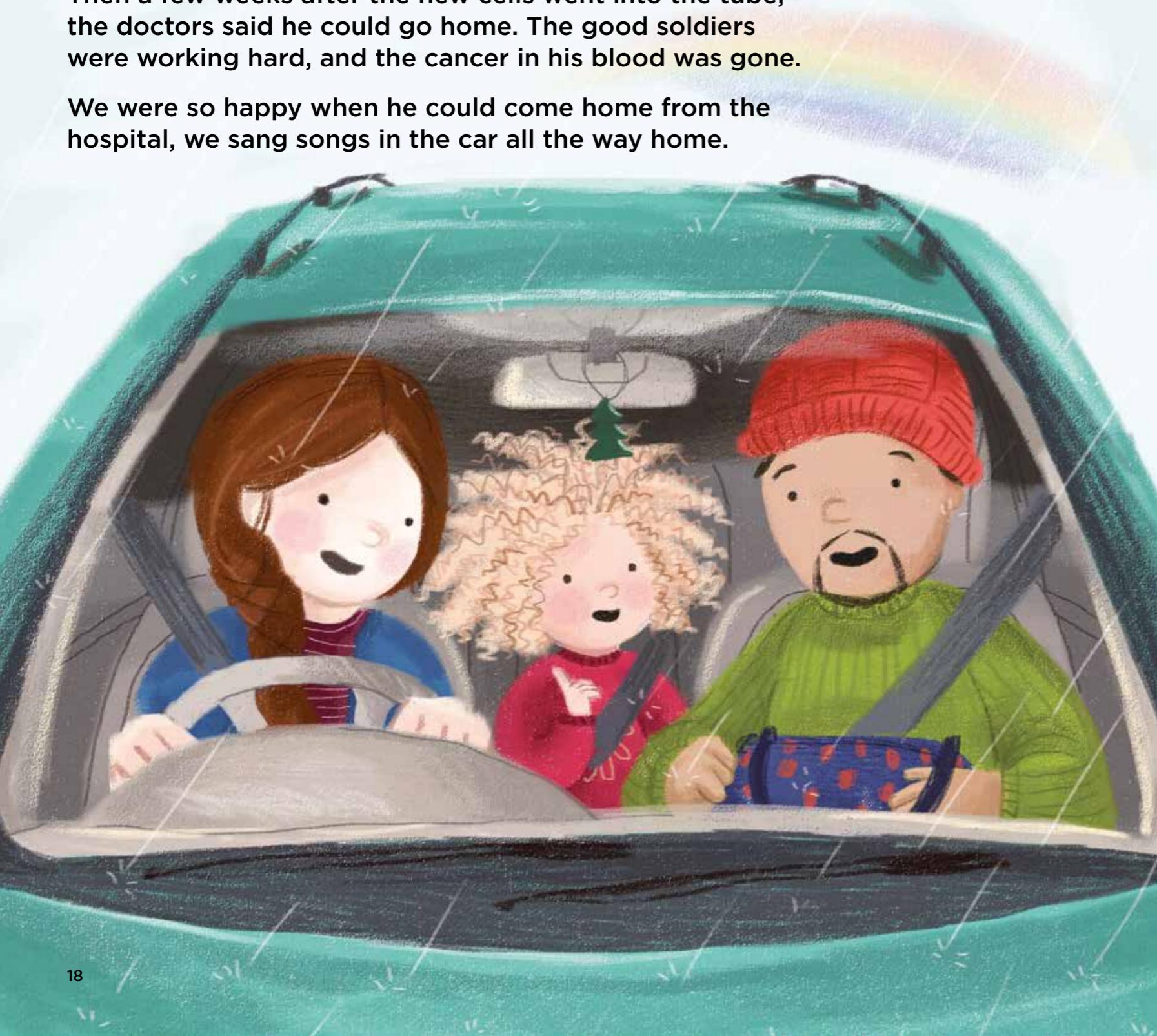
I was sad. It seemed like Dad was in hospital for ages.

I wasn't always allowed to see him, especially when I had a cold. But we talked on the phone every day.

Bit by bit, Dad started to feel better.

Then a few weeks after the new cells went into the tube,
the doctors said he could go home. The good soldiers
were working hard, and the cancer in his blood was gone.

We were so happy when he could come home from the
hospital, we sang songs in the car all the way home.



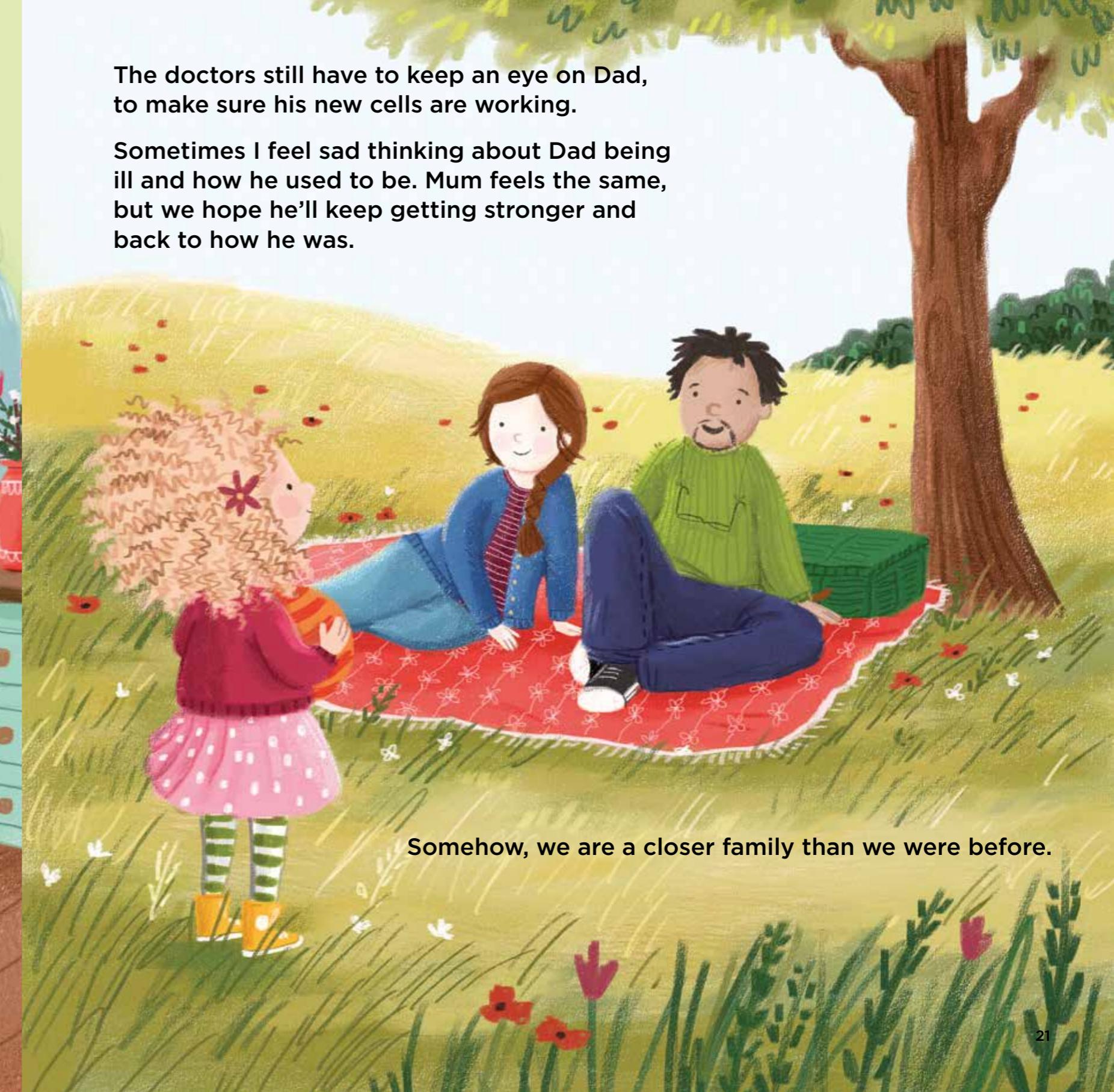
Today, Dad is getting better. He feels more like himself now, though he still gets tired a lot, and jokes that he feels a bit more like Grandad sometimes!

It's not quite like before, but that's OK. I know things change in life. Just like I'm getting bigger as I grow up. I feel like I grew up a lot when Dad was in hospital.



The doctors still have to keep an eye on Dad, to make sure his new cells are working.

Sometimes I feel sad thinking about Dad being ill and how he used to be. Mum feels the same, but we hope he'll keep getting stronger and back to how he was.



Somehow, we are a closer family than we were before.

We're happy every day that Dad is here with us, and he's happy too.

Somewhere out there is a stranger who saved his life...



**The Patient Experience team at
Anthony Nolan is here for you before,
during and after a stem cell transplant.**

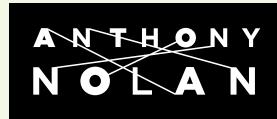
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