

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HERO

Written by
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Illustrated by
Maria Iva



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ORGAN DONATION

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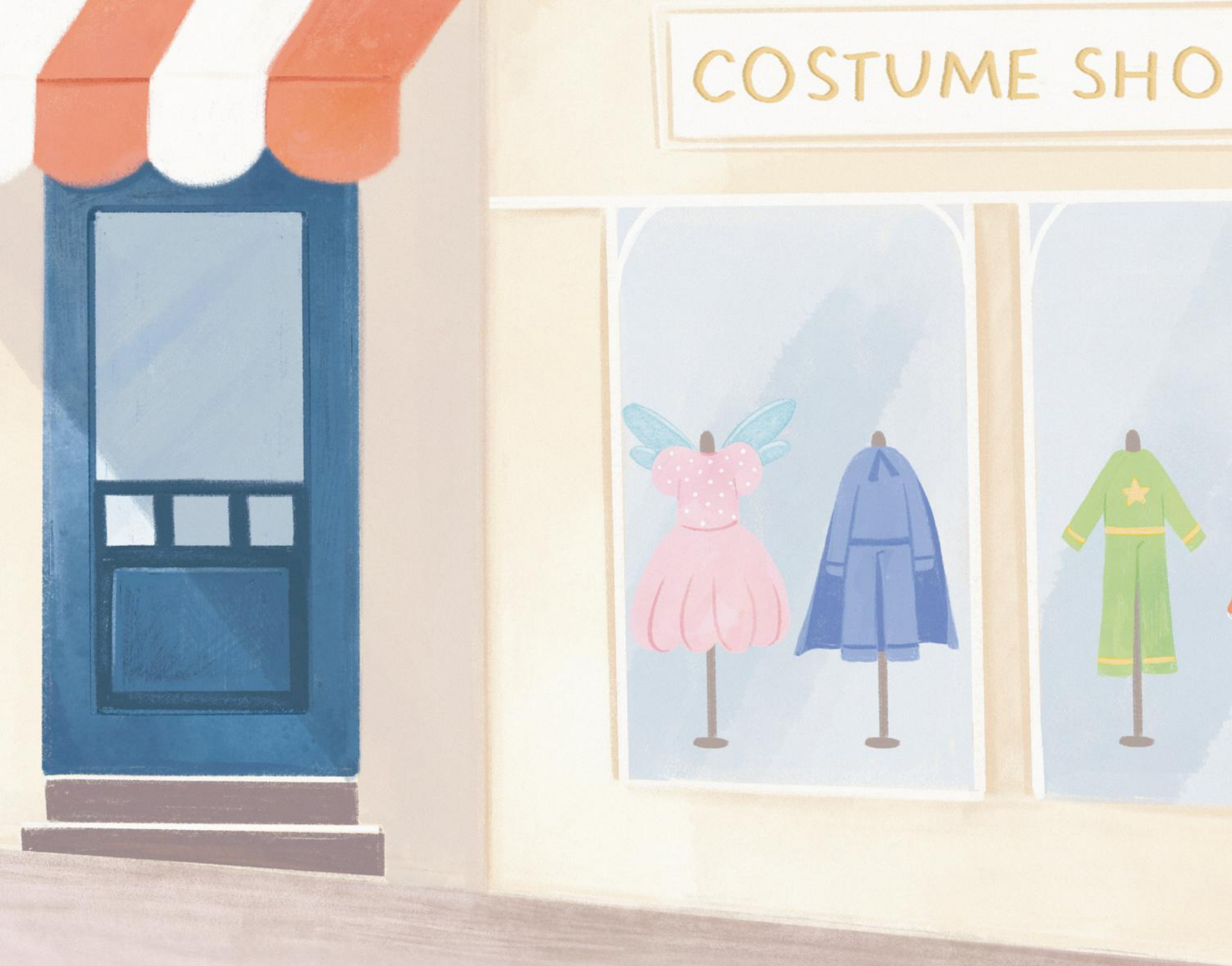
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COSTUME SHO

It's Hero Day at school tomorrow. I am so excited!
My mum and aunty take me to the fancy dress shop.

I look excitedly at the Superman costume.

My aunty smiles. "Great choice," she says, tousling my hair.





I love my aunty very much.
She is my mum's younger sister.
They do everything together.
They cook yummy food for me.
They play games till late at night.
And they never stop talking to each other.



I ask my aunty if Superman is her favourite hero too.
She thinks for a moment and says, "No, not Superman...
Your mum is my favourite hero because she saved my
life when I was sick last year."
I'm surprised by what she says. I know what my mum
did, but did that make her a hero?





I look over at my mum.
I squint my eyes and tilt my head.
She doesn't look like a hero.

I can't wait to go to school the next day.



I feel like I'm ready to save people.



“Come on Superman,” Mum says.

“Let's see how fast you can get to school.”



I race all the way to the school entrance.
My mum walks me over to my friends
and then kisses me goodbye.

I watch as my mum leaves and remember what my aunty said yesterday. I squint my eyes and tilt my head. She still doesn't look like a hero.





After a busy morning in class, my friends and I play games in the playground. We pretend to fly in the sky and save each other from imaginary bad guys. It makes me think about how my mum saved my aunty.



In afternoon circle time, the teacher asks us
what makes a hero.

"Real heroes have superpowers,"
says a girl in pigtails.

"They can fly," adds her friend.

"Heroes have big muscles,
like me," shouts out a boy.



“Hmm...” says my teacher, “It sounds like you’re talking about superheroes. Real heroes are so much more than superheroes. They are brave and kind. They help other people. And unlike superheroes, real heroes can be found all around us. You may even have one in your family!”





I think about my mum. She doesn't have any superpowers. She can't fly. And her muscles aren't big. But she is brave and kind, and she helps other people.



I raise my hand.

"My mum is a real hero!" I say.

"She is not!" interrupts the girl in pigtails.

"Mums can't be heroes!"

I take a deep breath and say,

"My mum is! Last year she did something really brave and kind. She saved my aunty's life!"







All my classmates stare at me in surprise.
They start to ask me questions about my mum.
So many questions - more than I can answer!
My teacher suggests that I bring my mum
and aunty in for a visit.





My mum and aunty come to school with me the next day. They sit with me in front of the class, and I tell everyone how my aunty was very sick last year. The doctors said her kidneys weren't working. They said she needed a new kidney.





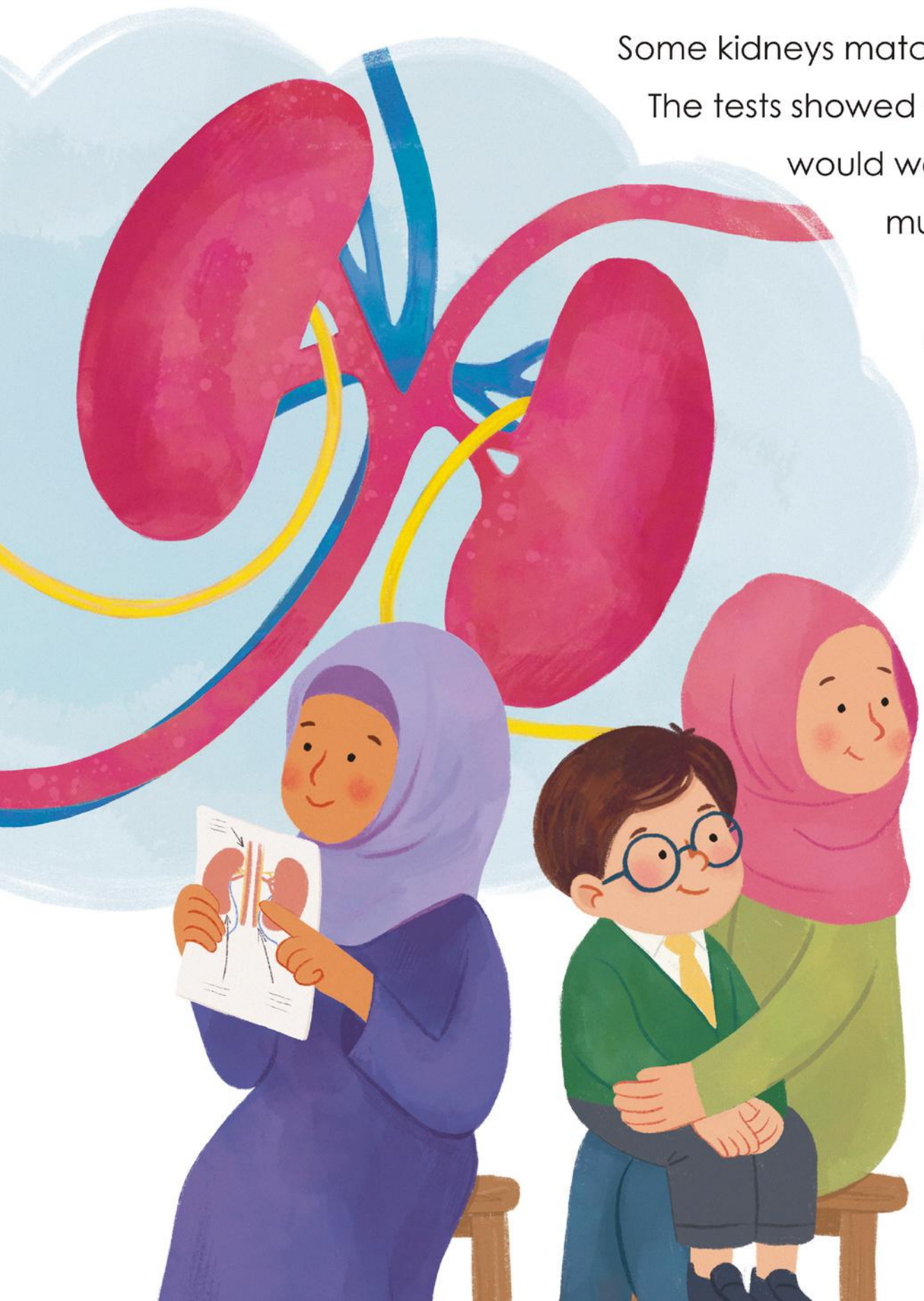
“Where do you get a new kidney from?” asks a boy.
My aunty says, “Most people have two healthy kidneys,
and they can donate one to someone who
needs it. But first, the doctors need to run
some tests.”

“Why do they have to do tests?”
questions a girl.
My mum explains that not all
kidneys work in all bodies.



Some kidneys match some bodies better.

The tests showed that my mum's kidney
would work in my aunty. So my
mum had an operation,
and the doctors took
out one of her kidneys
and put it into my
aunty's body.





"Were you scared?" someone asks.

My mum smiles and says, "I was a little scared, but I love my sister very much and I remembered that I was doing this to help her. That helped me feel braver."
My aunty says, "My sister is my hero. She was brave and kind and thoughtful and she gave me a new kidney. My sister saved my life."

Everyone in class claps for my amazing mum and aunty. I feel happiness spread through me. I am so incredibly proud of them.



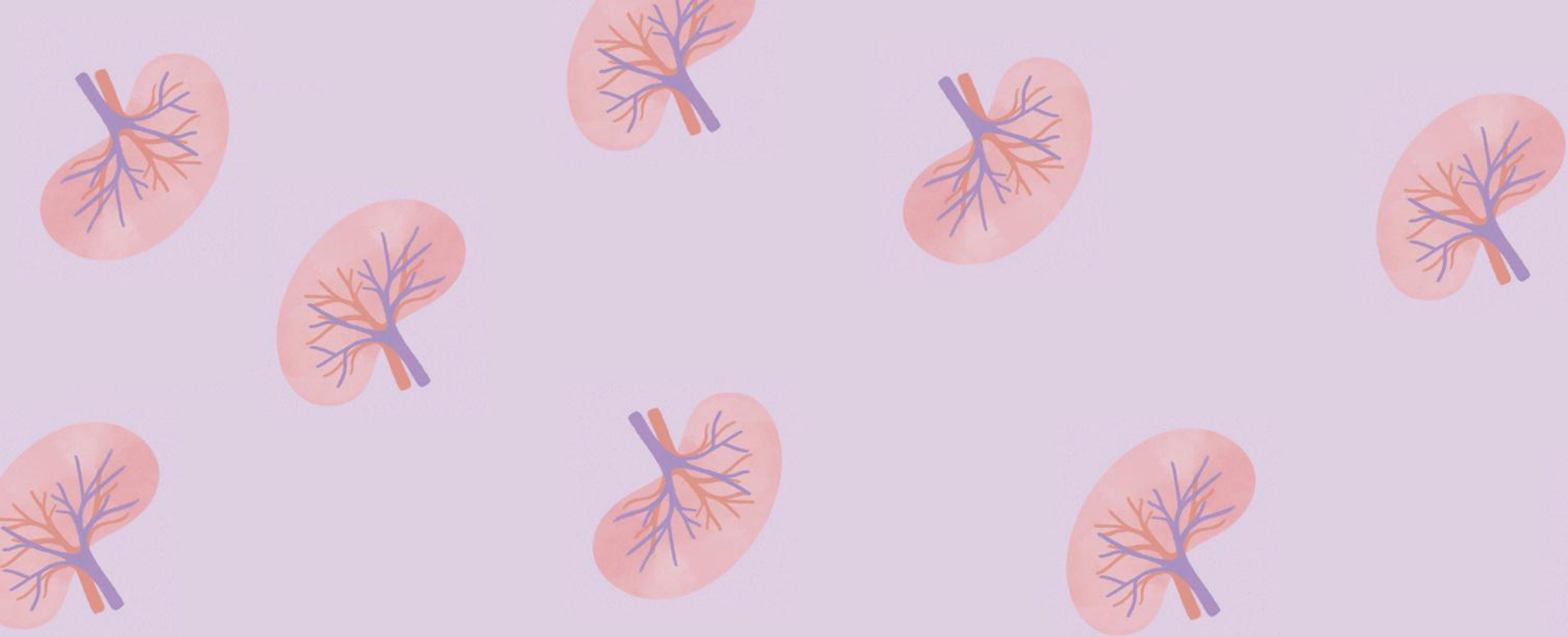


As we walk home, I look up at my mum.
This time I don't have to squint my eyes or tilt my head.
I know my mum is a hero.



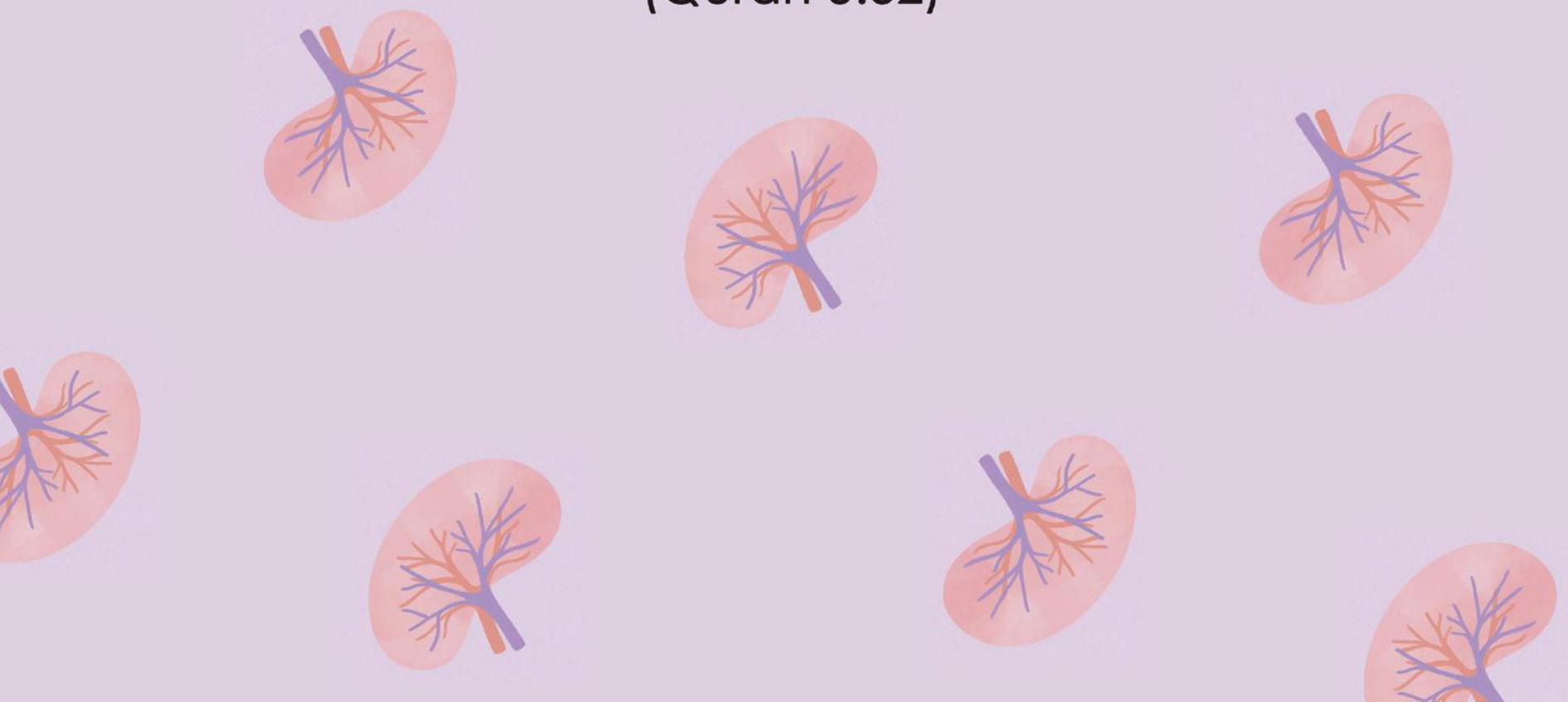
And she sort of looks like a superhero too!





“...and whoever saves the life of a person it is as if he has saved the life of the whole of humankind.”

(Quran 5:32)





A Note for Parents and Teachers

This book is a gentle introduction into the world of kidney transplant. It was written by someone from an ethnic minority with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

- Today in the UK, it is estimated that around three million people live with CKD.¹ Kidney disease has a big impact on people's lives.
- Due to an increased prevalence of underlying diseases like diabetes amongst black and South-Asian people, they are three to five times more likely to need treatment for kidney failure than white people.²
- When someone has kidney failure, they need to go on dialysis or get a kidney transplant from a living or deceased donor.
- Dialysis is a type of treatment that helps to remove extra fluid and waste products from the blood when the kidneys are not able to. Although it is lifesaving, it is very time consuming and can cause issues that shorten life expectancy.

- A kidney transplant is a surgery done to replace a kidney that is not working properly with a healthy kidney from a living or deceased donor. Transplant patients usually live longer and have a better quality of life than those who stay on dialysis.
- Black, South-Asian and minority ethnic patients often have to wait much longer for a successful kidney transplant match than white patients, due to a shortage of suitably matched donors.³
- Transplant waiting times would be reduced if more people from these ethnic backgrounds considered living kidney donation and/or registered their decision on the Organ Donor Register.

For information, guidance, and advice around your faith, ethnicity, and organ donation, scan the QR code below.



1. Kidney Research UK, Kidney Health Check. Available at: www.kidneyresearchuk.org/health-information/kidney-health-check
2. Roderick PJ et al, 1996, The need and demand for renal replacement therapy in ethnic minorities in England, J Epidemiol Community Health, 50(3): 334-9
3. NHSBT, 2023, Annual Report on Ethnicity Differences

It's Hero Day at school and the children come to school in all sorts of costumes, from superheroes to inspirational heroes. But, as they soon learn, heroes come in all shapes and sizes and can even be found in their own families!

A gentle story which will make children think about the different ways of being a hero.

"Growing up with my father's illness, having a book like this would have made me feel less alone. A much needed book that will add value to all our lives and tackles an issue our community battles in such a delicate manner"

Sophia Iman Ali, daughter of the late Amjid Ali, former UK head of HSBC Amanah and pioneer of organ donation in the Muslim community

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