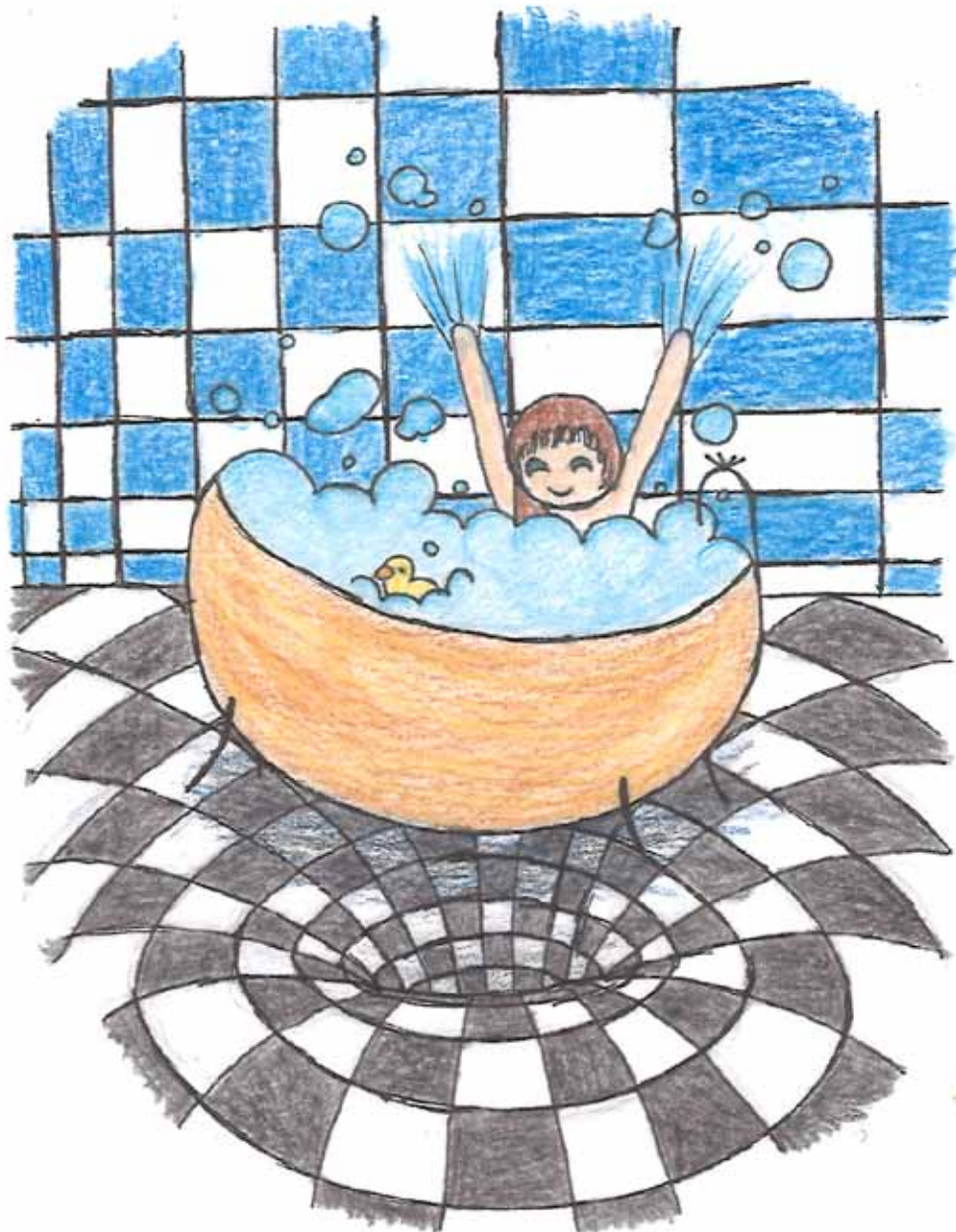




AN ITP CHILDREN'S BOOK

Jessica tells her story



The text for this booklet was written by Shirley Watson MBE,
founder of the ITP Support Association and approved by Dr John Grainger of
Manchester Children's Hospital.

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The Platelet Mission, Kimbolton Road,
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E-mail info@itpsupport.org.uk

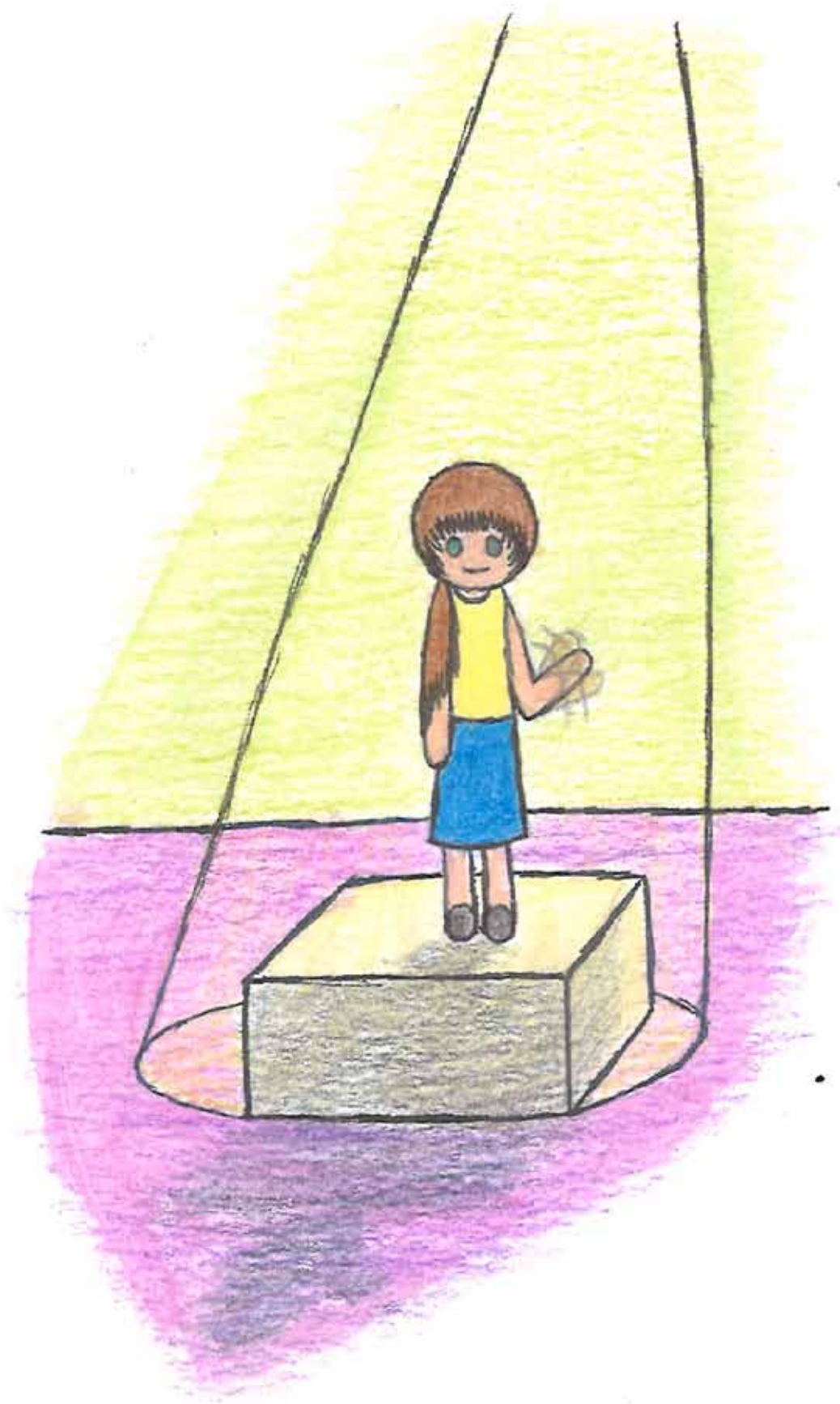
Tel: 01234 376559

Web: www.itpsupport.org.uk



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Hi, I'm Jessica
and I've had ITP!



It all started with me getting lots of bruises. Mummy and my teacher asked how I got them, but I didn't know. They just happened.

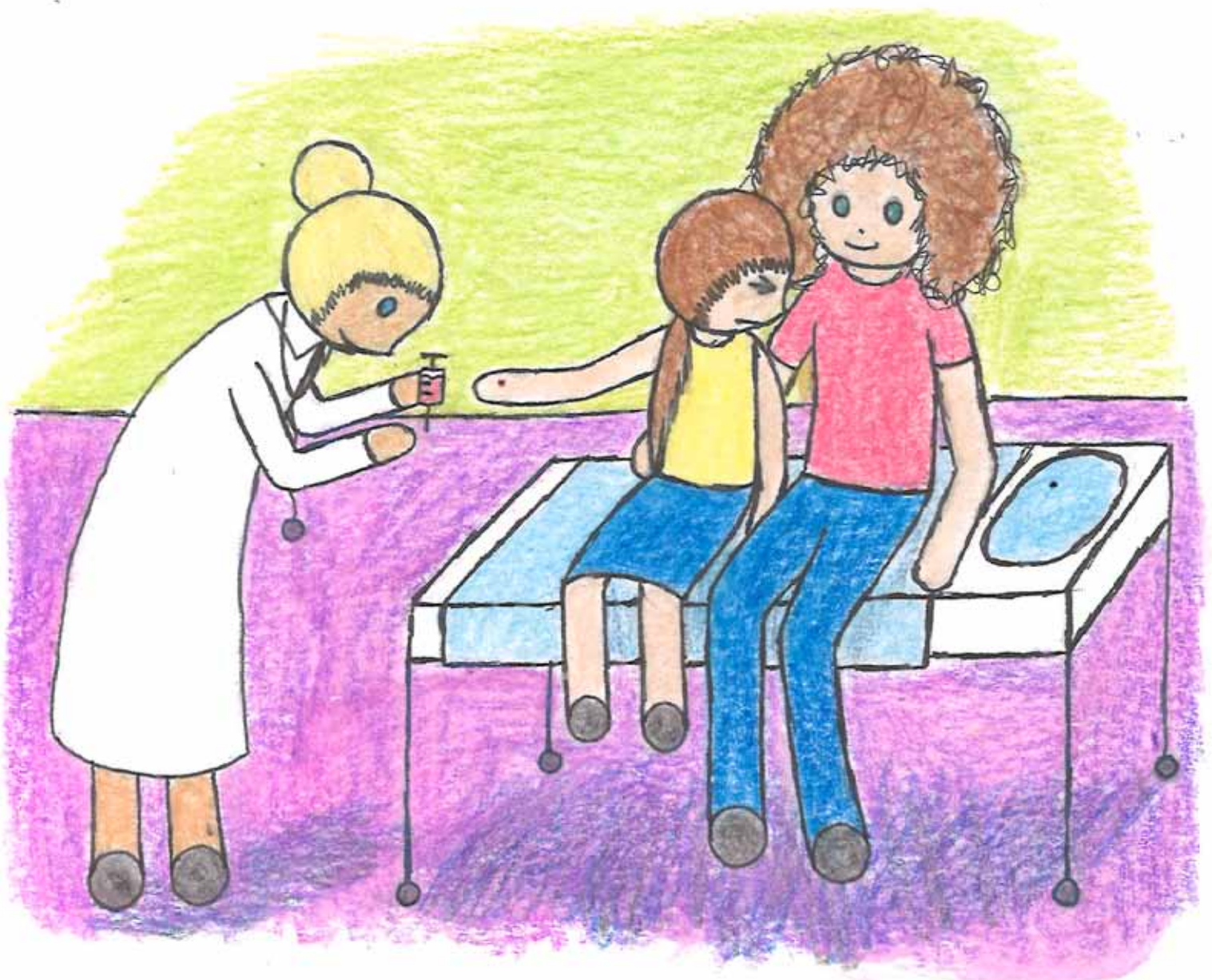


Then one night when I was in the bath
Mummy noticed a rash of little red spots
on my legs and said she would take me to
the doctor in the morning.

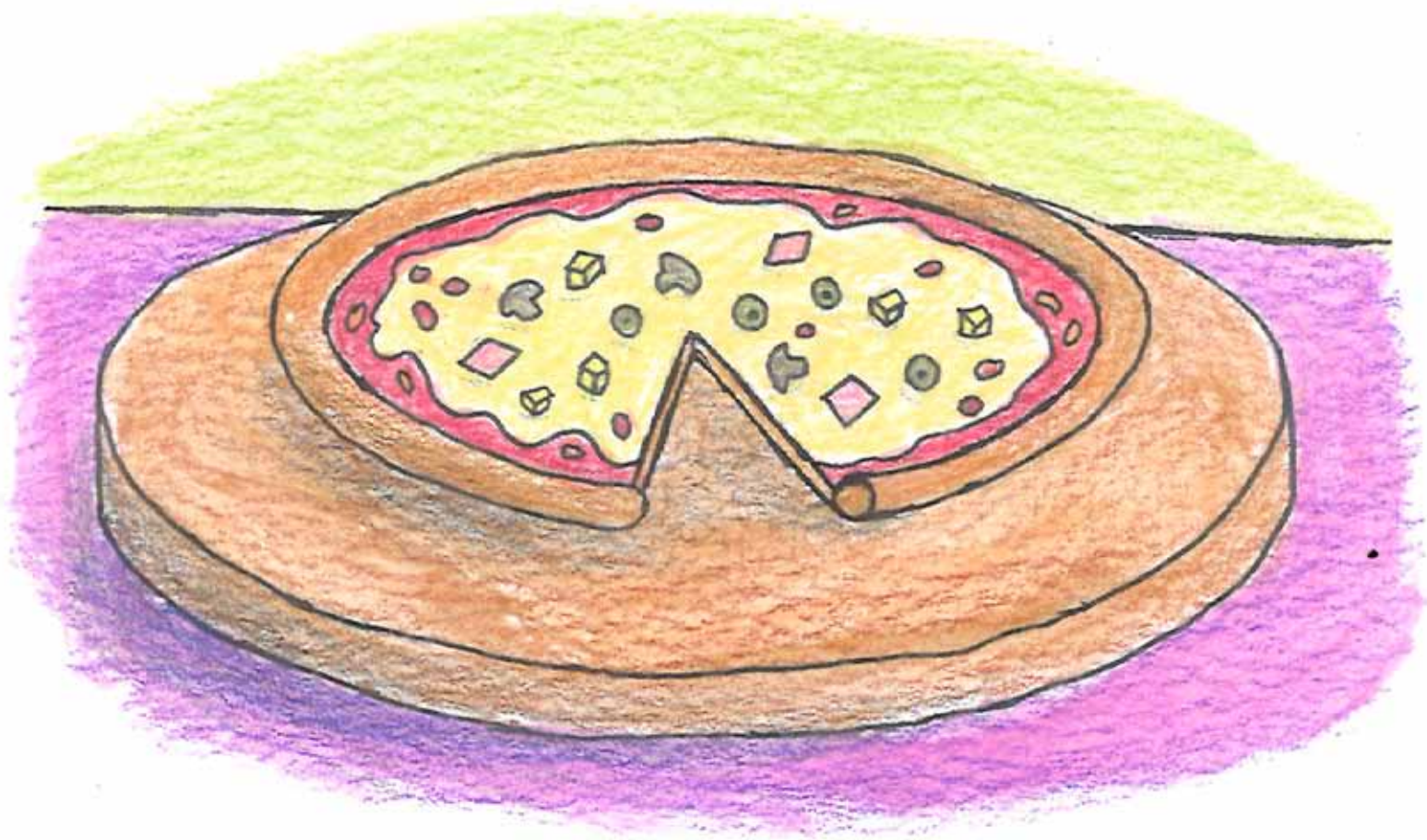


The doctor looked at my bruises and rash. She asked me if I felt unwell, but I said I felt fine. She told me that it might be something to do with my blood and the quickest way to find out was to take a blood test.

She explained that she would need to put a needle in my arm to get a little bit of blood but it would all be over very quickly. I held Mummy's hand tightly while the doctor pricked my arm and took the blood.

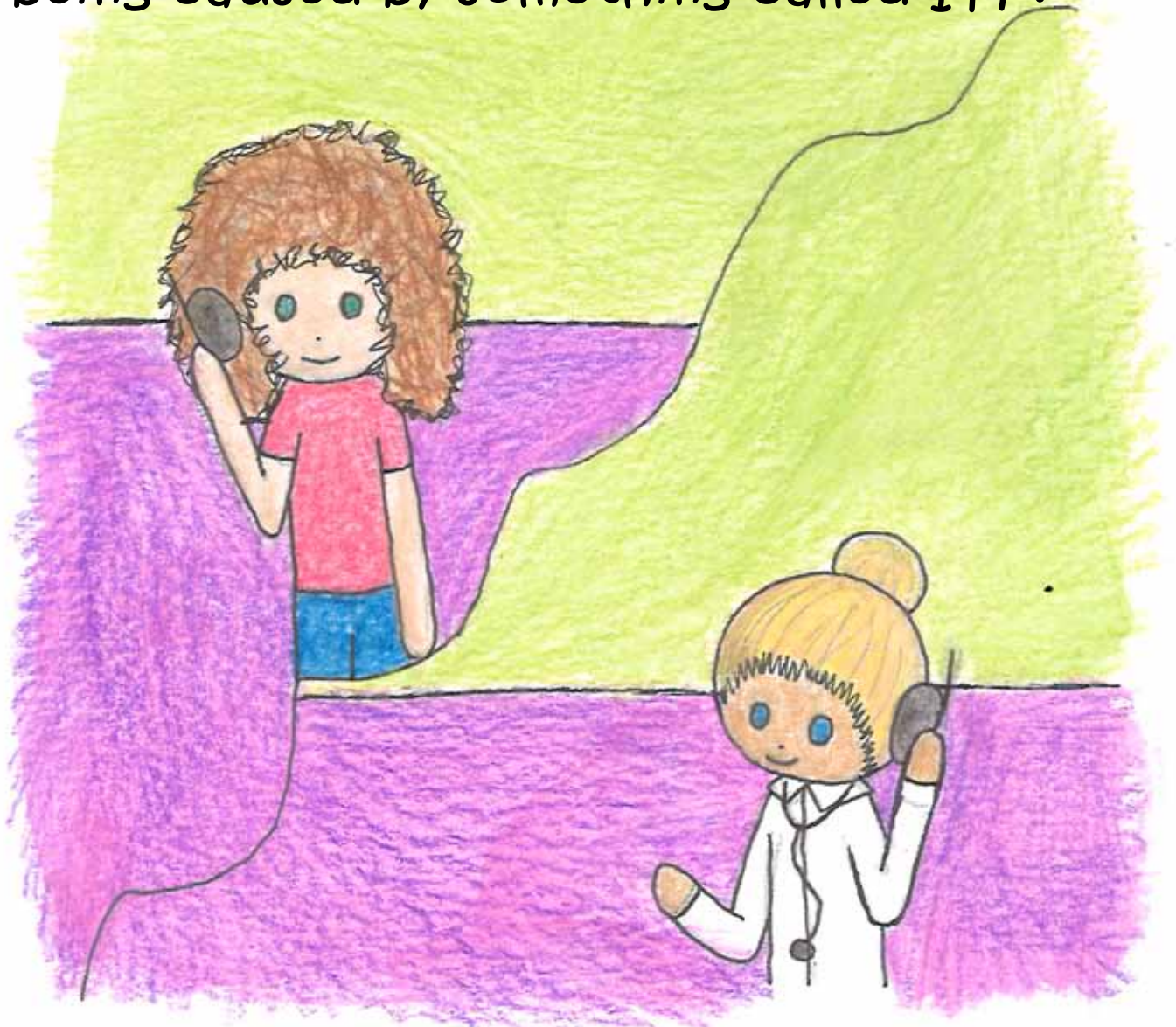


Mummy made me pizza for tea because I had been so brave.

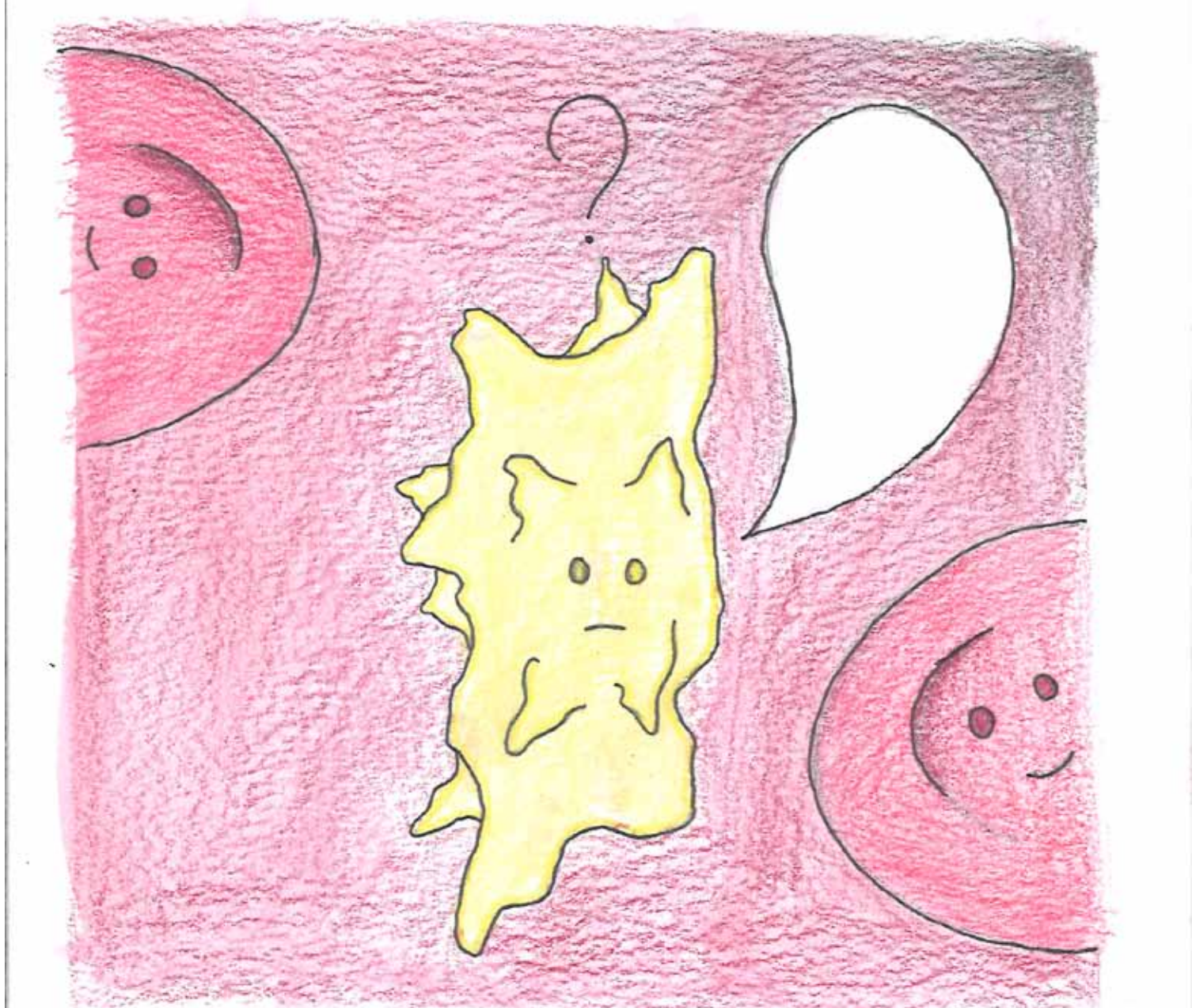


Yummy!

The doctor rang the next day and asked Mummy to take me to the hospital. We saw a doctor in the children's ward who told me that my bruises and rash were being caused by something called ITP.



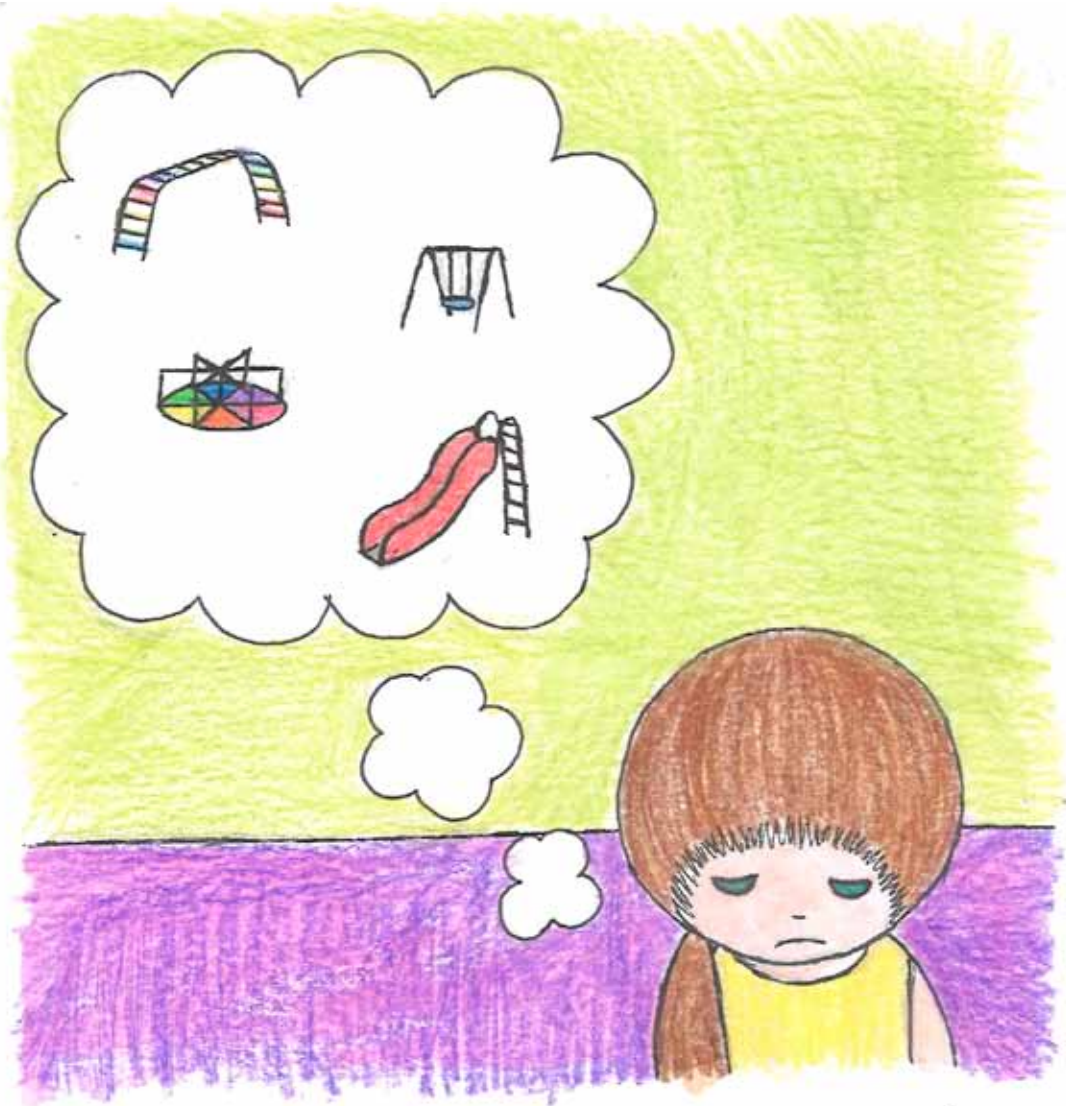
She explained that we all have special cells in our body to fight off nasty things like colds and chicken pox, but sometimes they get confused. She said that mine were being very naughty and gobbling up some tiny cells in my blood called platelets.



I hadn't heard of platelets before. The doctor said they swim round in our blood but if we have a cut or injury they stick together to make a scab and stop the bleeding. Because I barely had any platelets left I was having little tiny blood leaks under the skin that caused the rash and the bruises.

The doctor said our bodies make platelets all the time in the bone marrow, which is in the middle of our bones, so my body would be very busy making new ones.

I was a bit scared but the doctor said ITP doesn't usually last very long in children, and I could still go to school and play with my friends. Mummy asked if there was any medicine I could have, but the doctor said we should wait and see if I got better all by myself first.



I was told that I mustn't go on the climbing frame or play sports

where I could get kicked or hit as that could give me some very big black bruises. Mummy said she would explain it all to my teacher at school.



The doctor arranged for me to go back in a couple of weeks for another blood test. I didn't like that idea much, but Mummy said I could have a treat afterwards, so that would make up for it.

When I got home everyone said they were sorry I was ill and were really nice to me, which was strange because I didn't feel poorly, just a little bit tired.

A few days later I was watching TV when my nose felt wet. I touched it and saw blood on my hand. I ran and told Mummy, but she said to keep calm it was only a nosebleed.



She held the middle of my nose until it stopped bleeding then told me not to touch it even though it was very itchy.

When we saw the doctor again he said children with ITP often have nosebleeds and not to worry.



If they got very bad I could have some pills called steroids, but they can make children very hungry and rather grumpy, or I could have some special liquid made from blood but that would mean me staying in hospital for a little while, so it would be better if I could manage without them.

I had to keep going back to hospital every 2 weeks and was always told my platelet count was under 5. Then just when I was thinking I would have ITP for ever the doctor told me my platelet count was over 300! Mummy was so excited she gave me a big hug as though I had done something clever!



The doctor said I should go back for one more blood test just to make sure I was better.

That was three years ago, and I have been perfectly OK ever since. Mummy still worries a bit if she sees I have a bruise, but...



Mum's are like that, aren't they!



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