

Annabelle's Growing Pains

Written by
**ERIN
O'CONNOR**

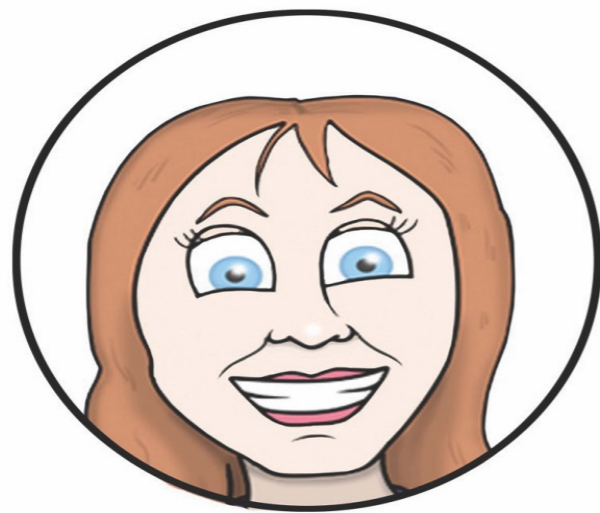
Illustrated by
MIKE GOLDSTEIN



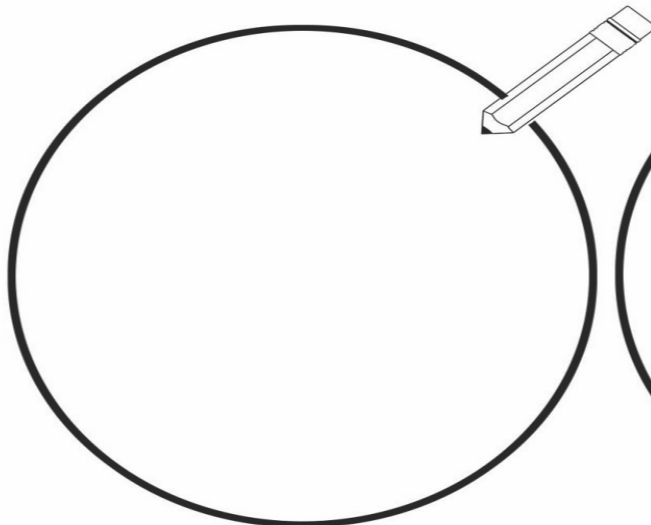
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Author
Erin O'Connor



Reader
This book
belongs to:



Illustrator
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A Message to the Parents

As a massage therapist for 38 years, I have gone into many homes and heard many stories from parents and children alike regarding physical pains of one kind or another experienced by the children themselves.

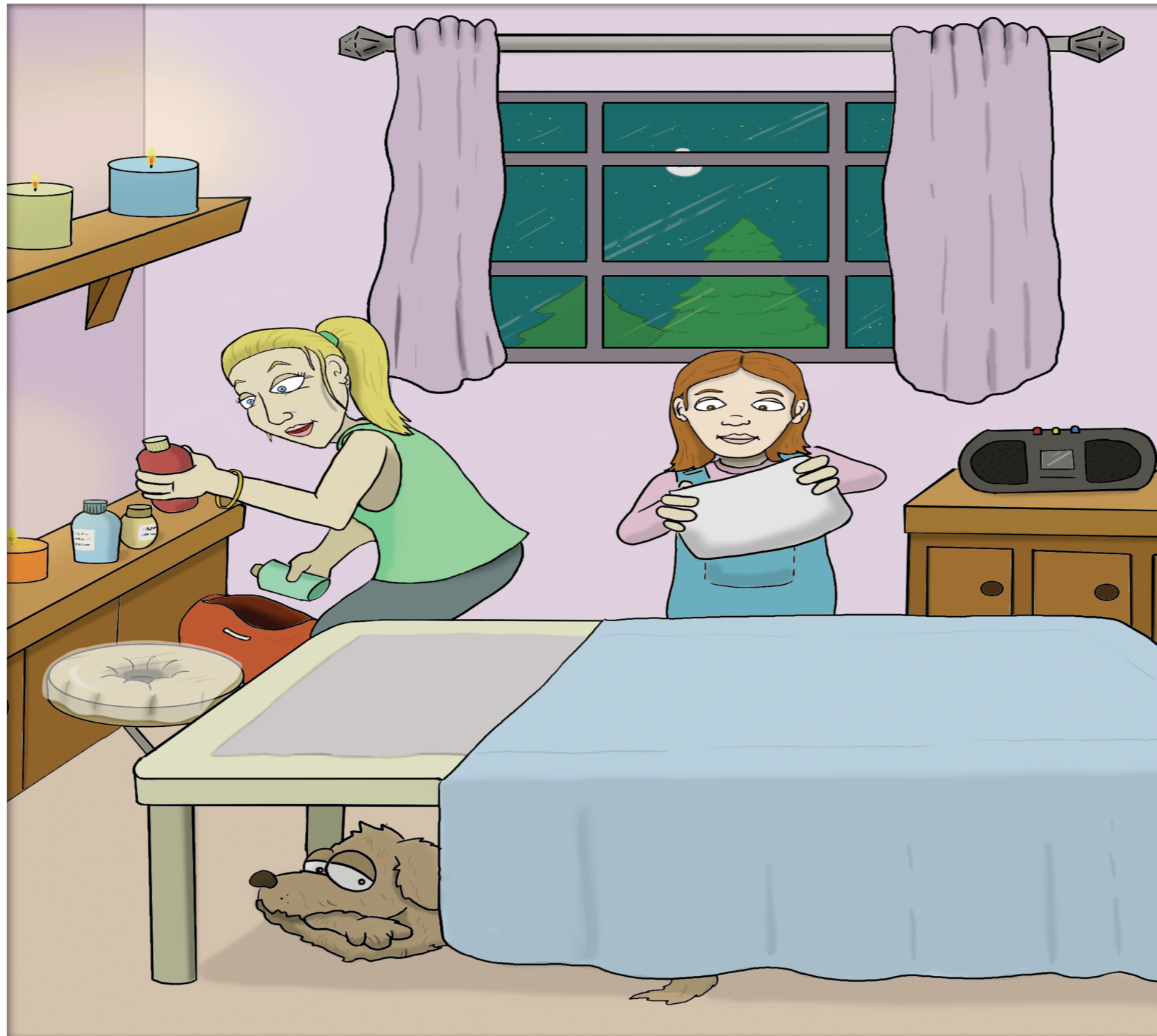
It is surprising to me how many differing opinions the parents express regarding the realness of their child's aches and pains. Let me assure all who read this book that growing pains do exist.

This story paints a vivid picture of growing pains...what they are and how to alleviate them. Annabelle is a real person and her journey, although embellished a bit, truly happened.

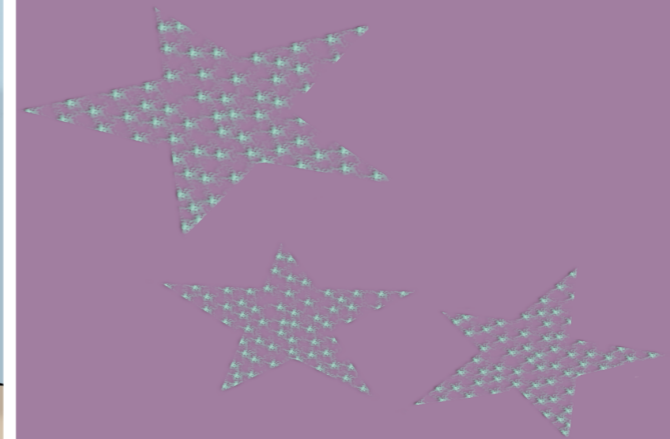


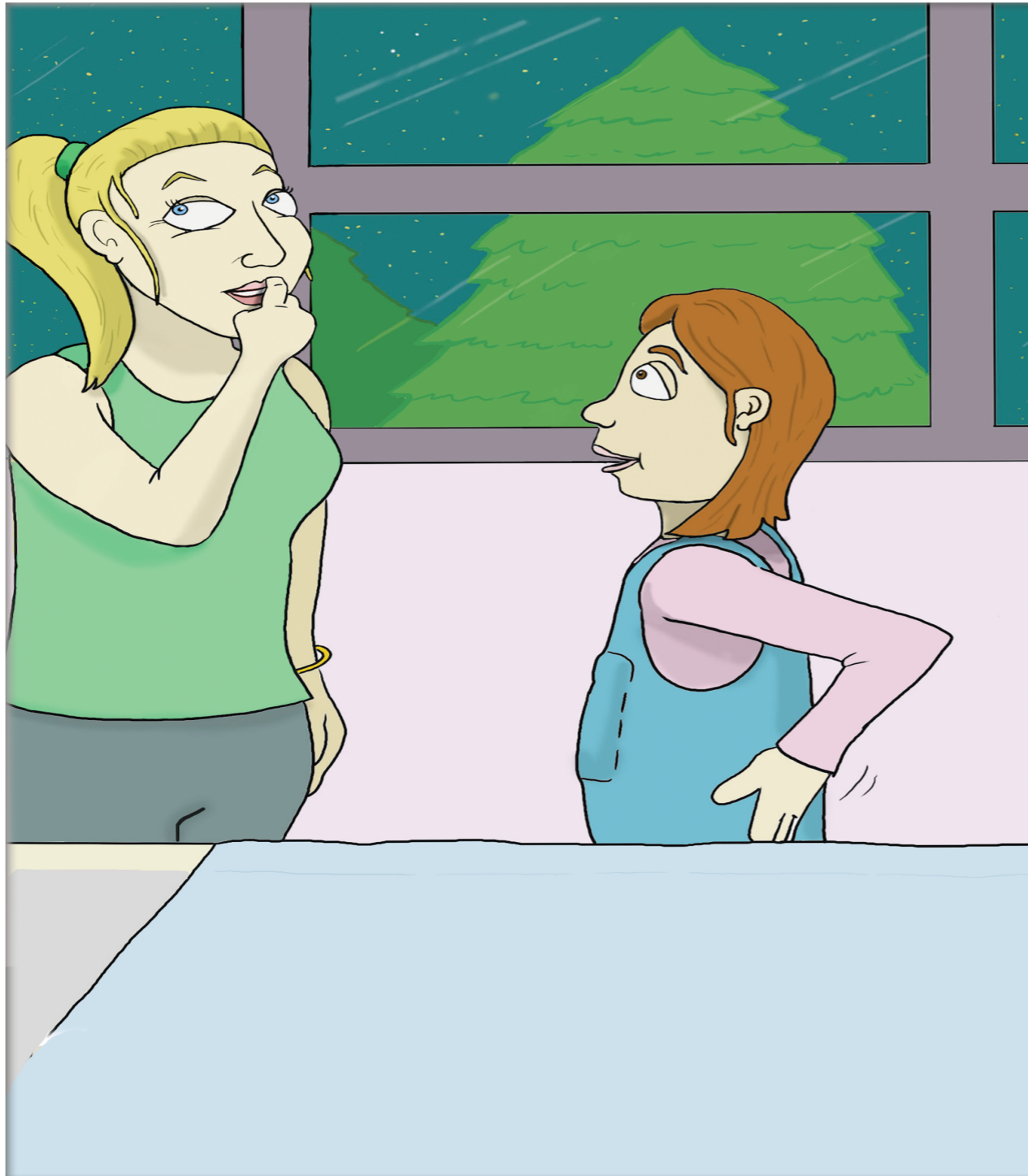


Sunday night is massage night at Annabelle Tyler's house. When the doorbell rings at 7:30 p.m. Annabelle and her family's dogs, Rosie and Sophie, race to the door to greet Lisa, the massage therapist. Annabelle always helps Lisa carry the massage equipment to the massage room.



It is a lovely room!
There are lit candles all
around, beautiful
aromas and quiet music
to add to the relaxation.
Annabelle loves to help
Lisa set up for her mom
and dad's massages.
First the table, then the
warming pad, then the
sheets and finally the
pillows...all this is
necessary for the
comfort and healing
which massage brings.





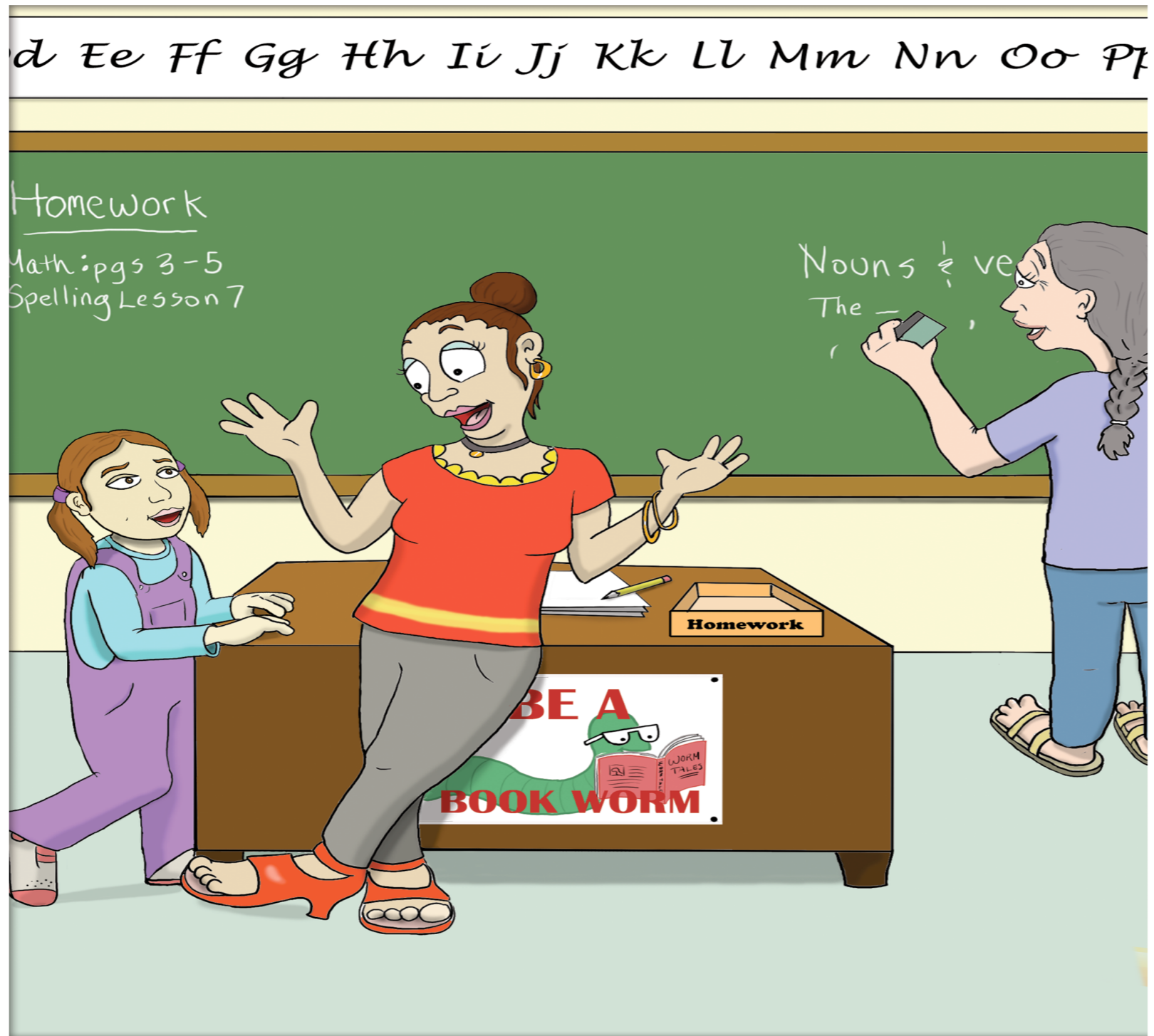
Annabelle and Lisa talk about this and that as they work. Their conversations always include Annabelle's saying something such as, "You know, Lisa, I am having back pain today. Do you have some time tonight to give me a massage? I really need one."

On this particular night, however, Lisa thought about Annabelle's words before she spoke. "Hmmm... Three weeks ago your legs were hurting, and two weeks ago you had a very sore neck. Now, your back hurts? I'd say you have "*Growing Pains*."

"What are *Growing Pains*?" Annabelle wanted to know. But before Lisa could respond Annabelle's mother came into the room.

"Ok Annabelle...it's time for my massage and your bath."

"But Mommy!" Annabelle tried to protest, but her Mom gave her a look that told her there would be no arguing. That was that.



On Monday morning Annabelle decided to ask her teacher about *Growing Pains*. Her second grade teacher, Mrs. Levine, had been a sports referee and Annabelle thought she should know.

“Why yes,” she said. “When I was a child I had them and many children I’ve coached have had them. But, I have to admit, I don’t know what causes *Growing Pains*.”





Later that morning, Annabelle helped Ms. Smith, Mrs. Levine's teaching assistant, clean up the art center. Of course, Annabelle asked her too about *Growing Pains*.

"I am forty five years old and have done a lot of growing during my lifetime, but I have never had physical *Growing Pains*."

Not exactly understanding the meaning of this reply, Annabelle still knew nothing about *Growing Pains*.





When it was time for recess, Annabelle asked her friends if they had heard of *Growing Pains*. Unfortunately, most of her classmates were clueless. Annabelle was thrilled when her good friend Kayla had an answer.

“Yes,” she said, “I sure have had some *Growing Pains*...especially on my stomach when I eat too much!”

Emily also knew about them. “My feet get *Growing Pains*. My mom rubs them with her special Chinese lotion. It feels really, really good!”



After school Annabelle asked her big sister, Kaitlyn, if she had ever experienced *Growing Pains*.

“Sure,” Kaitlyn said. “*Growing Pains* really bother me because they are so uncomfortable.”

“But what are they?” Annabelle asked.

“I don’t really know,” Kaitlyn replied.



On Wednesday afternoon Annabelle's Nana came to visit and play. While Annabelle's dad barbecued chicken for dinner and her little brother, Spencer, jumped on the trampoline, Annabelle and Nana brushed Rosie and chatted.

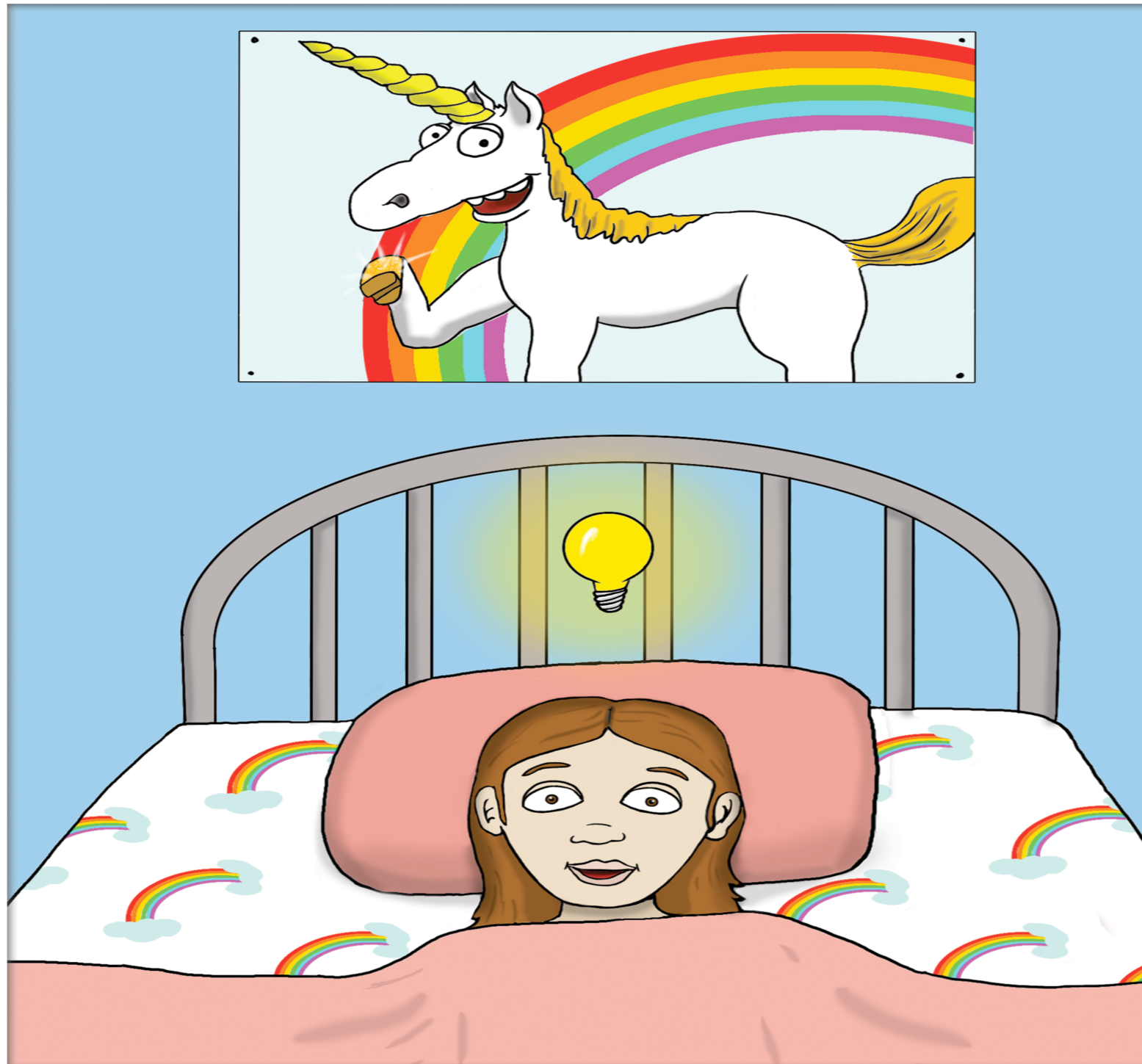
"Nana, have you heard of *Growing Pains*?" Annabelle asked for the umpteenth time.

"Growing old pains is more my speed. Just wait until you're my age...then you'll see what real pain is all about, believe me!"

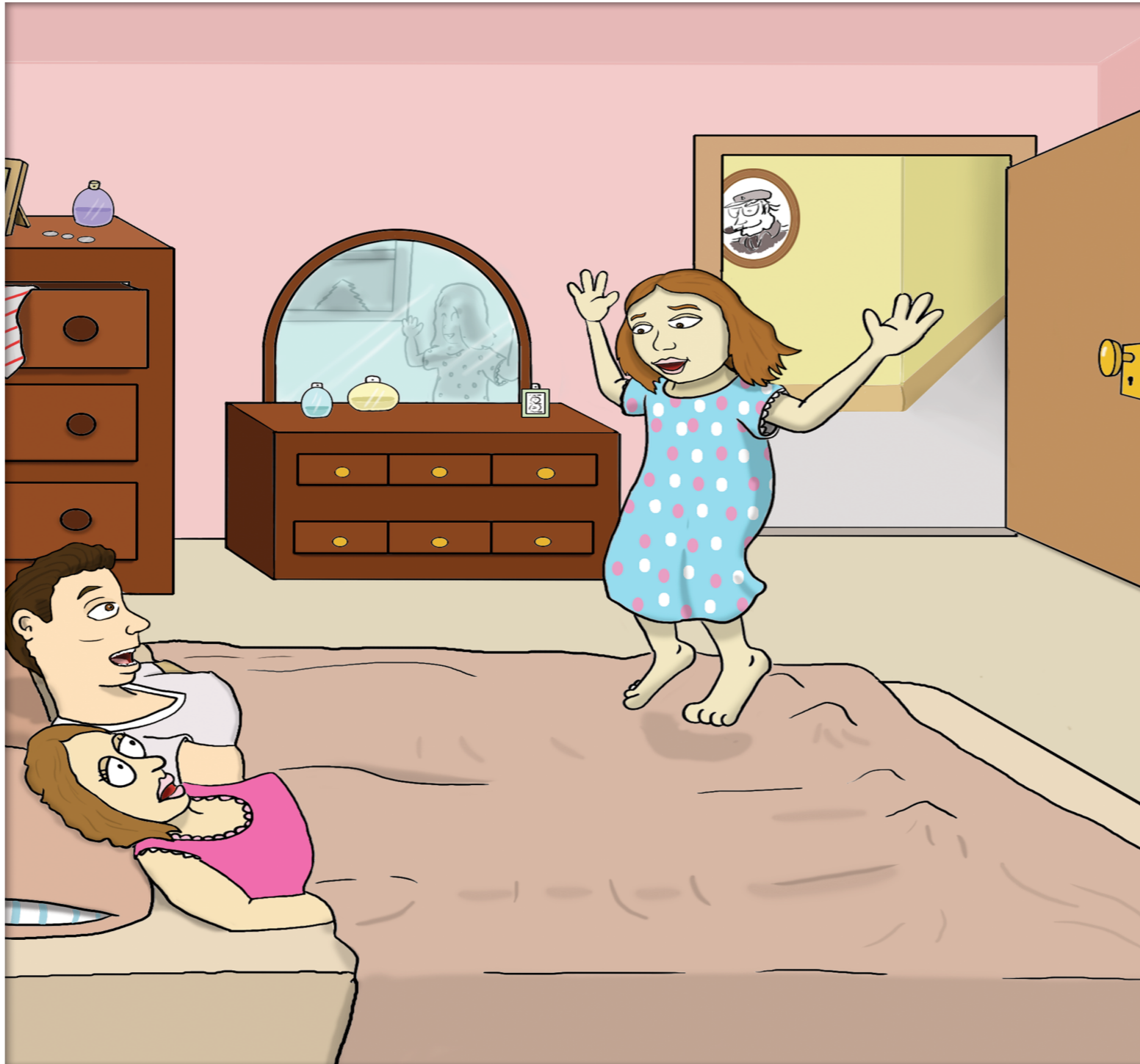
As Nana laughed at her own words, Annabelle just shook her head. Even though her friends, family and teachers had lots to say, she still knew nothing about her own *Growing Pains*.



It was the next day that Annabelle had an idea. Her computer teacher, Mr. Rosen, had told her class that computers could answer any question in the world. So that evening Annabelle and her mom turned to their computer. They searched the Internet for information about *Growing Pains*. They learned that many children get them and that they often occur after playing or exercising. Sometimes the pains can awaken children in the middle of the night...not fun. The pains can be felt in the muscles of the back, neck, arms, legs and feet. Annabelle learned these pains aren't dangerous and will stop when children are fully grown.



Annabelle was happy with the information gathered on her computer search. However, like a scientist or a detective, she still did not feel her question had been completely answered. As she lay in bed that night, a light bulb suddenly went off in her head. She could hardly wait, in fact, until morning.



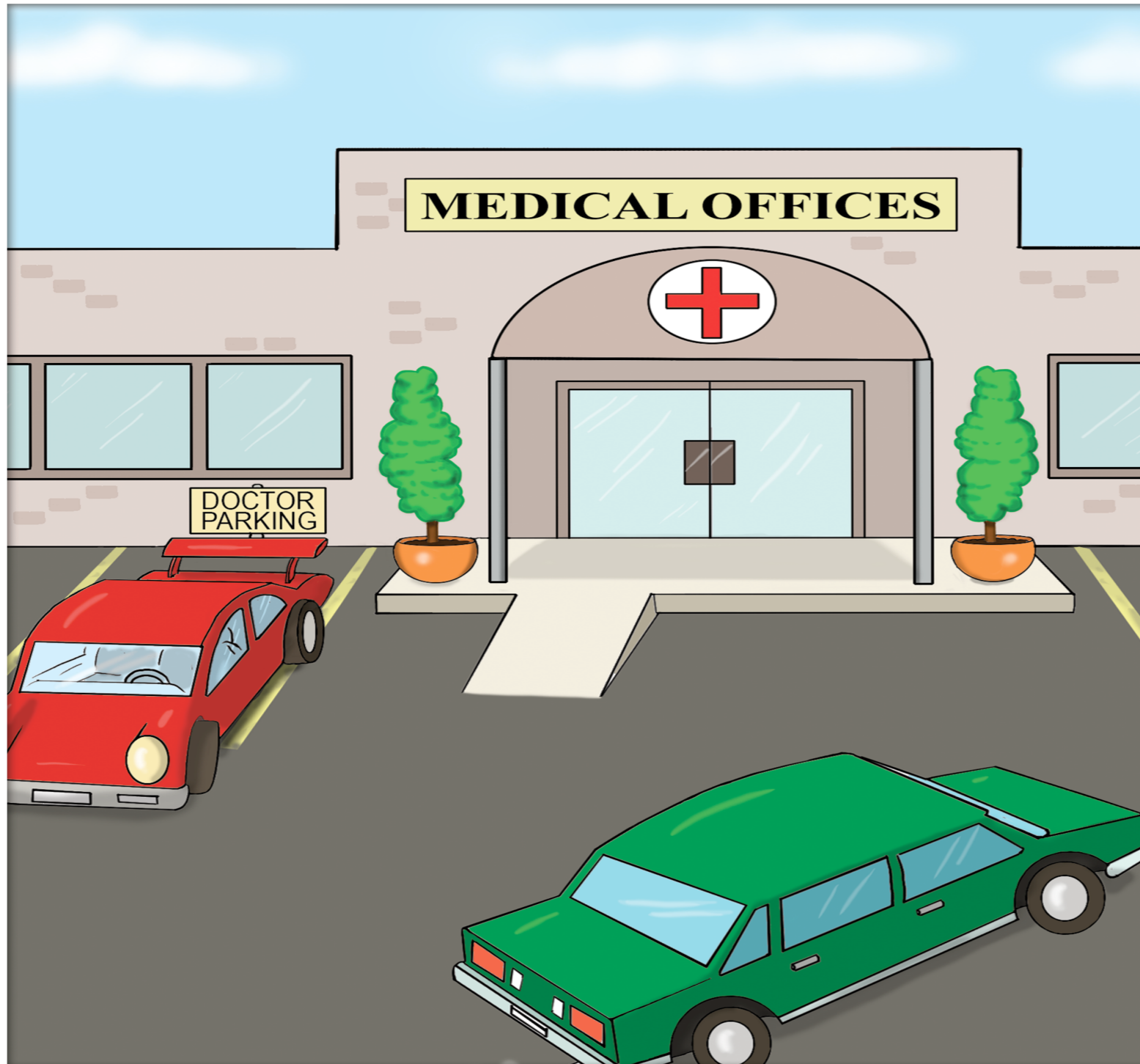
As soon as the sun rose on Friday morning, Annabelle jumped out of bed and ran to her parents' bedroom.

"Mommy, Daddy, we need to make an appointment with Dr. Lee. I really need to see her!"

"What's wrong honey? Are you sick?" Annabelle's dad asked.

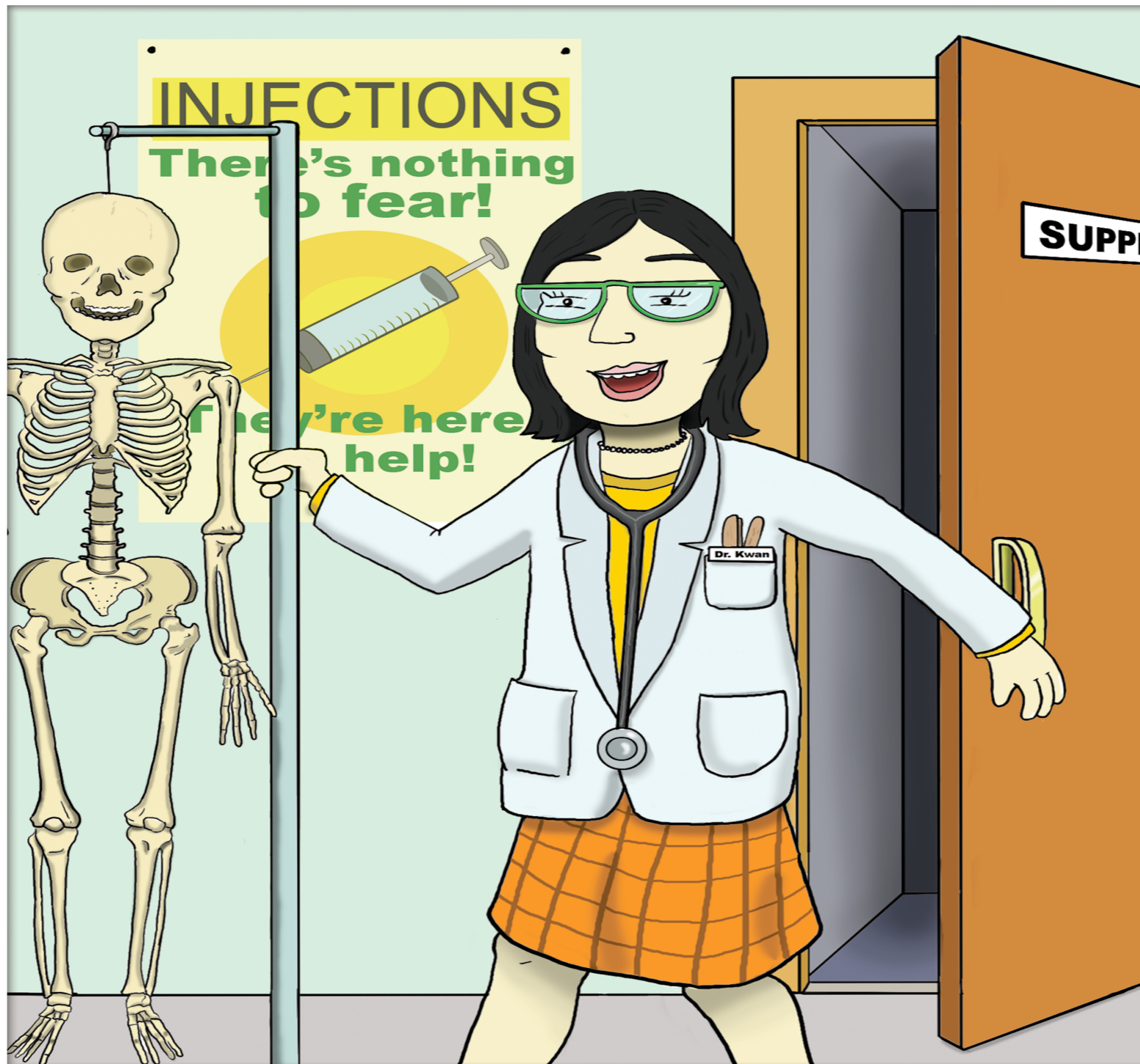
"No ...nothing like that, but she's a pediatrician and must know everything about *Growing Pains*."

"That's a really good idea, sweetie. I'll make an appointment for us this afternoon," Annabelle's mom agreed.



After school Annabelle's mom drove her to Dr. Lee's office and Annabelle quickly became an expert in the field of *Growing Pains*. You see Dr. Lee was a very kind and very intelligent children's doctor. She was more than happy to help Annabelle and she was impressed by the way Annabelle tried to understand this subject.



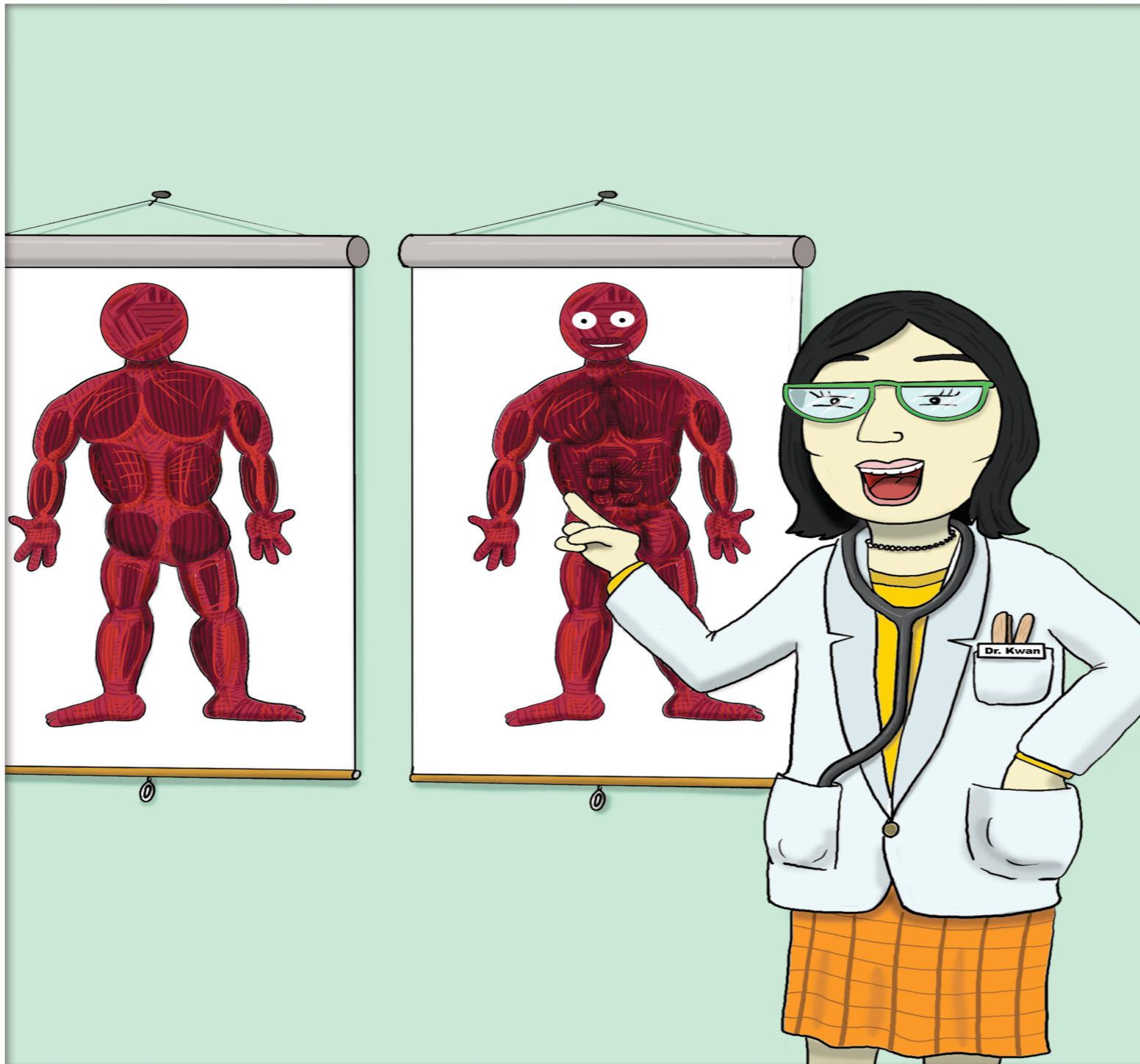


Dr. Lee excused herself and left the room briefly. She returned wheeling a skeleton that hung from a pole.

“I’d like you to meet Buddy. He is here to show you the framework of our bodies. All of us look like Buddy when we’re stripped of everything else.”

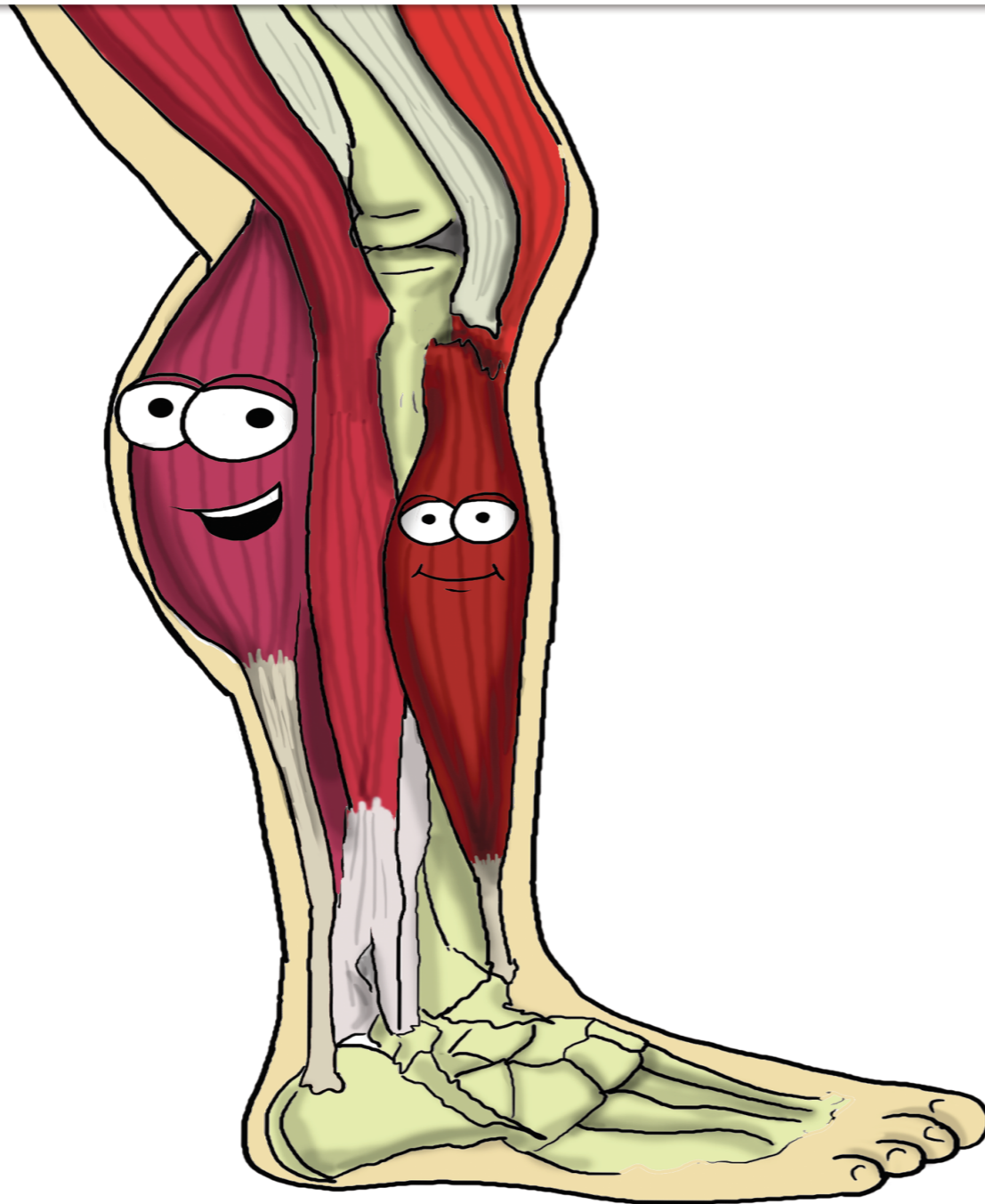
“Was he alive once?” Annabelle asked with fear in her voice.

“No, he’s just a model to show you that all bodies begin with bones, lots of bones,” Dr. Lee explained.



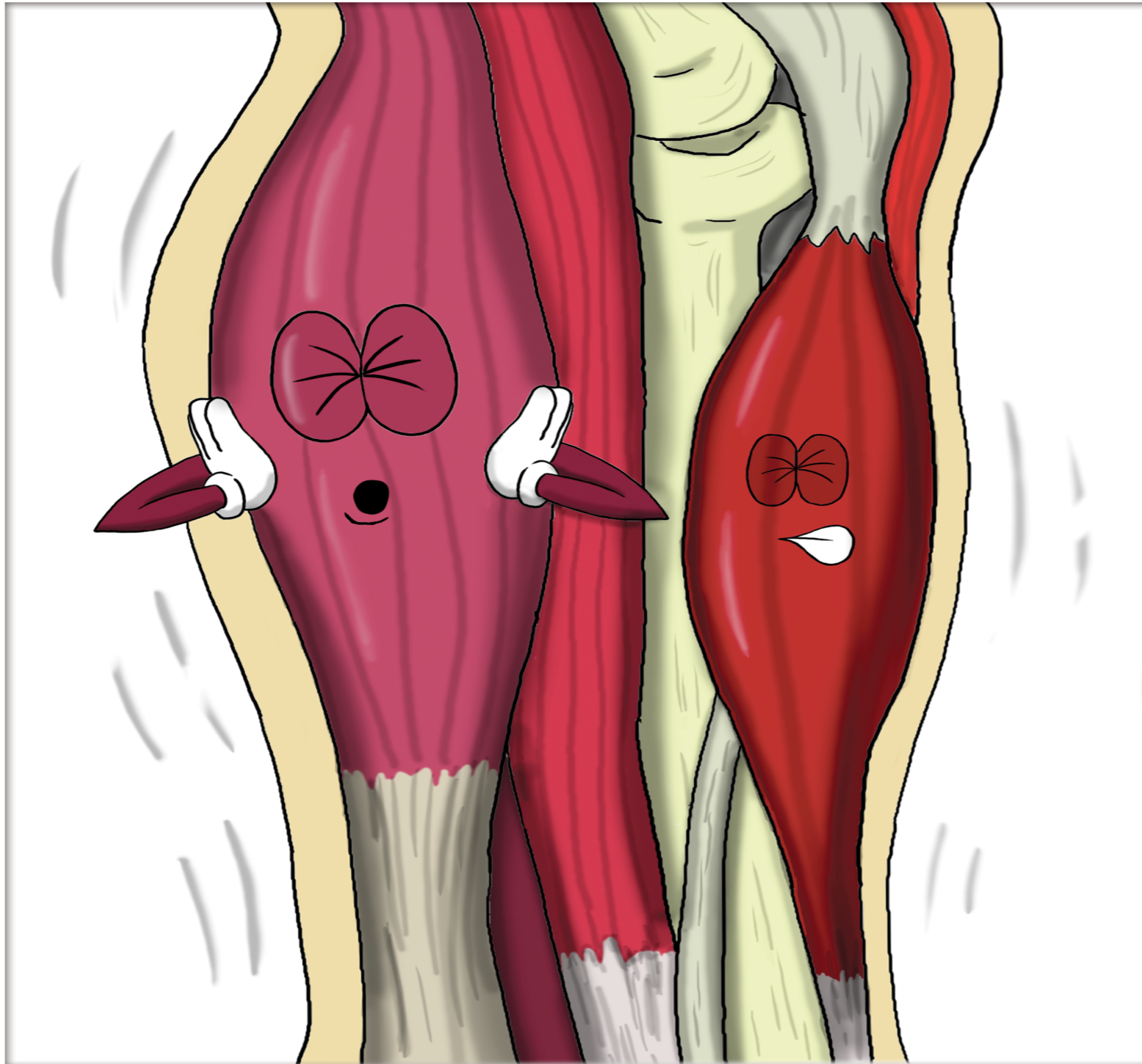
Next, Dr. Lee pulled down two charts of the human body...a front pose and a back pose of a child without skin.

“These are anatomy charts, Annabelle. All people...big or small...young or old...look the same under their skin.”



“The skeleton is wrapped in soft tissue called muscle. Other soft tissue called tendons attach muscles to bones. Another type of soft tissue called ligaments attach bone to bone. In the end, we are all wrapped up like a beautiful birthday present.”

Annabelle smiled. She was learning a lot thanks to Dr. Lee.

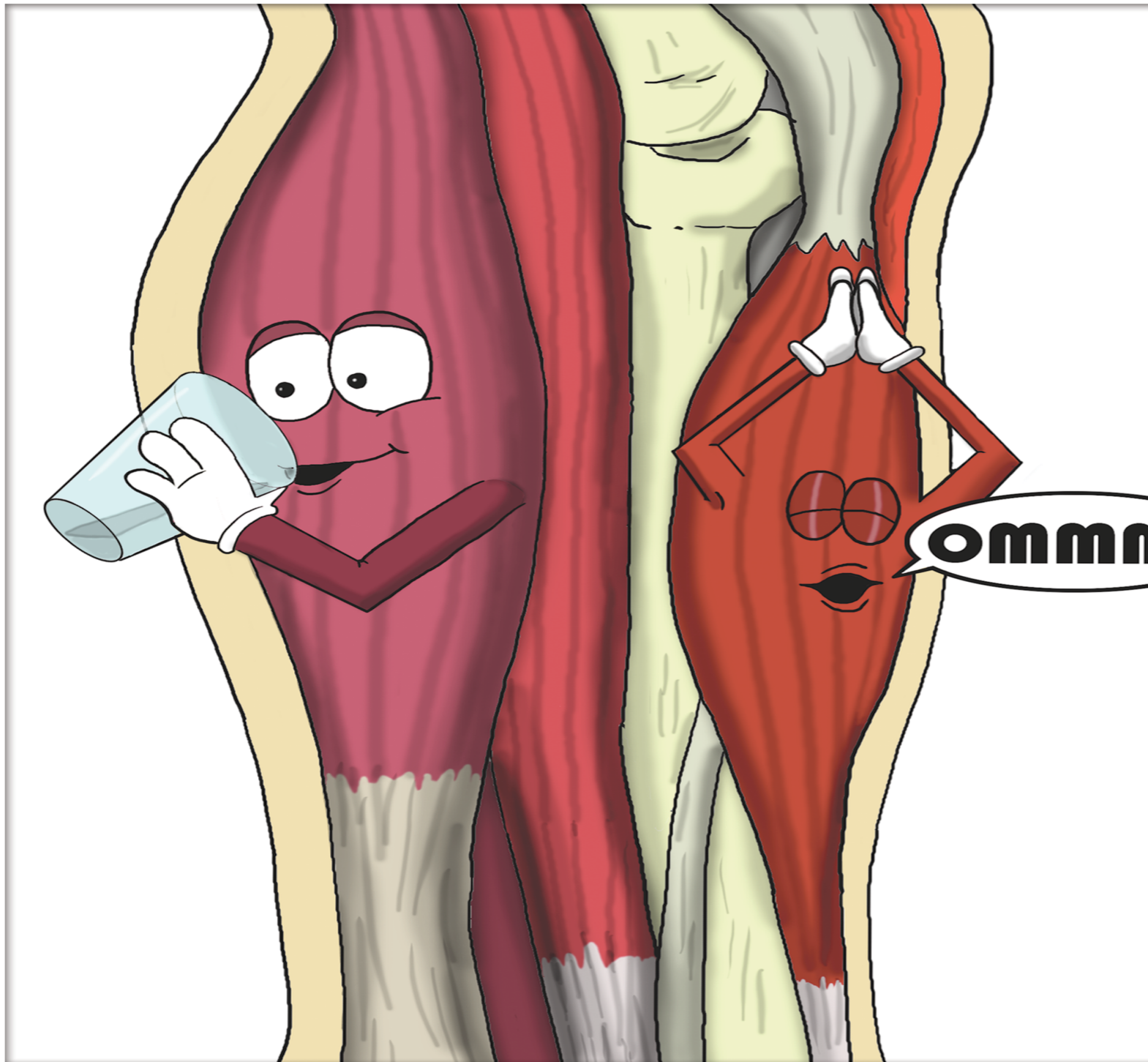


“When you go through little or big growth spurts,” Dr. Lee explained, “There is a great deal of pulling and tugging. As the bones grow longer, the muscles, tendons and ligaments play a game of tug-o-war with each other.”

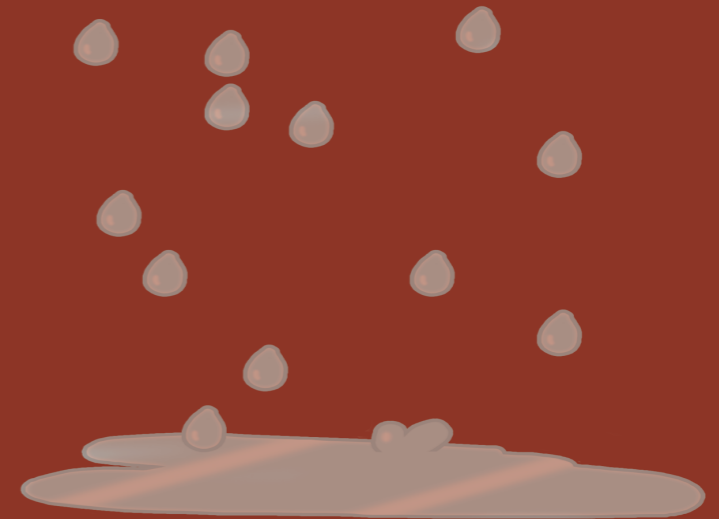
“So that’s why children feel growing pains!” Annabelle said with great satisfaction.

“Exactly,” replied Dr. Lee.





“Is there a cure for the pain?” Annabelle asked the doctor. “Not exactly,” Dr. Lee said, “But there are some helpful hints. First, we all need to drink plenty of water. This keeps the soft tissues flexible and makes the tugs and pulls of growing less painful. Then, stretching or yoga keeps our soft tissues loose. Hugs from Mom and Dad add to the body’s relaxation and lessen pains too.”

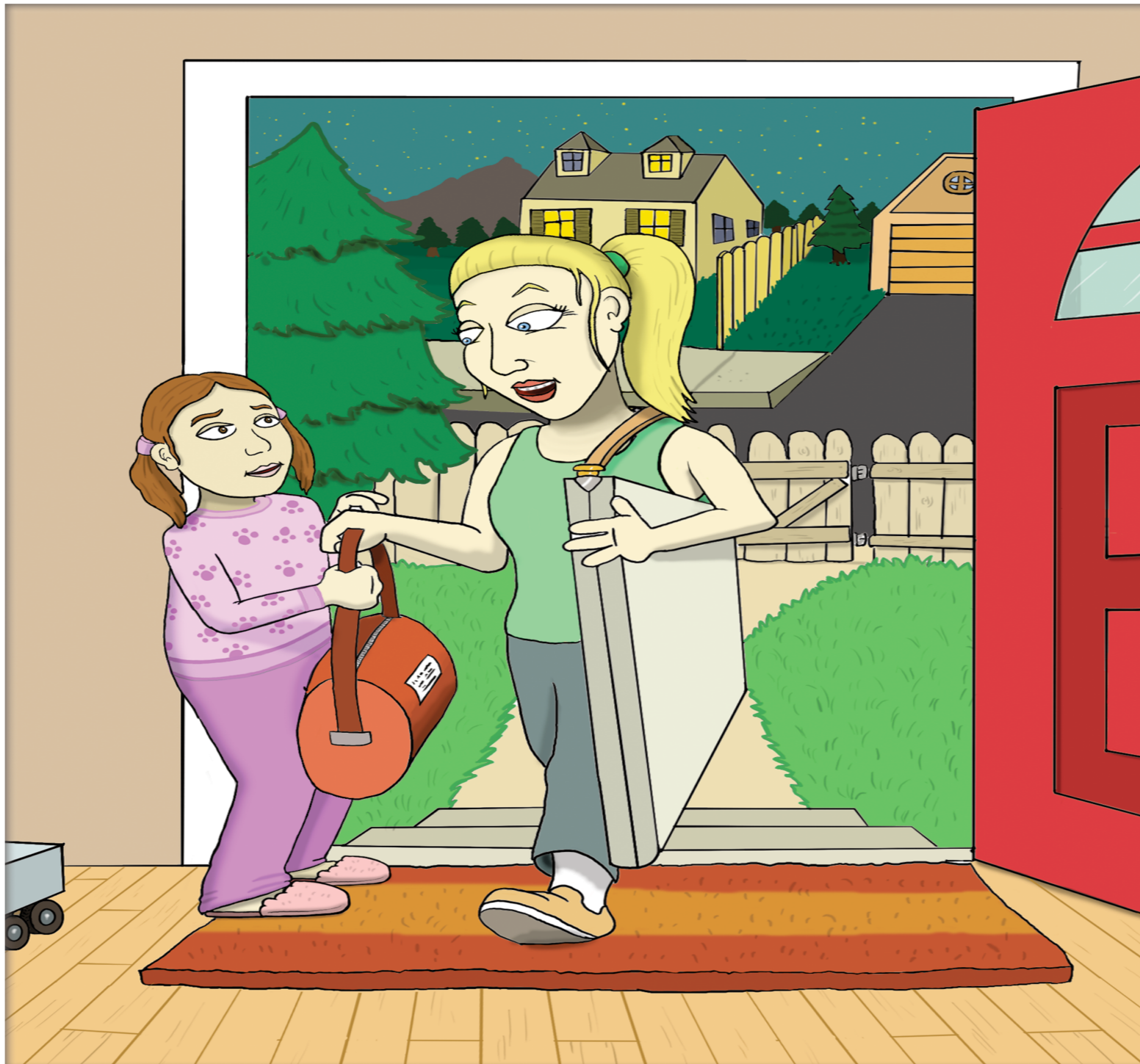




“Is massage a good idea?” asked Annabelle.

“Oh yes, absolutely... Massage is great for all aches and pains.” The doctor smiled at Annabelle’s solution.

“Thank you, Dr. Lee...you have made my day!” Annabelle said joyfully.



On Sunday night when Lisa arrived, Annabelle greeted her at the door.

“You were right, Lisa, I do have *Growing Pains*.”

As the two friends set up for the massage, Annabelle told Lisa everything she had learned from family, friends, the internet and Dr. Lee regarding *Growing Pains*. Needless to say, Lisa was amazed. Annabelle had done her homework.



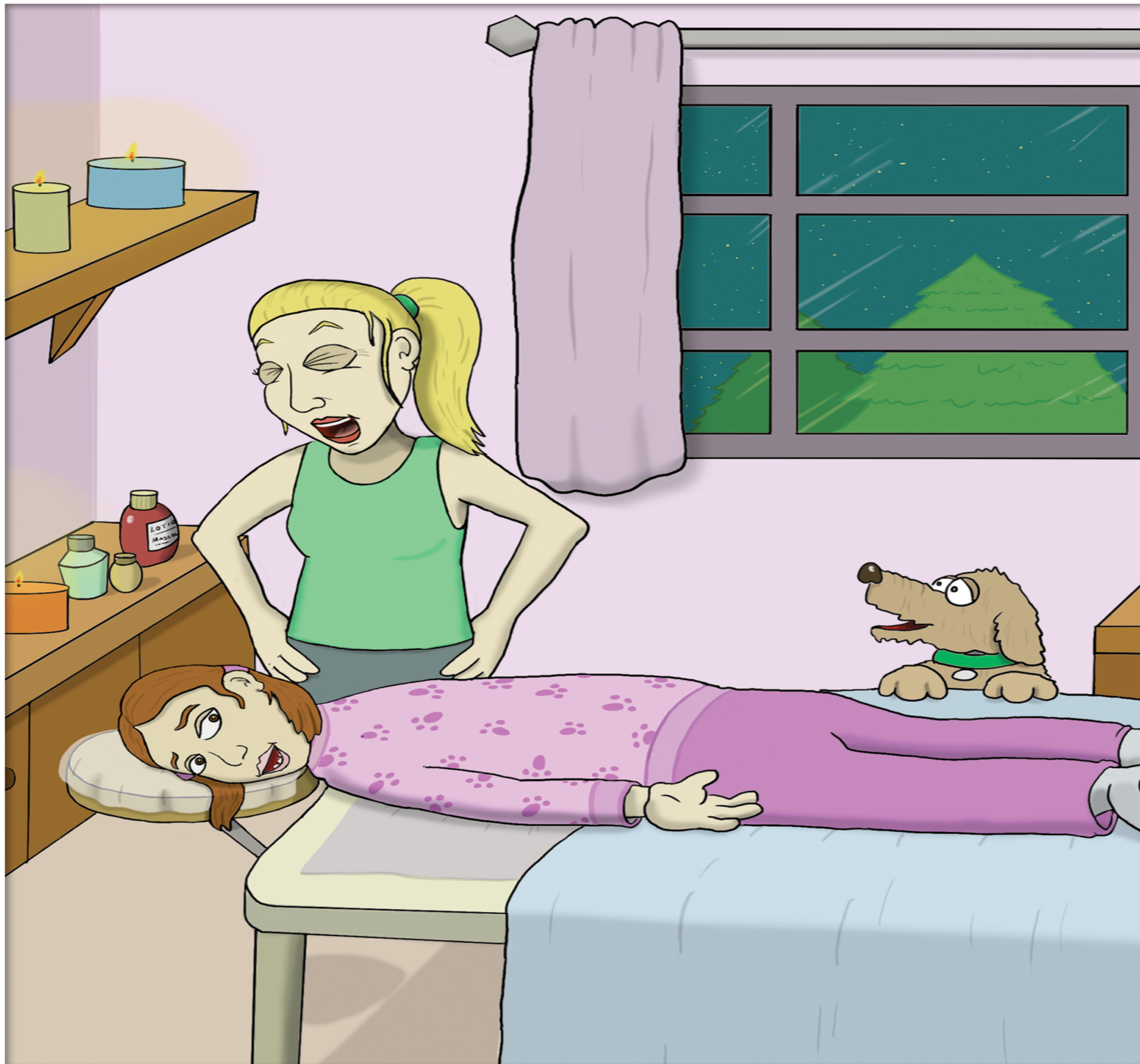
“Dr. Lee said they aren’t dangerous and by the time I’m sixteen, I’ll be done with them.”

Lisa said, “You have definitely become an expert, Annabelle.”

Annabelle had a funny look on her face as she continued, “The best thing is that Dr. Lee is a believer in massage and says it totally helps lessen *Growing Pains*.”

“Really!” Lisa smiled as she said this.





At that moment Annabelle jumped onto the massage table. “Not only does Dr. Lee recommend massage, but Mommy and Daddy said, if you have the time, it’s fine for me to take a 15 minute massage tonight.”

Lisa burst out laughing. Then, with candles lit and soft music playing, Annabelle received her first massage... a sure cure for her *Growing Pains*.

The End

As an in home massage therapist for the past 33 years I have frequently listened to the complaints of many of my clients' children.

"My feet hurt." "My back aches." "My legs are sore." These are some familiar declarations children have spoken to me as they seek relief from their various ailments.

"Annabelle's Growing Pains" was born out of this reality. Annabelle represents all children who have experienced growing pains and look for a cure. Her journey takes her to parents, family and community as she tries to understand why she suffers from growing pains and what she can do to heal herself.

This book is my second collaborative effort with Mike Goldstein as illustrator. We both live in the Los Angeles area and have enjoyed entering the children's books world together. For myself, it is my third career, having been an elementary school teacher as well as a massage therapist. Mike is a teacher, an artist and an animated filmmaker.

