

Elissa and the Coronavirus  
Written by Deanna Altomara  
Illustrated by Veronica Paltaratskaya

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Dedicated to children and families affected by coronavirus



## Table of Contents:

Chapter 1: Stories

Chapter 2: Fighting Germs

Chapter 3: Things Begin to Change

Chapter 4: Coping with Change

Chapter 5: Family and Friends

Chapter 6: A Good Day

Chapter 7: Sick

Chapter 8: Recovery

## Chapter 1: Stories

Elissa was a fairy.

Or at least, she liked to pretend she was. Elissa was an imaginative child. She loved to listen to stories and make up her own.

In her stories, Elissa lived in a fairy kingdom. In her kingdom, Elissa had a magic wand that could make any wish come true.

One of Elissa's favorite things was to visit the park with her mom. At the park, they would explore. Mom would push Elissa on the swings until she was so high she could close her eyes and pretend to fly through the clouds on her fairy wings. She would go down the slides and jump on her tiptoes from stepping stone to stepping stone, because she liked to pretend that the ground was made of lava. Mom and Elissa would have adventures in the woods and listen to baby birds, and then walk to the pond where they looked for tadpoles and frog princes.



At school, Elissa's friends also liked to tell stories. They pretended that they had magic powers, and that they could wave their wands and turn pebbles into diamonds. Every day at recess, they played pretend.

day at recess, Elissa's friend Jasmine told a scary story. Jasmine said that all the way on the other side of the world, people were getting very sick. Jasmine said that the sickness would come to their own town soon.

"Don't worry," said Elissa confidently. "I'll wave my wand and make all the sickness disappear!"

But Jasmine still seemed nervous. All week, she kept talking about getting sick. Other kids started talking, too. Some of them told stories that were scary or hard to believe.

One night, when Mom was putting Elissa to bed, Elissa asked if the stories about the sickness were true.

Mom said, “What stories?”

So Elissa told her.

Mom shook her head. She said, “Some parts of the story are true, and some aren’t.”

Elissa asked, “What parts are true?”

She said, “There is a sickness. It’s called coronavirus. Some people call it COVID-19, which is short for “coronavirus disease 2019.”

“Is it dangerous?” Elissa asked.

“Usually it’s not dangerous. Do you remember when you had the flu last winter?”

Elissa nodded. “I remember. I felt tired and coughed and sneezed a lot. Is that what coronavirus is like?”

“Usually,” Mom said. “For most people, having coronavirus is just like having the flu. You might feel tired or start to cough. You stay home and rest, and then you start to feel better.”

“Then why is Jasmine so scared?” Elissa asked. “She said that if you get coronavirus, you die. You say that if you get coronavirus, you feel sick for a while and then get better.”

Mom held Elissa's hand. She said, "Most people with coronavirus get better. In fact, some people don't even have a cough. Although yes, sometimes people die. The good thing is that we have very good doctors and hospitals that can help people feel better when they get sick."

Elissa smiled, "And nurses like you!"

Elissa's mom was a nurse. She worked at the hospital. When she went to work, she wore a blue uniform. It was her job to help sick people feel better. Elissa's mom was an expert on how to feel better after being sick.

Elissa's mom smiled. "Yes, and nurses like me."

Then Elissa remembered something. She said, "You also said that some parts of the story aren't true. When I talk to my friends, how do I know what's true and what's not?"

Mom said, "Whenever you have a question, you can come ask me. I'll help you figure out what is true and not true."

Elissa felt much better now. Her mom read her a bedtime story about fairies and wizards, and she fell asleep.

## Chapter 2: Fighting Germs

At school, kids kept talking about coronavirus. Some people were very afraid, including her friend Jasmine. Elissa tried to explain that most people with coronavirus got better, just like after a cold. However, Jasmine was still scared.

One day after recess, Elissa's teacher, Mrs. Humphries, spoke to the class. Mrs. Humphries stood at the front of the classroom and clapped her hands to get the class's attention. Everyone sat in their seats and listened.

Mrs. Humphries said, "I've been hearing some of you talk about something called the coronavirus. There are a lot of rumors going around."



In the front row, Michael raised his hand. “Mrs. Humphries,” he asked, “What’s a rumor?”

She said, “A rumor is a story that isn’t true. Sometimes, people don’t realize that the story isn’t true. Then they tell their friends, and their friends tell more people. There are a lot of rumors about coronavirus.”

Shaylan raised his hand. “My brother said that we’re all going to die. Is that true, or is it a rumor?”

“That is a rumor. Most people with the virus get better quickly. Good question, Shaylan. Whenever you’re not sure if something is a rumor or not, you can ask a trusted adult, like me or your parents.” Then Mrs. Humphries said, “Does anyone know what causes people to get sick?”

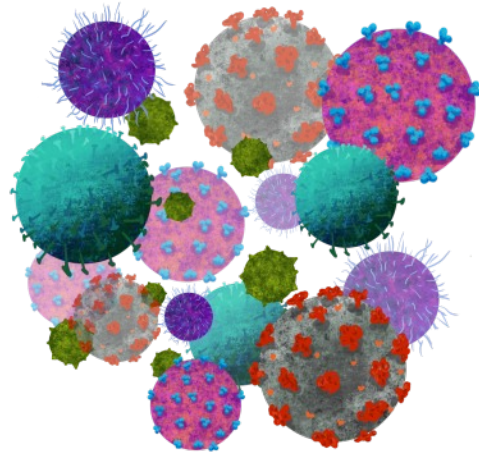
Kayla jumped up and down in her seat. She explained, “There are these little creatures called germs. They’re so tiny that you can only see them under a microscope. When a germ gets inside your body, it makes you sick.”

“That’s true,” said Mrs. Humphries, “and there are many different types of germs. Each germ causes a different sickness, and some germs don’t cause any sickness at all. Some germs are even good for you and help keep you healthy! Viruses, including coronavirus, are one type of germ, and they can cause people to get sick.”

In the back of the classroom, Owen raised his hand. He was shaking. He said, “My sister is home sick today. I think she has coronavirus.”

The whole class gasped. Mrs. Humphries shook her head and explained, “Just because you’re sick doesn’t mean you have coronavirus. Coronavirus causes a fever and cough. However, there are lots of different types of germs that can cause a fever and a cough. Your sister probably has the common cold. Let me show you what different types of germs look like.”





Mrs. Humphries went to her computer and typed. Then she turned on the screen at the front of the room. On the screen there were pictures of many different types of germs. Mrs. Humphries pointed at each one and told the class what kind of sickness it caused. She showed the kids which germ was coronavirus. She said, “Most germs are harmless. A lot of germs don’t cause any sickness at all. When a germ causes you to get sick, doctors can give you medicine to help you feel better.”

“I don’t like medicine,” said Carly. “It tastes like grape syrup.”

“Medicine is very important,” said Mrs. Humphries. “Even if it doesn’t taste good, it helps your body to heal. That’s most important.”

Justin asked, “So if medicine helps you feel better, why don’t the doctors just give medicine to people with coronavirus?”

“Different medicines are good at fighting different types of germs,” Mrs. Humphries said. “This is a new type of virus. Doctors have never seen this virus before, so they don’t know which medicine to use. Most people get better without any medicine, but there are a few people who may need medicine. Right now, doctors and scientists are working very hard to make a medicine for coronavirus. They are also trying to create a special type of medicine called a vaccine, which is like the chickenpox shot you get at the doctor’s office.”

Carly said, "I don't like getting shots."

Mrs. Humphries replied, "They might not be fun, but shots can keep you healthy and safe. Vaccines help keep you safe from different types of sicknesses. When I was a little girl, all of my friends got chickenpox. Then doctors made a chickenpox vaccine. Now when you go to the doctor, you get a vaccine for chickenpox, which helps keep you safe from chickenpox. Doctors are working very hard to make a vaccine that will help keep you safe from coronavirus."

Carly sighed. "If getting a shot keeps me healthy, then I'll do it."

Michael raised his hand again. "I don't understand," he said. "How does the virus get inside your body?"

"Viruses enter your body when you touch them and then touch your face," Mrs. Humphries said. "Germs are so small, you can't see them and don't know when you touch them. So be careful not to touch your face too much, and to wash your hands a lot. Washing your hands gets rid of germs."

"Does hand sanitizer also get rid of germs?" Stephen asked.

"Yes, it does. Still, handwashing is the best way to get rid of germs. When you have a germ on your hand, and then you touch your face, the germ can make you feel sick." Mrs. Humphries said. "Someone who is sick can also spread germs. When a sick person coughs or sneezes, germs can escape their body and land on someone else. That's why it's so important to sneeze into a tissue and cough into your elbow. That traps the germs in one spot so they don't land on other people and make them sick. Then you should wash your hands, just in case you missed any germs from your sneeze."

Mrs. Humphries added, "Germs might sound a little scary, because no one likes to feel sick. However, your body is very smart and knows how to get rid of germs. Sometimes, your body needs a little help fighting the germs. Medicine is good at fighting germs. Also, we know how to keep our bodies healthy. If we eat lots of fruits and vegetables, get enough sleep, and stay active, our bodies will be stronger. Being healthy helps protect us from getting sick in the first place."

She went back to the computer, and began typing a list, which appeared on the screen.



*Tips to Help Fight Germs:*

- *If someone is sick, let them rest so they can heal quickly.*
- *Wash your hands.*
  - *Use soap and warm water.*
  - *Wash your hands for twenty seconds. Sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice while you wash.*
  - *Hand sanitizer also cleans your hands, but soap and warm water are best.*
- *Try not to touch your face. Germs can enter your body through the mouth, nose, and eyes. Try not to pick your nose!*
- *Use a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw it in the garbage when you are done. Sometimes people don’t realize that they are sick, so it’s important to do this even if you feel fine.*
  - *If you don’t have a tissue, you can use the inside of your elbow.*
- *Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing, even if you used a tissue.*



After the lesson on germs, the students felt much better. They knew that there were smart doctors working on a medicine for coronavirus. They also knew that there were things they could do to stay healthy, like washing their hands.



### Chapter 3: Things Begin to Change

Elissa was very excited for spring break. Her father would make her pancakes every morning. Her mother would take her to the park, where they could play pretend. Elissa would have playdates with friends, watch movies, and read books with her parents.

On the third day of spring break, her parents received an unusual email. The email was from the principal. It said that after spring break, the children would not be returning to school for a whole two weeks.

“Yay!” Elissa cheered. “No more school! We can go to the park every day!”

Her father shook his head. He said, “You won’t be going to your classroom after break, but you will still have to learn. Mrs. Humphries will send home worksheets and videos.”

“Oh,” said Elissa. “That’s not as fun.”

Dad said to Mom, “I’m going to start teleworking. Elissa can’t be home by herself. The hospital will need your help.”

Elissa asked what “teleworking” was.

“Instead of going to my office to do my job, I’ll work at home,” he said. “You’ll do your schoolwork at home on the kitchen table. We can eat lunch together and play in the backyard for recess.”

“Why can’t I go to school?” Elissa asked.

“Some people in our state have become sick with coronavirus,” Mom said. “Doctors are taking care of them, but they want everybody to be safe. So the doctors are asking people to stay home.”

“How does staying home help keep us safe?” Elissa asked.

Mom said, “Coronavirus is caused by germs that like to hop from person to person. Germs like big crowds of people because it is easier for them to spread. One sick person can accidentally spread the germs to many other people. If one child at school has coronavirus, they might sneeze and make other children sick. So for now, everyone is just going to stay home.”

“Why don’t just the sick people stay home, and the rest of us go to school?” Elissa asked.

“Usually a germ lives inside your body for a few days before you start feeling sick. Some people with coronavirus don’t even feel sick at all,” Mom explained. “So people might not realize they’re sick, but they can still go to school and accidentally spread germs.”

Mom added, “Also, remember that if someone gets sick, it’s not their fault. No one likes to be sick! Some people can’t or don’t know how to protect themselves from sickness. There are many doctors whose job it is to help people learn how to stay healthy.”

“Oh,” said Elissa.

“Don’t worry,” Mom said. “Staying home from school and washing our hands often will help keep us safe.”

## Chapter 4: Coping with Change

After that, things started to change. Elissa's playdates were cancelled. Her parents said that there was a small chance that Elissa's friends might have the virus but not feel sick. Her friends were probably healthy, but it was better to be safe than sorry.



Elissa asked her mom if they could go to the park. Mom shook her head sadly. She said, “The parks are closed. A lot of things are closed right now.”

Elissa was upset. She asked, “Why is the park closed?”

Mom explained, “The doctors and scientists think that we will be safer if everybody tries to stay home as much as possible. Germs like to spread in crowds of people, so we have to stay away



from big crowds. If we go to the park or the store, we might meet someone who is sick and doesn't realize it yet."

"I want to go to the park," Elissa said.

"It is safer if we stay home. Some people call it social distancing. This is how we can do our part to help stop the pandemic," Mom said.

"What's a pandemic?" Elissa asked.

"It means that the sickness has spread to a lot of different parts of the world. Doctors are working very hard to make a medicine for coronavirus, but until then, we can also help stop coronavirus by staying home and washing our hands often. That will help stop it from spreading."

Elissa was happy that by staying home, she could help fight coronavirus. Still, she was sad. She wanted to go to the park and have playdates with her friends.

Her mom tried to make her feel better by building a fort downstairs. They made the fort into a wonderful fairy castle with tall towers and a dark dungeon. It was fun to spend more time with her parents, but Elissa still felt sad sometimes.

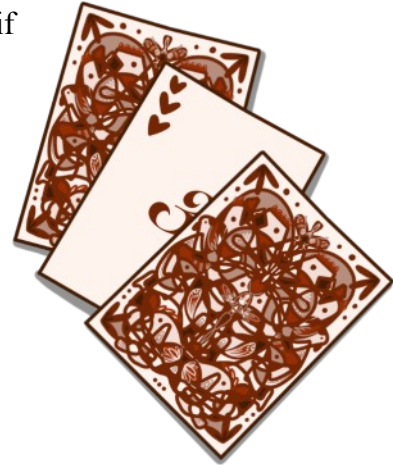
Mom said it was okay to feel sad sometimes. Everyone feels sad sometimes.

Drawing and writing stories helped Elissa to feel better. Mom was very proud of Elissa. She said that when you're sad, it's important to do things that make you feel good, but are still safe and kind.

Elissa told her dad that she missed her friends. He said, "I know what to do." He called Jasmine's mom, and Elissa and Jasmine talked on video-chat. It wasn't the same as a playdate, but it was still fun.

Her parents explained that everyone had to be flexible right now. That meant they would be doing things a little differently. Even if things were a little different, the family would still be safe and happy.

Dad started working from home, and Elissa started doing schoolwork from home. She did worksheets and watched videos. Mrs. Humphries made some of the videos. Mrs. Humphries said she missed her students. She was also staying home to be safe and help stop coronavirus.



Every day, Elissa and her dad both worked in the morning. Then he made her a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch, and then they played in the backyard. Afterwards, Dad worked for a little bit longer. Elissa did her homework and then watched movies, read books, or played pretend until it was time for dinner.

Elissa started to get bored. Dad said, “Let’s brainstorm all the fun things we can do at home.”

“What’s a brainstorm?” Elissa asked.

“It means to have a bunch of creative ideas,” Dad said.

“Ooh,” Elissa said, “I love being creative! I am creative when I play pretend or write stories.”

Together, they brainstormed a list of fun activities. Dad wrote their ideas down on a piece of paper.

#### *Fun Things To Do:*

- *Play boardgames*
- *Learn new card games*
- *Have a scavenger hunt*
- *Make an obstacle course*

- *Play freeze-dance*
- *Make forts*
- *Bake cookies*
- *Paint pictures*
- *Make arts and crafts*
- *Make homemade ice cream*
- *Make slime*
- *Cook pizza*
- *Build a castle out of blocks*
- *Pretend to go camping*
- *Plant flowers*
- *Make a homemade bird feeder*

They had a lot of other fun ideas. Each day, they tried a new idea.

Two weeks passed, and another email from the school came. It said that school would be at home for the rest of the school year.

Elissa was sad. She missed her friends, missed her teacher, and missed playing in the park. She sighed, “How long is the pandemic going to last?”

Dad said. “We don’t know how long things will be this way, but we do know that this is temporary. Things will be like this for a while, and then they will go back to usual.”

Mom was a nurse. She started spending more time at work. Some days she went to work very early or came back very late. After working, Mom was too tired to play. Her voice sounded different, too. This made Elissa sad.

Elissa asked her father, “Why isn’t Mom playing with me anymore?”

He looked sad. He said, “Mom is working very, very hard at the hospital. She is a nurse, and the hospital needs her help. There are some people at the hospital who are very sick, and she is working hard to take care of them. So when she comes home, she is very tired and needs to take a nap. It’s very important that she gets good sleep, because sleep helps you to stay healthy. So we need to be quiet when she is home resting. In fact, I am going to start sleeping on the couch in the living room. That way, she can have the bedroom all to herself and relax.”

Elissa said, “ I want to play pretend. I want to be a fairy with a magic wand.”

“I know,” said Dad. “I have an idea. I can play pretend with you.”

“When will Mom be able to play with me again?” Elissa asked.

“I don’t know when, but she will definitely play with you again,” he said. “Your mother loves you very much. Things are just a little different right now. Things will get better soon, but until then, we have to be flexible. We can still play and have fun, and we can still eat dinner and do homework like usual, but we might have to do those things a little differently.”

So Dad and Elissa went outside and played pretend. They pretended that Elissa was a fairy and that she could cast spells with her magic wand. With her wand, Elissa made flowers grow. She turned rocks into frogs. She could soar in the sky like a bird.

“I wish I had magic to make the coronavirus go away,” Elissa sighed.

Dad also sighed. “I wish so, too. Doctors and scientists are working very hard to make new medicines. There are ways we can help fight coronavirus, too. For example, we can stay home, we can wash our hands...”

“I know!” said Elissa. “We talked about it at school. We can also blow our nose into a tissue and try not to touch our face.”

“Very good!” Dad said. “I’m proud of you. Those are important lessons.”

“What about masks?” Elissa said. “Some people are wearing masks to try to make the coronavirus go away.”

“Masks can help, too,” Dad said. “If you are sick, masks help stop the germs from spreading to other people. They can help trap germs, kind of like how a tissue can help trap germs after you sneeze. Masks are helpful, but the most important things we can do are washing our hands and staying home.”

“It would be easier to make coronavirus go away with my wand,” Elissa smiled, “but I’m glad there are things we can do to help.”



## Chapter 5: Family and Friends

Mom was working at the hospital a lot. She had a lot of patients with the coronavirus, and she was helping them to heal. Elissa missed playing with her mom, but she knew this was temporary.

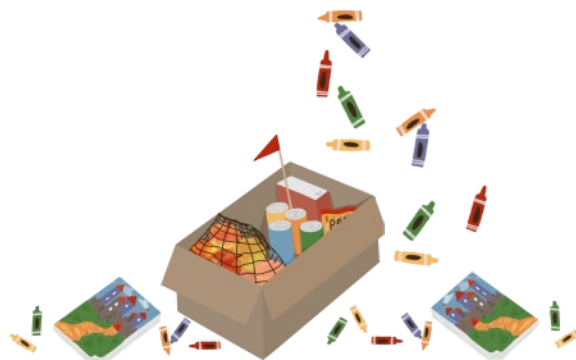
Every day, the first things Mom did after work were to wash her clothes and take a shower. She washed her hands, took a lot of showers, and kept the house clean. She ate a lot of fruits and vegetables to help her body stay healthy so it could protect itself from germs. She spent most of her time in her bedroom with the door closed so that in case she did get sick, she wouldn't spread it to Dad and Elissa.

After dinner one day, Elissa asked her dad, "What if the coronavirus germs land on Mom at the hospital? Will she get sick?"

He sighed. He said, "It is possible that the germs will land on her, but she is wearing special masks and equipment to protect herself."

Elissa was still worried. "What if she gets sick?"

Dad said, "She might get sick. Remember, most people with the coronavirus do not get very sick. She might have a cough and then get better again."



“I heard that some people die from coronavirus,” Elissa said.

“There are a few people who die, but most people get better. Doctors are good at taking care of sick patients so they can get better.”

Elissa had a horrible thought. She said, “If I get coronavirus, will I die?”

Dad said, “Doctors don’t know why, but it is rare for children to get very sick from coronavirus. Most children and adults get better quickly, just like with a cold. The people who get very sick are usually older people.”

“Are you old? Is Mom old?” Elissa asked.

Dad chuckled. “No, we’re not old.”

“What about Grandma and Grandpa?” Elissa asked. “I know they’re old.”

Dad nodded. He said, “Grandma and Grandpa are old, but they are being very careful to not get sick. Do you remember how we are keeping ourselves safe from coronavirus?”

Elissa said, “Yes! We’re staying home, washing our hands, not touching our faces, and wearing masks.”

“Very good,” Dad said. “Grandma and Grandpa are doing the same thing.”

“Can we go visit them?” Elissa asked.

Dad looked sad. He said, “We can’t visit them right now because they have to be very, very careful to not get sick. They are trying to stay home and not see many people. Right now there is a small chance that we might have the virus and not know it. If we go visit them, we might accidentally spread germs.”

“Oh no!” Elissa cried. “Are they lonely?”

“I have an idea,” said Dad. “Let’s go leave a present on their doorstep. Then we can call them when we get back home.”

“That’s a great idea!” Elissa said. “I know! I’ll write them a story!” So she ran to her room and took out all her art supplies.

She wrote a story about a fairy who lived in a magic kingdom where the flowers always blossomed and the birds always sang. One day, winter came to the kingdom, and everything was covered in glistening, glittering ice. The fairy was cold. She was scared because she had never seen snow or felt cold before. She waved her wand to make the winter go away. Although her wand could make dogs talk or rocks change colors or candles float in the air, her wand could not make winter go away.

An old wizard with a beard came to the castle where she lived, and explained that there were some things magic could not fix. The fairies would have to trust that one day the sun would come out again. So the fairies made snowmen and went ice skating and drank hot chocolate until the sun came out and the snow began to melt. Winter had lasted a long time, but it was finally over. The flowers began to blossom again and the birds began to sing again.

Elissa was very proud of her story. She painted beautiful pictures for it. She stapled the paper together to make a little book.

Meanwhile, Dad gathered a bag of food. Elissa helped him bake golden-brown homemade cookies. She even tasted a few, and they were yummy, warm, and chocolate-y.

Dad explained, “If we give Grandma and Grandpa food, then they don’t have to go to the grocery store. They can stay home where it is safe.”





“Good thinking!” said Elissa. “Then they can read my story!”



Dad drove Elissa to her grandparents’ house. They left Elissa’s book and some food on the front step. Then they rang the doorbell and dashed back to the car, giggling. They were like secret spies.

When they got home, they called Grandma and Grandpa on the phone. They laughed a lot. Grandma said she adored Elissa’s book. They couldn’t wait to eat the cookies for dessert.

“That was really fun,” Elissa said. “Can we do it again?”

“Sure!” said Dad. “We can leave them another surprise later this week. Do you know there are also older people who live on our street? Older people, just like Grandma and Grandpa, are called seniors. The seniors are also trying to stay home, and they might be bored or lonely. Let’s leave some of your artwork for them!”

“Great idea!” said Elissa. “I’ll start making more artwork!”

While Dad was thinking about how Elissa could cheer up the seniors with her artwork, he had another idea about how they could help people. Dad suggested, “When we deliver the artwork to the seniors, let’s also do a neighborhood food drive.”

“What’s a food drive?” Elissa asked.

Dad explained, “Sometimes people don’t have enough to eat. When that happens, there are organizations called food banks that are there to help. Food banks collect canned and packaged foods, and then give them to people who need the help.”

“That’s really nice,” said Elissa.

Dad said, “A food drive means that you are asking people to donate to the food bank. When we deliver your artwork to the seniors, we can also drop off a letter on everyone’s porch to let them know that we are doing a food drive. If people have extra cans of food, they might like to donate them. The next day, we can come back with your wagon to collect the food. Then we will deliver the food to the food bank, and the food bank will give it to people who need it.”

“That’s a good idea,” said Elissa. “Will we donate some food, too?”

“Sure,” Dad said, “I’m going to visit the store and buy some groceries. I have to go tomorrow anyway, because we are getting low on milk.”

“But Dad!” Elissa cried, “What if there are germs at the store, and they land on you?”

“I will be very careful. I will not get too close to people and I will wash my hands. I will also wear a mask.” Dad explained, “And remember, usually coronavirus doesn’t cause you to get very sick. Older people are more likely to go to the hospital. So we should help to keep them safe.”

“Okay,” said Elissa.

“We should also buy a cake and flowers for Mom,” Dad said. “She is a nurse. She has been working very hard to help people with coronavirus.”

“Oooh, can we get chocolate cake?” Elissa asked.

“Well, what kind of cake do you think Mom would like?” Dad asked. “What’s her favorite flavor?”

Elissa thought about it. She said, “I think Mom would like a carrot cake. She always says carrot cake is her favorite.”

“Then we have a plan,” Dad said. “Tonight, you can create artwork for the seniors. Tomorrow, I’ll go to the store. Then we will bring the artwork down the street and leave them on the seniors’ front porches. Your stories are going to be especially nice gifts, because you put a lot of hard work and love into them. And when Mom comes home from work, we will take out the cake and surprise her!”

Elissa was so excited!

## Chapter 6: A Good Day



Elissa was so excited she couldn't stay in bed the next morning. It was Saturday, which meant she didn't have any schoolwork. Mom didn't have the day off. She had to work at the hospital.

While Elissa worked on beautiful artwork to give to the seniors, Dad went to the grocery store. He wore a mask like a superhero!

She helped Dad type a letter to tell their neighbors about the food drive. After Dad printed the letters, she drew a picture on each one. She put all of her artwork and the stack of letters in the wagon.

Then Elissa and Dad pulled the wagon down the street. They stopped at every senior's house. They left the artwork on the front porch, rang the doorbell, and then ran back to the street. When

the person opened the door and found their surprise, they would laugh with happiness and wave at Elissa. They shouted, "Thank you!"

They also left a copy of their letter on every neighbor's porch. The letter said:



## NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD DRIVE



Hi, it's me, Elissa! We are collecting food to donate to the local food bank. If

you have a can of food to donate,

please leave it on your porch. Tomorrow at 3pm, I will come by to collect the food in my wagon.



Have a nice day!

From, Elissa (your neighbor)



It made Elissa very happy to help people. She felt happy, so happy she felt like she could fly. This was like magic! She said to her dad, "I like helping people. It's just like having a magic wand!"

When they came home, it was almost dinnertime. Elissa played in the backyard and then ate dinner with Dad while she waited for her mom to come home from work.

When Mom came home, it was late and she was very tired. She looked like she was going to fall asleep. She sat down at the table and ate soup. She didn't talk much, because she was tired. Elissa and Dad waited outside the kitchen.

After Mom finished eating, Elissa said, "Guess what, Mom! We have a surprise for you!"

Mom looked surprised. She asked, "You do?"

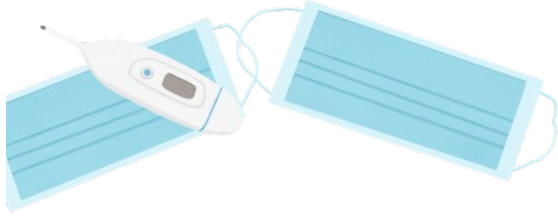
“Yes!” Elissa cheered. “To thank you! You work so hard to help people with coronavirus. You deserve a treat.”

Dad took out the cake and the flowers. Everyone had a big smile on their face.

“You are amazing!” Mom cried, “I have the best family ever!”

Elissa laughed. She said, “We have the best mom ever!”





## Chapter 7: Sick

The next day, people left cans of food on their front porches. Dad and Elissa visited every house in the neighborhood with their wagon to collect the food. Elissa was so happy! She was surprised how many people donated food. Not everyone had extra food to donate, but that was okay. Elissa was still happy that she could cheer people up with her pictures.

After collecting the food in the wagon, Elissa helped Dad to load it into the car. Then Dad drove it to the food bank and donated it. He and Elissa felt very proud to be doing something kind.

For a few weeks, things were very different. Dad worked from home. Elissa did school from home. She played in the backyard with her dad, since the parks were closed. Sometimes the store ran out of toilet paper. No matter what, Dad took care of Elissa. Everything was alright.

It took Elissa a while to get used to the changes. She coped with them by reading and writing stories and drawing. That helped her feel better. She also helped her Dad deliver more artwork to the seniors. That helped her feel good inside.

Elissa felt inspired to keep helping people. Dad helped her to brainstorm a list of how she could help people during the coronavirus.

### *How To Help Others During the Coronavirus Outbreak:*

- *Write thank-you letters to people who are still working. They are working very hard!*
- *Send letters and make phone calls to people who might be lonely*





- *Paint a “Thank You, Heroes!” sign to hang in the window*
- *Make a chalk drawing to brighten up the neighborhood*
- *Donate to a food pantry*
- *Help an adult to sew homemade masks*
- *Pick out toys and clothes to donate*
- *Paint pretty rocks, and leave them outside to surprise people*
- *Most importantly, wash your hands and stay home!*

Meanwhile, Mom was very busy. She worked at the hospital all the time. When she came home from work, she was tired. Sometimes she was so tired she became angry. Dad explained that Mom needed time to relax and be alone. Elissa tried to respect that. She tried to be quiet when her mom was sleeping. She kept drawing pictures and writing stories to help Mom feel better. They always made Mom smile.

One day, Mom was more tired than usual. She started coughing a lot. She slept a lot. Dad took her temperature. She had a fever.

Elissa was scared. She asked, “Dad, does Mom have the coronavirus?”

He said, “Yes, she does.”

Elissa started to cry.

“Don’t worry,” Dad said. “Most people who get the coronavirus only are sick for a while. They might cough or have trouble breathing, but then they get better.”

“Some people have to go to the hospital,” Elissa said.

“That’s true, some people have to go to the hospital,” Dad said. “Especially seniors. The hospital helps them feel better. Remember, most people can get better at home. They just have to stay home and rest.”

“Dad, what if Mom coughs and the germs land on us? Will we get sick?”

“We have to be very careful,” Dad said. “We have to wash our hands a lot, and not touch our faces. Also, Mom is going to wear a mask. It might look a little strange, but it will help stop the germs from getting in the air. Think of it like a superhero mask.”

“Mom is a superhero,” Elissa said. “She helps so many people at the hospital. Now we have to help her.”

## Chapter 8: Recovery

Dad and Elissa had to be very careful while Mom was sick. They washed their hands a lot. They made sure to eat fruits and vegetables, get outside and play, and get enough sleep, because all of those things help to keep the body healthy.

While Mom was sick, she stayed in her bedroom. She didn't want to accidentally spread the germs to Dad or Elissa. She still loved them very much, but she knew that by giving them space, she was protecting them from getting sick.

Dad and Elissa helped Mom to feel better, too. They made her healthy food to eat. They were quiet so she could sleep. Elissa helped her family by doing extra chores around the house, like sweeping and cleaning her room. She also drew pictures for Mom and slid them under the bedroom door. Dad was in charge of the family first aid kit. Dad showed Elissa the thermometer, tissues, bandaids, and other things that could help keep them safe and healthy.



One day, Mom woke up and didn't have the fever anymore!

Soon, she started to get better. She stopped coughing and felt less tired, but she still wore the mask. She wanted to be very careful so that Dad and Elissa didn't get sick.

For a while, that's how things were. Mom got better. Dad worked from home and Elissa did school from home. The parks were closed. Elissa played pretend with her parents in the backyard. Every time she got bored, Dad helped her to brainstorm things to do.

After what seemed like a very long time, some people started to go back to the places that had been closed. When people went to these places, they were very careful. They wore colorful masks, just like at a costume party. They still tried to avoid crowds, just in case someone was sick and didn't realize it. They washed their hands a lot.

One day, the news reporter had something very special to say. He said that the doctors and scientists had made a medicine for coronavirus! They were successful!



Elissa was so excited she jumped up and down. Dad lifted her into the air. Mom cried with happiness. It was like a party!

Elissa's parents received another email from the principal. School would be opening up soon! Elissa was so excited to see her friends. She couldn't wait. Mom saw how excited she was, and started setting up playdates so Elissa could see Jasmine.

Everything was starting to go back to usual. Elissa was so happy! There were also some things she knew she would miss.

"Dad?" she asked, "Can you keep playing pretend with me, even though you have to go back to work now?"

"Of course!" he said, "I love playing with you!"

Elissa added, "Can we keep making phone calls to Grandma and Grandpa? Only now we can visit them, too!"

"Yes!" he said, "They will be so happy to see you."

Finally, Elissa asked, "Can we keep giving gifts to seniors? I think they really liked it, and so did I!"

"That's a great idea!" Dad said. "There are always people who need help."



Elissa felt like a fairy. Only she didn't have to pretend anymore—she felt just like she had a magic wand.

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## About the Author

Deanna Altomara grew up in New Jersey, where she first fell in love with words and storytelling.

She has been honored on a national and international stage through several organizations, including Future Problem Solving, the Ayn Rand Foundation, the Outdoor Writers Association of America, the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, and the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. An avid dreamer, she is the author of two middle-grade fantasy books, *Ageless* and *Pi*. Deanna was a Woodruff Scholar at Emory University, where she majored in Creative Writing and Human Health. When she's not writing, she can usually be found with a book, hiking shoes, or a good meal!

## About the Illustrator

Veronica Paltaratskaya is a creative spirit from Nevada. She was a founding member and president of Science Art Wonder (SAW), an organization connecting student artists and researchers in need of illustrations. She has done extensive work in art conservation at the Michael C. Carlos Museum and Emory Libraries. Veronica also worked in a microbiology lab and volunteers with senior citizens. She graduated from Emory University with a double-major in Neurobiology and Behavior and Art History, Criticism, and Conservation. She loves experimenting with art of all forms!