

Lia & Ellie

talk about Coronavirus



Ashley Anthony



Little Lia stood by her sister's bedroom door. She was very sad today. "Ellie", she exclaimed, "I hate staying in all day! I miss my friends from school, and going to the movies with you on Saturday. Am I being punished? I don't understand why I can't leave! Dad even said we might have to cancel our camping trip next weekend! I haven't seen our cousins in so long. It isn't fair!"

"Come in, let's talk about it," said Ellie. "I miss being outside too. You haven't been bad. We just have to stay home to protect ourselves and others from coronavirus!"

"What is coronavirus," Lia asked, "and why is everyone so scared?"

"The coronavirus is a new virus. A virus is a teeny-tiny particle that causes people sick--" said Ellie.

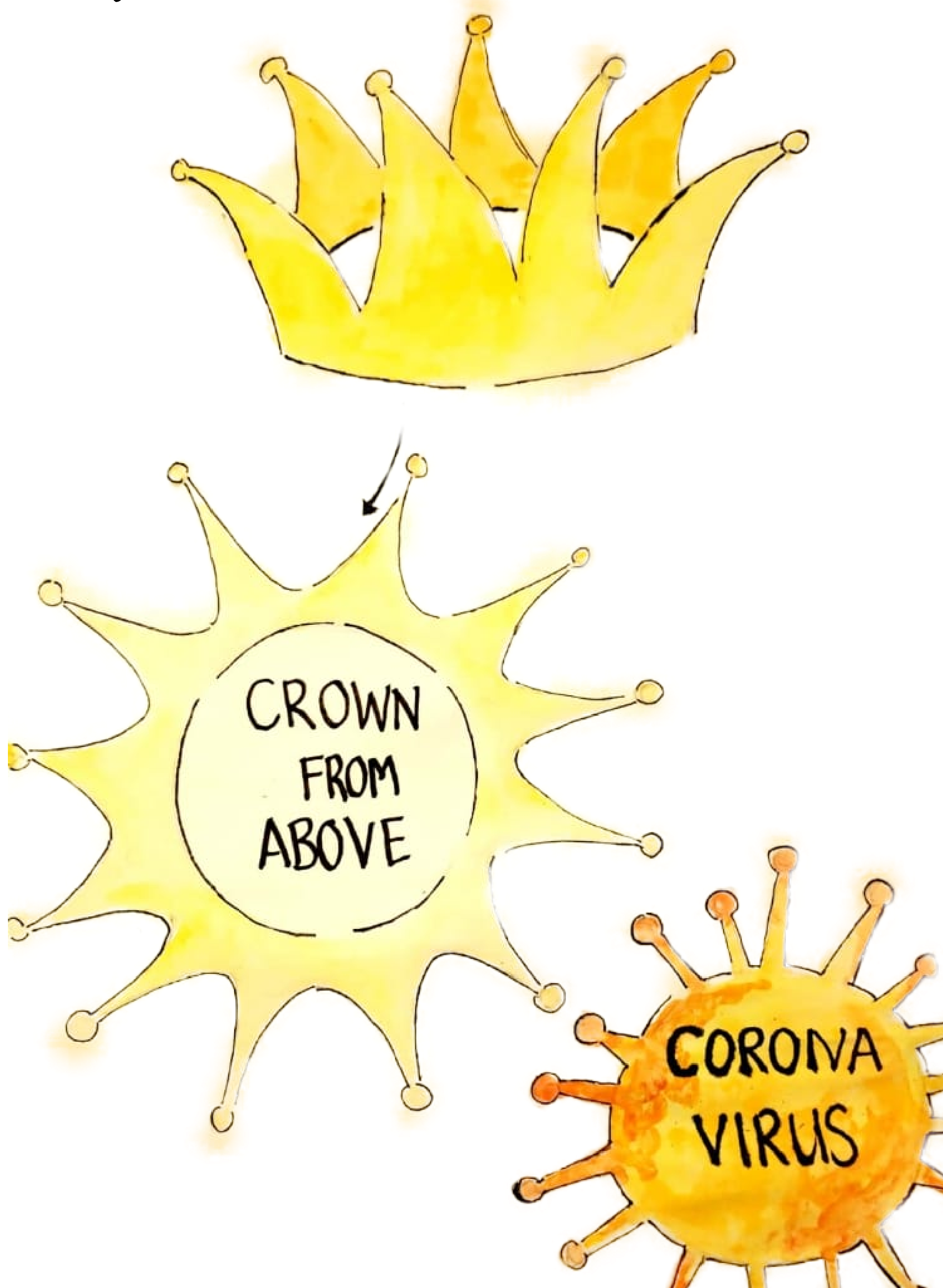
"Tinier than an ant?" Lia asked.

"Yes, tinier than an ant! ," Ellie answered, "So tiny that you can't even see it."



“Corona is a fancy word for crown. This virus is called coronavirus because it is spiky and looks like a crown.” Ellie explained. “Here, give me your crown, I’ll show you.”

Lia handed her older sister the crown, and Ellie pulled up a picture of the virus from online. “Here, look at your crown from above”, Ellie said.





Lia asked, "But why is it so bad? I heard someone say on the tv that it is like the flu. I had the flu before. I didn't like it, but it wasn't scary!"

"Well", said Ellie, "when coronavirus gets in the body it can cause people to feel really bad. For some people it can feel like a flu; you can get a fever, feel tired, cough and sneeze. But for some people you can have a really hard time breathing. Sometimes, it gets so bad that these people need to go to the hospital for doctors to help them. This is why coronavirus is a lot more serious than the flu. If lots of people get sick and have to go to the hospital, they will run out space and doctors and nurses will be overworked! Also, we have a vaccine for the flu virus. A vaccine is when we get an injection that helps our body prepare to fight off a disease! Your body naturally fights off lots of diseases, but vaccines help us do this better, and faster so that we don't get any of the bad feelings of being sick! We don't have a vaccine for the corona, yet, so we have to be more careful."

“But why do I have to stay inside? How does that help?”

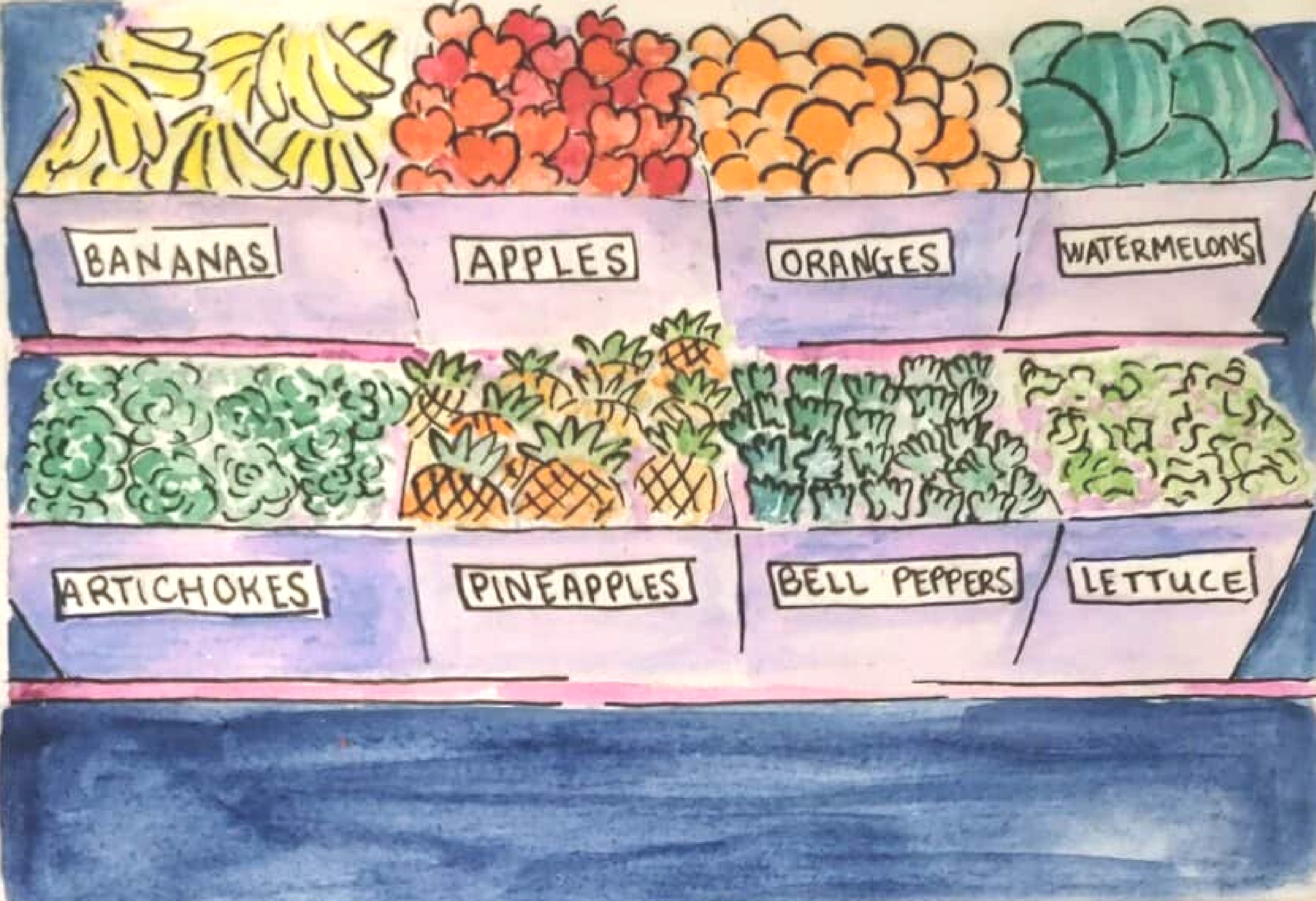
“The virus is infectious. This means that once it is in one person it doesn't stay there. When people cough and sneeze, the virus travels out of the body and into the air. If someone else is nearby they can catch it!”

“But wouldn't it be better if people who were sick stayed home?”

“Well sometimes, it takes the virus a little while to make you feel sick. Someone might not feel sick but could still have the virus and be infectious. Also, the virus can hang around in the air or on surfaces like doorknobs, desks or bus seats. On average, every person with the virus spreads it to three other people. This means that it spreads very quickly. Think about all of the people you come near to everyday!”

Lia thought about all the people she saw each day, her teachers, her friends and even the girls in her after school ballet class. “Wow,” she thought. “I see so many people everyday!”





"I think I get it," Lia said, "but sometimes, we still have to go outside. Like last week, you and mommy went to the grocery store! Plus mommy works in the hospital, is that safe?"

"Well", Ellie answered, "sometimes we have to make what are called essential trips. These are trips that we need to make to get things like food which we can't live without. It is okay to do this if we are very careful. When we go to the store, we make sure to stay six feet away from other people and use a mask and gloves. Six feet is as tall as dad is! Also, it is important to wash our hands often and clean our surroundings just to be sure we don't have any germs on us. Some people, like mommy are essential workers. Mommy needs to go to work because someone needs to take care of those who get sick. She is very brave. But don't worry, she has personal protective equipment like masks, gloves and face shields to keep her safe!"

"Let me show you how we wash our hands to be safe," said Ellie. They went to the bathroom. "First," she said, "you need to wet your hands and apply enough soap to cover them. Then you have to wash your hands for twenty seconds. That's enough time to sing 'Happy Birthday', twice!"



That night Lia went to bed and she dreamt of what life would be like when things were back to normal. She dreamt about her friends at school, playing in the park, her ballet lessons, and her camping trip with her dad and cousins. She thought about how pretty the lake at the campsite was, especially in the mornings! She thought about how much fun she had with her cousins everytime she went camping, and about how tasty and gooey freshly made s'mores were. They were good dreams indeed, and she was sure that if she obeyed the rules, soon they would come true.





Lia couldn't wait to be at the lake.