



# THE BIG THING

by Angela Meng and Alexander Friedman

Illustrated by Alvaro Gonzalez



THE  
BIG  
THING



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To the superheroes

THE BIG THING

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Bea is worried.


A **BIG THING** happened, and now everything is different.

Schools are closed. So are restaurants, movies, parks, stadiums, beaches, and zoos. When Bea goes for walks around the block with her parents, they wear masks. The world looks empty.



People have to stay at least six feet away from each other -- almost twice Bea's height -- and wash their hands often.

Bea's mom and dad say it is because of the **BIG THING**.



The **BIG THING** is called a virus, something that lives inside the body. It's like a cold or flu, but worse.

One day, the virus jumped onto a man, and he became very sick. The sickly man accidentally passed it to a woman, and then another man. Soon, the virus was everywhere.

For thousands of years, this virus lived in bats. The bats learned to live with the virus.

Not everyone who had the virus got sick, but some people got so sick they had to go to the hospital. In order to stop the spreading, everyone stayed home.

On TV, adults talk about the virus turning the world into a scary place. At home, Bea's mom and dad talk nervously about their jobs, supplies, and their family's health.



It is all very confusing.

Bea wonders if she should be scared about money and food. She worries a lot now, and sometimes the worrying makes her stomach hurt. Bea misses the way things used to be.

She loves school, her classmates, and her favorite teacher, Mrs. Eva. But now she studies at home, alone, only seeing Mrs. Eva and her classmates through a computer.

It is hard to see them all on a tiny screen.





She loves to go to the beach with her friends in the summer, building sandcastles and catching baby crabs.

But no one knows how long the virus will last, and she might not be able to go at all.



She misses her favorite activities: picnics in the park with her grandparents, singing, dancing to music. Now she can only visit her grandparents over the phone.

She can't smell them or hug them.

She used to like counting  
fresh flower petals in the  
backyard, but not now.



She worries so much that her  
favorite color, blue, now looks  
grey, like all the other colors.

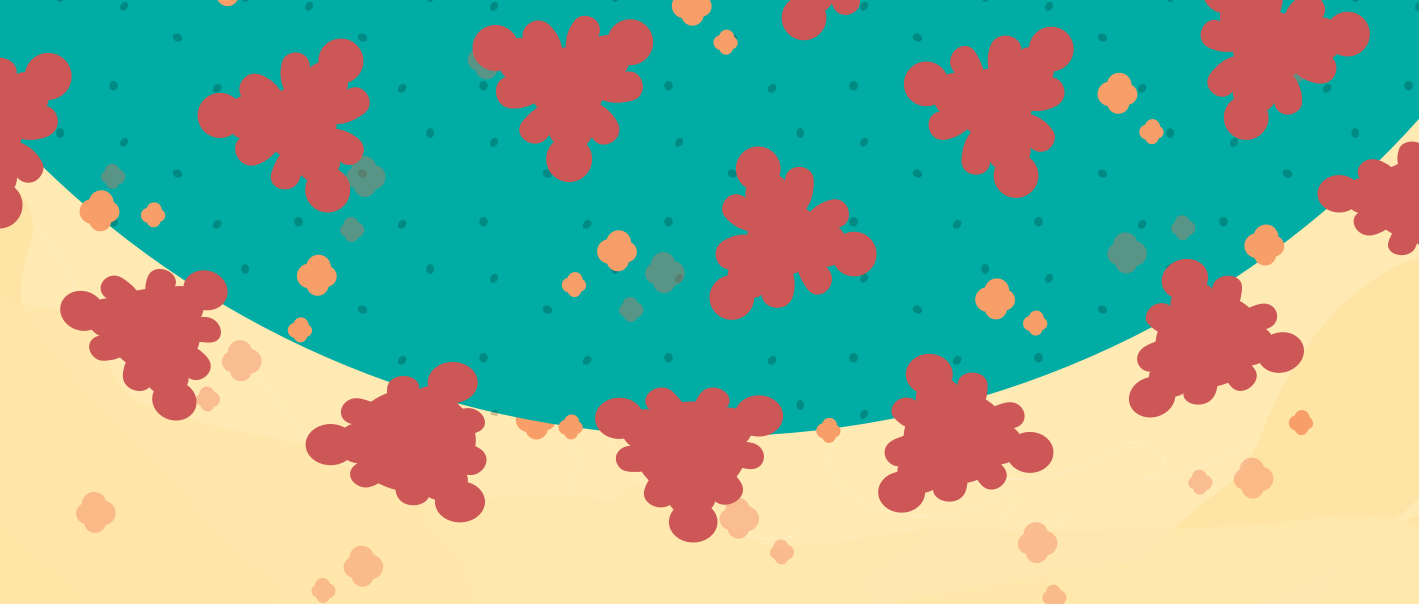




She worries so much that dessert, like mom's cupcakes, no longer tastes as sweet.



When Bea falls down and scrapes her knee, her parents patch her up and tell her she needs to be extra careful, because the hospitals are very busy right now.



Bea can only think about the **BIG THING**.

## THE VIRUS.



Mrs. Eva notices Bea's anxious face through the computer screen.

"What's wrong, Bea?" she asks.

Bea rubs her eyes and proceeds to tell Mrs. Eva all of her worries.





Mrs. Eva listens quietly, and asks Bea,

“If we pay attention to your worries, if we observe them closely, can we find a **SILVER LINING**?”

A **SILVER LINING**, Mrs. Eva says, is the good side of something that looks bad.



“Wherever there are bad feelings,” Mrs. Eva said, “there are good feelings, too.”

“Bea, is there something good, positive even, about studying at home?”

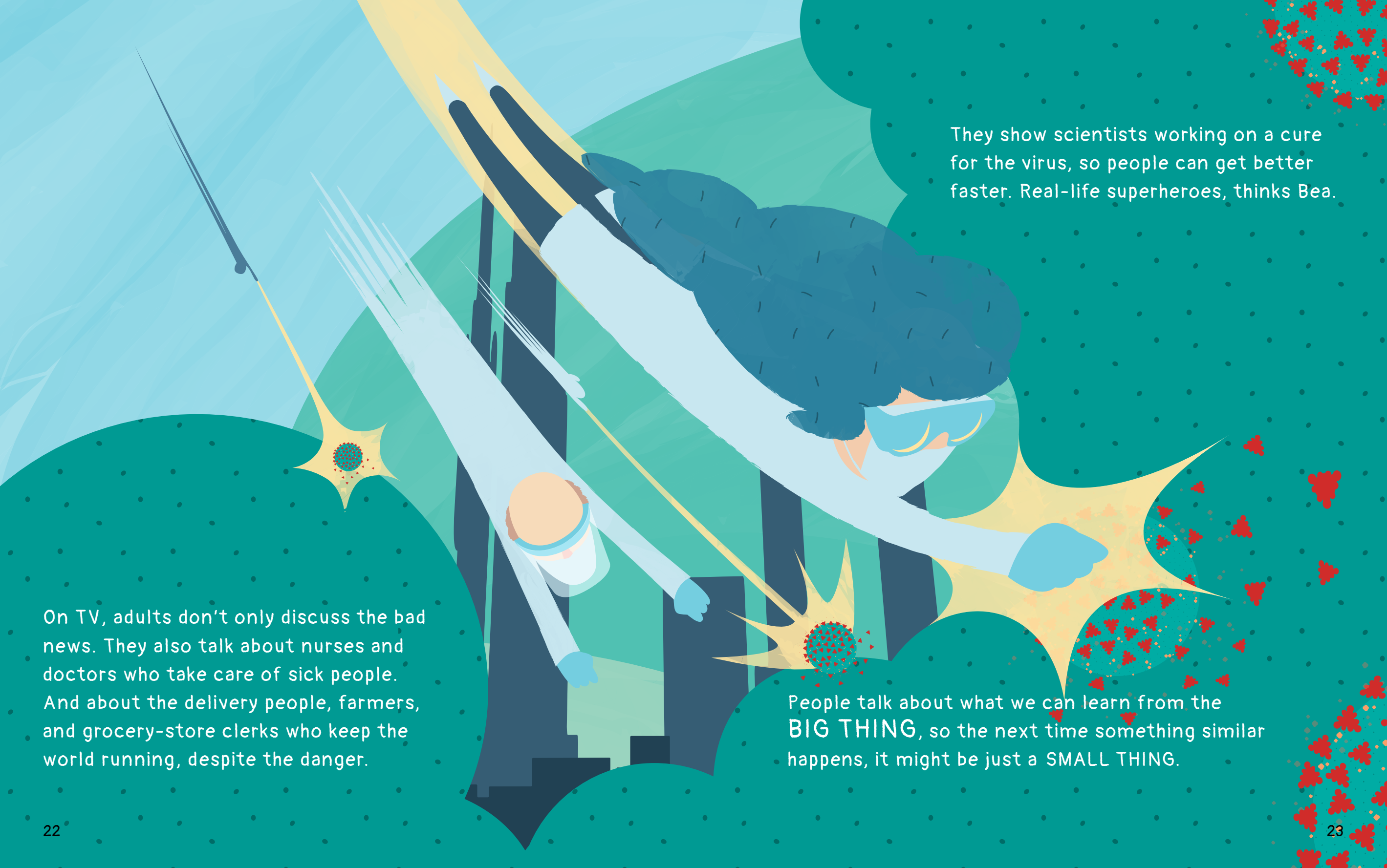
Yes, Bea answers, she often wished she could ask her parents questions when she was away in class, but they were not around. Now, she can ask them questions all day long.



“How wonderful,” Mrs. Eva replies.

Bea smiles. She likes this idea. She begins to look for more **SILVER LININGS**.





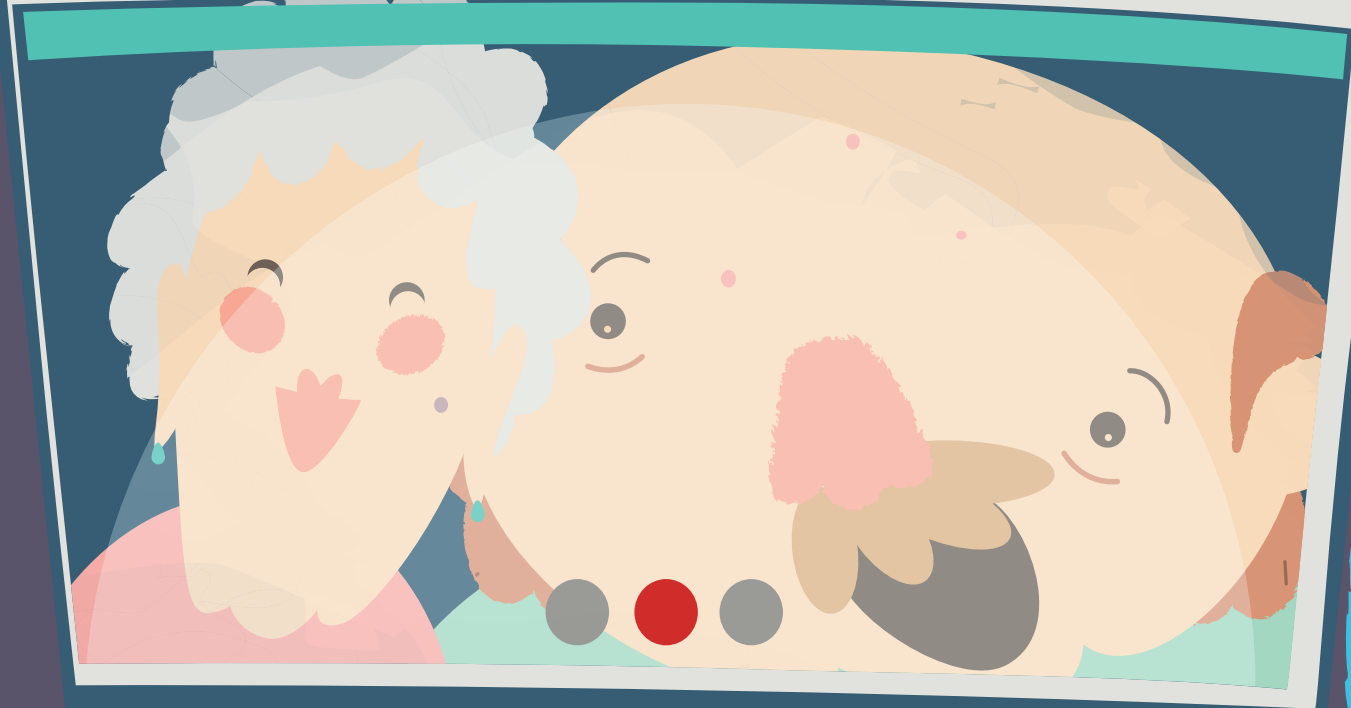
On TV, adults don't only discuss the bad news. They also talk about nurses and doctors who take care of sick people. And about the delivery people, farmers, and grocery-store clerks who keep the world running, despite the danger.

They show scientists working on a cure for the virus, so people can get better faster. Real-life superheroes, thinks Bea.

People talk about what we can learn from the **BIG THING**, so the next time something similar happens, it might be just a **SMALL THING**.

Bea thinks about her favorite color, and gazes up at the sky above her house. She notices it's bluer than usual. Even more blue than her favorite sweater.


Her dad explains that because everybody is home, the sky has become bluer. The bluer the sky, the greener the planet. Bea finds another **SILVER LINING**.



Though she only sees her grandparents and friends through a screen now, Bea talks to them more than she used to. Bea knows that she will meet them again soon, and then they will laugh and sing and dance and hug each other tightly.

Now Bea understands how special it is to be with the people she loves.





And the greatest **SILVER LINING** of all is the time she gets to spend with her mom and dad, her two favorite people. They wake up together, go to school and work together, eat together, and do activities like paint, watch movies, solve puzzles, and even go to museums, parks, and zoos on the Internet.

Bea learns that her mother's favorite game is chess, and her dad loves bamboo. She feels closer to her parents now and this makes her very happy.

A big thing happened outside, but inside Bea's little house, this is the **BIGGER THING**.



Bea knows that it may be a long time before the superheroes discover how to cure the virus, and things may never be the same.

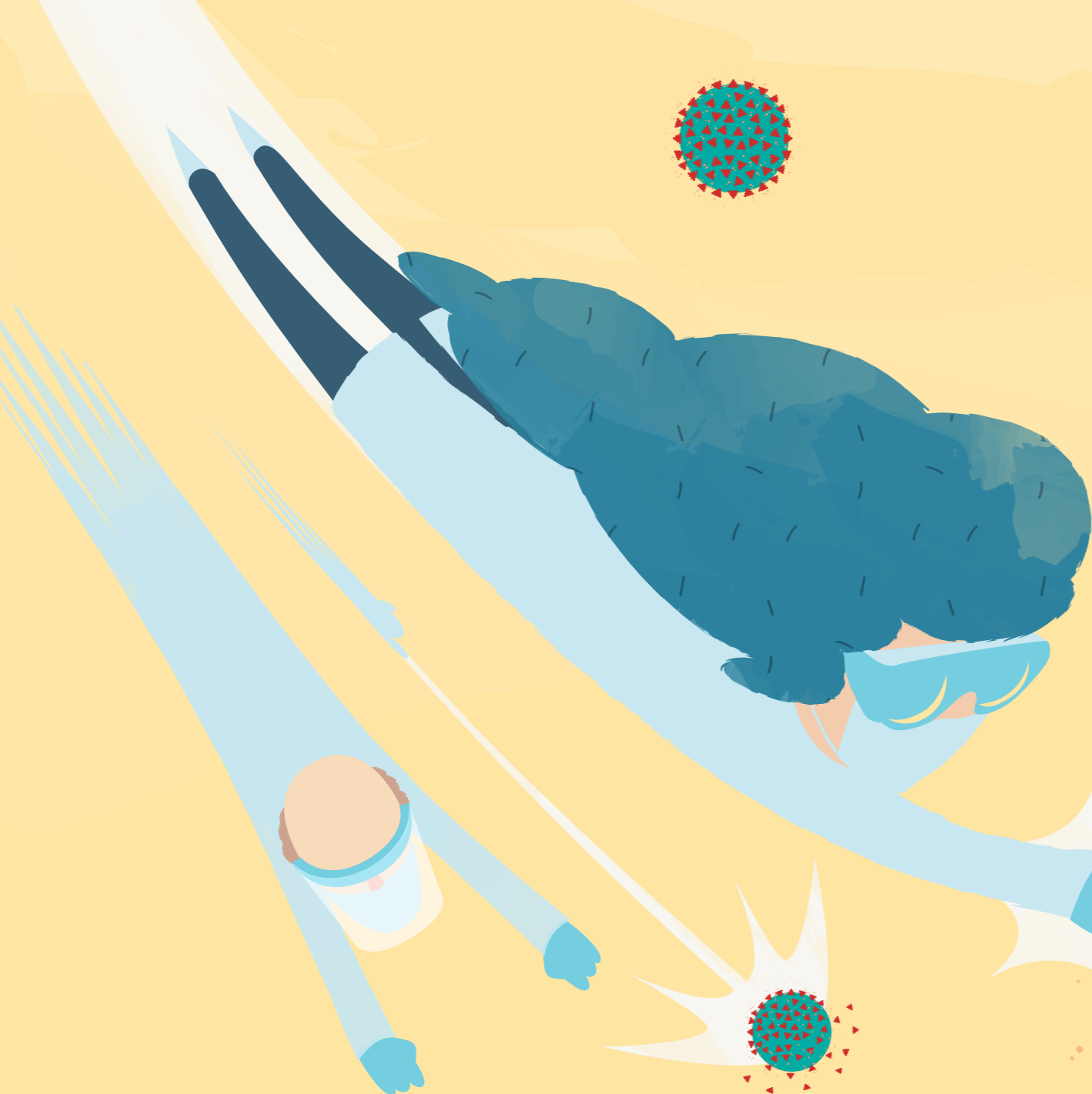
Sometimes, she still worries.

But she is no longer afraid.

For now, Bea knows that whenever, wherever, and however bad things happen, good things happen, too.

THE END

THE  
**BiG**  
THING



Bea is worried.

The big virus changed everything.

With the help of her family, teacher, and friends, can brave  
Bea find a silver lining during this crisis?

With 25 pages of vibrant illustrations and uplifting messages  
for all ages, this is an affirming story for you and your  
children during these unprecedented times and beyond.



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All proceeds from the sale of The Big Thing will go to COVID-19 charities.