

THE *Traveling* SHOES

WRITTEN BY WAYNE ELSEY



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ILLUSTRATED BY JERRY ROSEMBERT MOISE

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ORLANDO

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Dedication

To my adventurous granddaughter, Aubree,
and her two busy brothers, Aiden and Jaxon

You matter
JWC



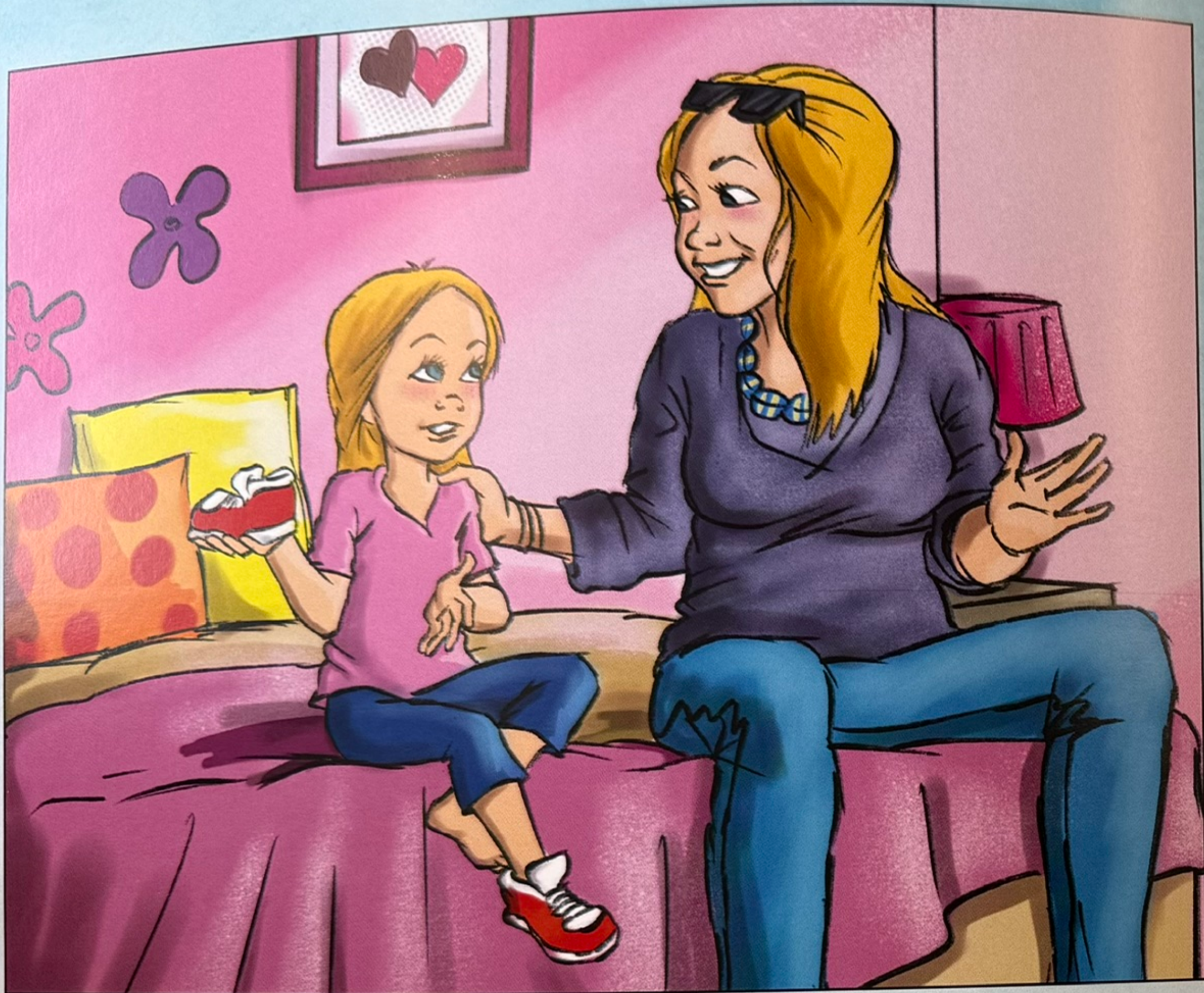
When I was 6, my mommy let me pick out super-running sneakers so I could run faster than all of my friends when we played and raced. After looking around the store, I found the perfect pair of running shoes that were red and glittered. I would be a superhero!



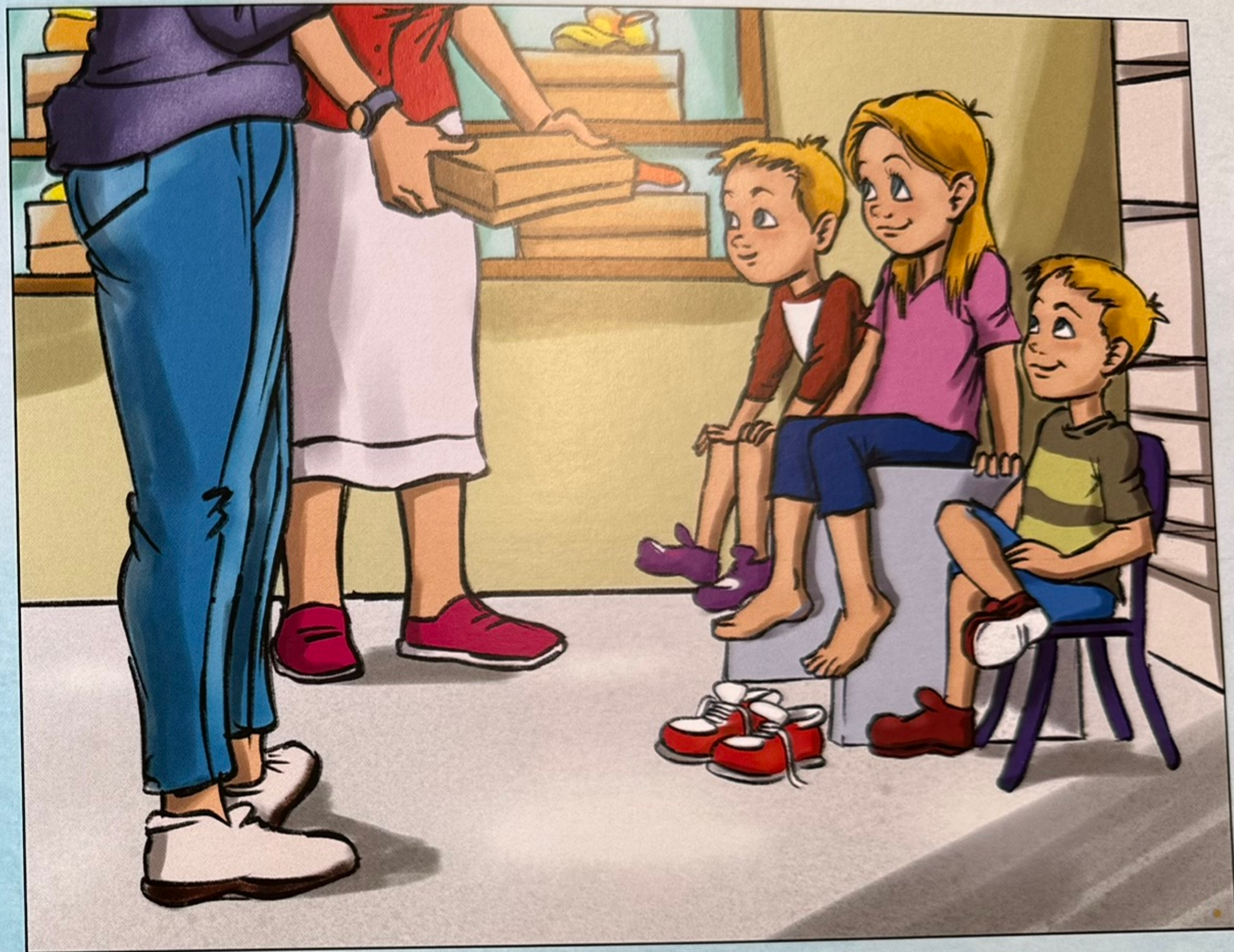
I asked my mommy if she would buy them, and she reminded me that the sneakers would be coming from the money I saved from doing my chores. I wanted the sneakers so much and quickly agreed. My mommy and I bought my ruby red glittering sneakers. I loved my new running shoes and wore them home.



That night, after taking my bath, I wore my sneakers to bed. The next morning, I woke up and was excited to go to school so I can show my friends my awesome sneakers. We had running class that day, and my sneakers would make me a faster runner. After I won the race, I smiled and knew I could do anything.



I wore these shoes for three months wherever I went and felt so amazing. One day, my mommy said, "Aubree, we have to get you a new pair of sneakers since these are getting too small." I was a little upset and asked, "Mommy, are you sure? They look good."



My brothers, Aiden and Jaxon, my mommy, and I went back to the mall. I wanted the same sneakers in the next size, and I crossed my fingers and toes hoping they had them at the store. The sales clerk told me they had the next size of my favorite red and glittery sneakers!



My mommy bought my brothers and me new sneakers. I thanked her and was very happy. As I waited for her to pay, I asked her about the collection box that was next to the cash register. It had a picture of a little girl on it with no shoes.



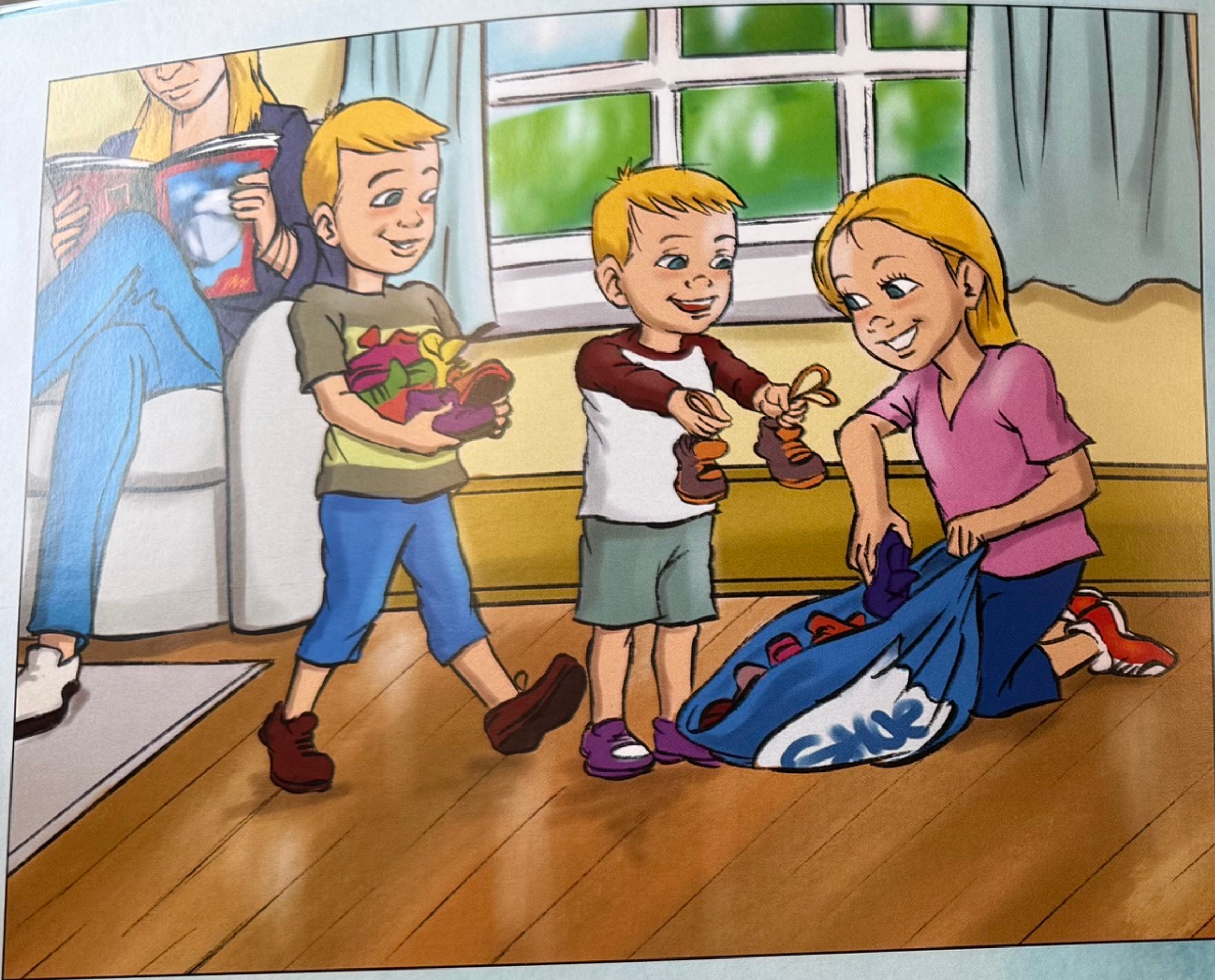
My mommy leaned down and read the poster of the girl on the box to my brothers and me. "Over 300 million people do not have a pair of shoes. Donate yours today."



I was sad, sat down, and took off my old pair of super fast running sneakers and asked for the new ones that were in the box. My mommy asked, "Aubree, what are you doing?" I replied, "Mommy, if she has no sneakers, we can give her mine." My mommy took the old sneakers and placed them into the shoe collection box. I wore my new sneakers home and gave away my old pair.



The next day at school, my teacher spoke of a shoe drive fundraiser. She said that the shoes and sneakers we collected would go to children and families around the world who did not have shoes and that other moms and dads would sell the shoes we collected. I raised my hand and told the class about the shoe collection box I saw at the store.



All the kids in the class were given a bag and asked by our teacher to go home and fill them up with gently worn, used and new shoes and sneakers. When I got home, I went through my closet and my brothers' and found 25 pairs. My brother, Aiden, and I asked our mom if we could give them away. Jaxon was too little to talk, but he seemed happy about giving away his shoes too!



At school, all of the students and I gave our teacher the bags. We collected so many shoes, which made everyone happy because we bought art and sports supplies. The teacher told us how the shoes donated helped our school raise money and how the shoes went to developing nations where moms and dads sell the shoes to support their families.



A few months later, our family went on a cruise. Aiden was happy because my dad told him there was ice cream on the ship he could eat 24 hours a day. My mommy and daddy told us the first port of call was in a country called Haiti, which they said is the poorest nation in our part of the world. We saw the beach and then went to the markets to buy presents for our family and friends.



At the market, I noticed a lady sitting with a bunch of shoes around her. I asked my mommy why. She said she didn't know, but we should ask the guide and then go and speak to her. When I saw a pair of red sneakers on the blanket, I remembered the super fast sparkly ones that I donated at the shoe store, as well as the bag of shoes I gave at my school.



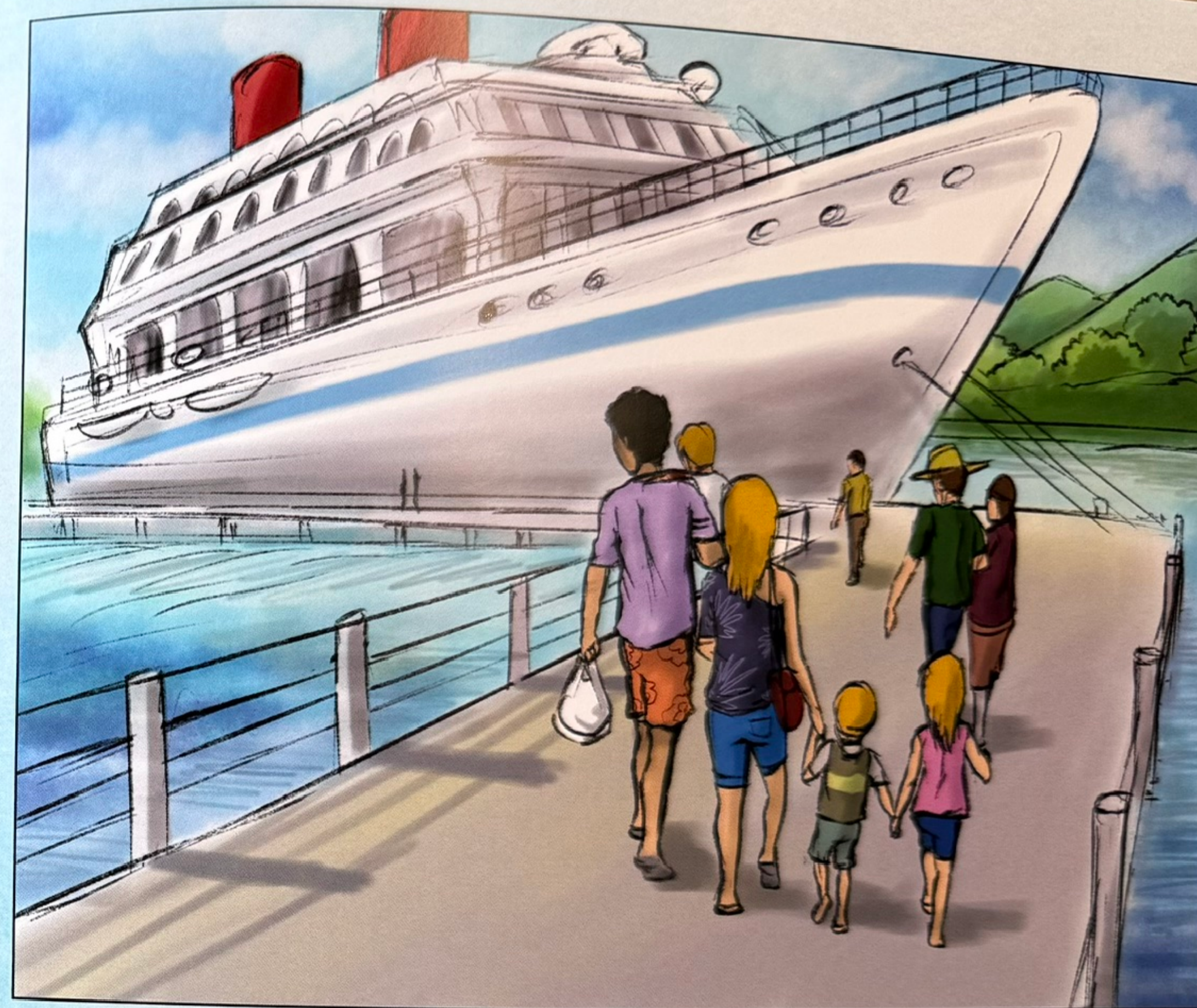
The guide told us that the lady with her shoes was a “micro-entrepreneur.” The guide also said that the inventory was brought from the United States and was used to help people living in poverty create their own jobs.



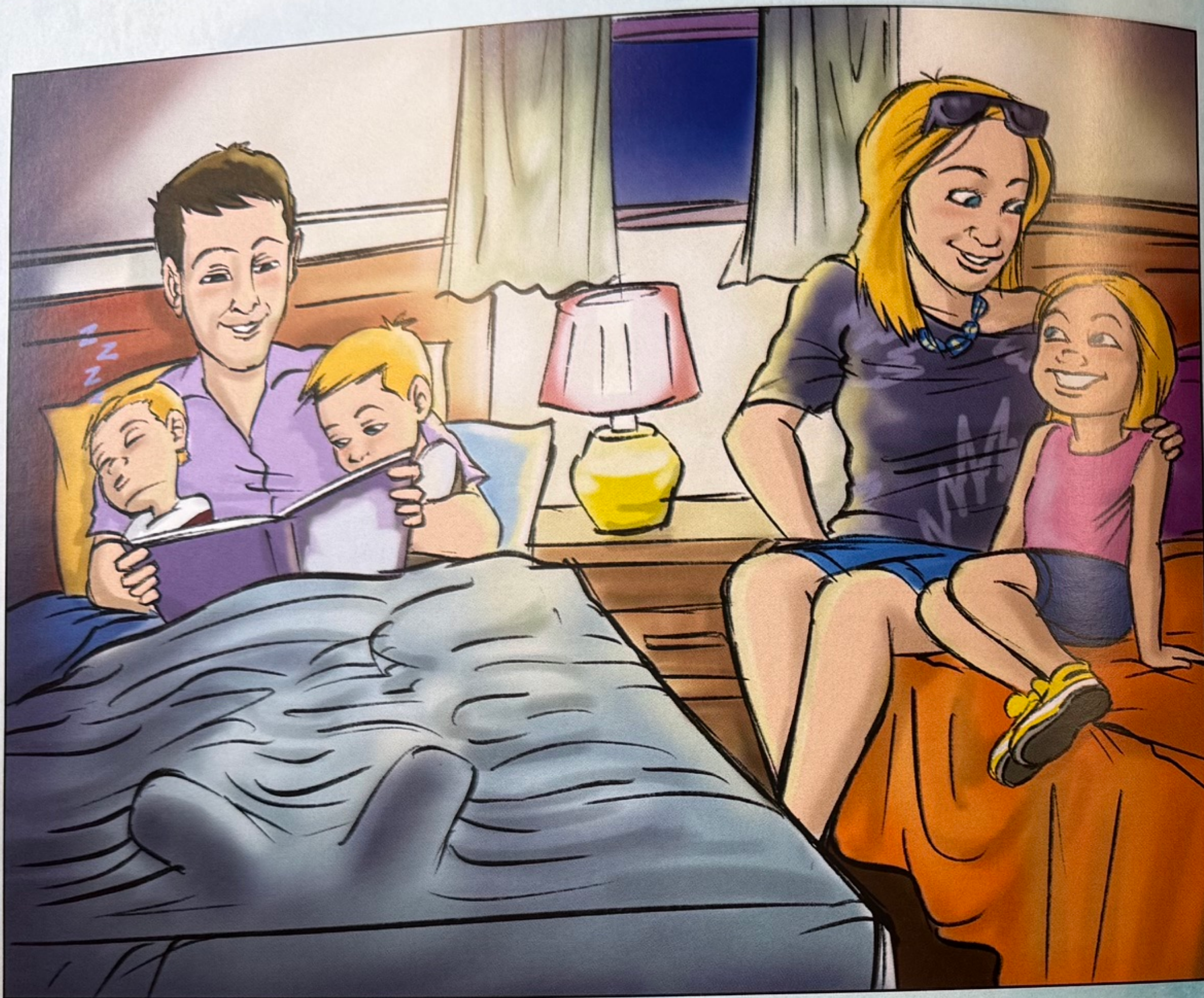
I then saw a little girl walking on the street with no shoes. I turned to my mommy and asked if I could give her the red sneakers that I wore on my feet. My mommy said, “Sure, and let’s buy a pair of new sneakers from this lady. She has nice ones in your size on her blanket.” She gave the woman \$3 for a new pair of shoes for me, and I took off my old pair and walked over to the little girl.



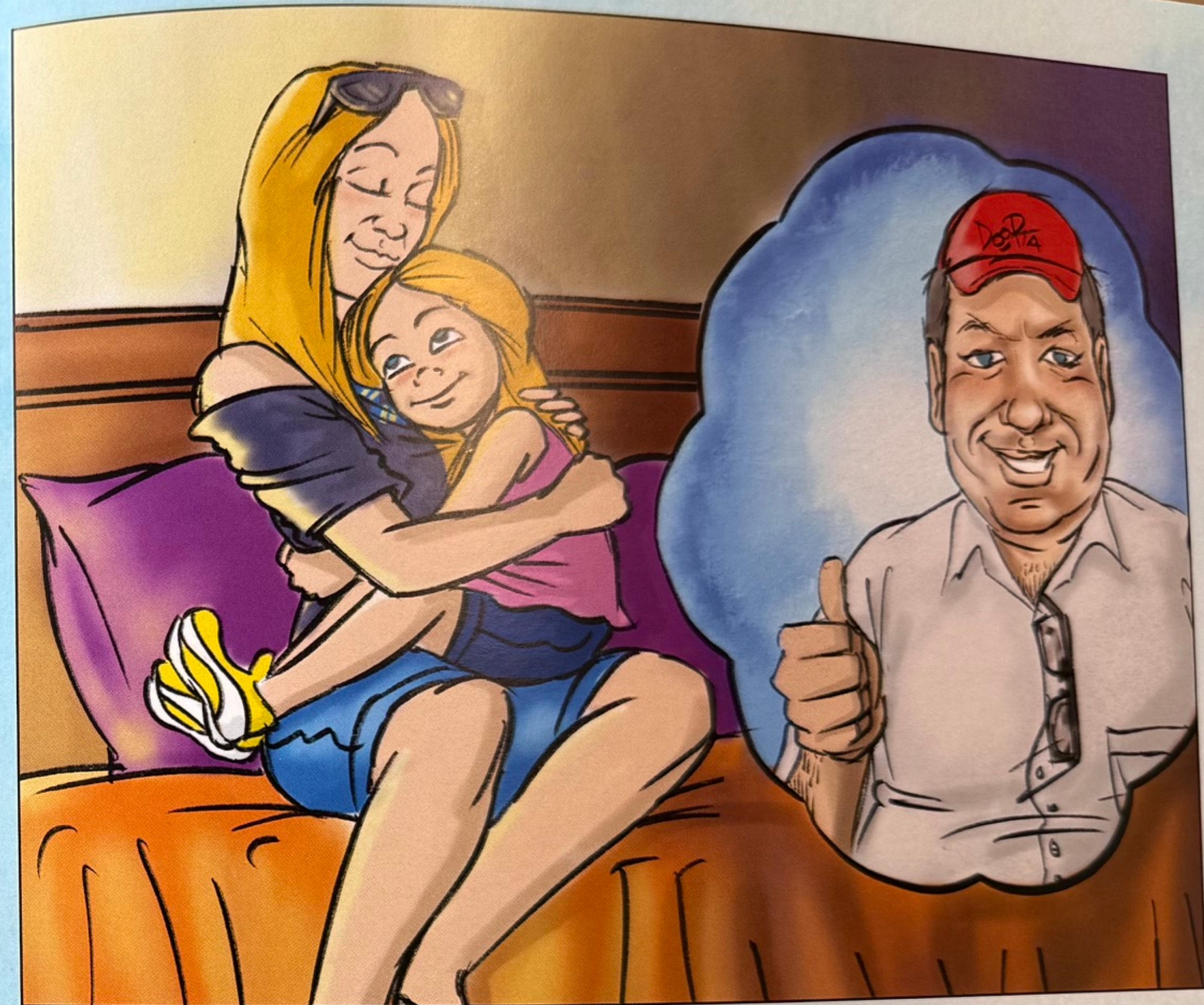
I sat next to the little girl and gave her my red sneakers. The little girl smiled. I helped place the shoes on the little girl's feet and then taught her how to tie her laces. She smiled a bigger smile. I told her that the sneakers would help her run faster when she plays. She got up and ran super fast! Then she ran back to me with a great, big smile on her face.



We had to go, so we said good-bye and my family got back on the ship. I had on my feet the yellow shoes my mommy had bought for me from the lady on the blanket. I loved my yellow shoes, which were very bright and helped me feel I could do anything. I hoped that the little girl loved my red sneakers.



When my brothers, Aiden and Jaxon, were asleep, and my dad was reading, I told my mommy that I was happy to have my yellow shoes and that the little girl had the red sneakers. I also told her I was happy the lady in the market could sell the shoes. I remembered the guide said that an American man helped start the shoe business in Haiti from the U.S. I asked my mom who it was.



My mommy smiled and told me it was my grandfather. We call him, Doopta. I smiled a big smile, hugged my mom, and went to bed. As my mommy was leaving to go to the next room, I told her that when I grow up, I wanted to help Doopta give shoes to people who need them and help their parents make money.



“Of course, Aubree,” my mommy said, “I think Doopta will love to have you work with him. Now go to sleep.” I went to sleep with my bright yellow sneakers on my feet, knowing that I could help people anywhere and could do anything.

Wayne Elsey is the Founder of Funds2Orgs, Sneakers4Good and several other social enterprise brands. He was one of the first social entrepreneurs who created commercial opportunities for people in developing nations by shipping shoes from North America. That experience inspired him to write, through the eyes of his grand-daughter, about how anyone can change the world.

Wayne is considered one of the top global social entrepreneurs and lives in Florida with his wife, Courtney. His daughter, Melissa, lives in Virginia with her husband, Josh, and their three children, Aubree, Aiden, and Jaxon.



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SPECIAL THANK YOU TO NADIA TORES AND
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