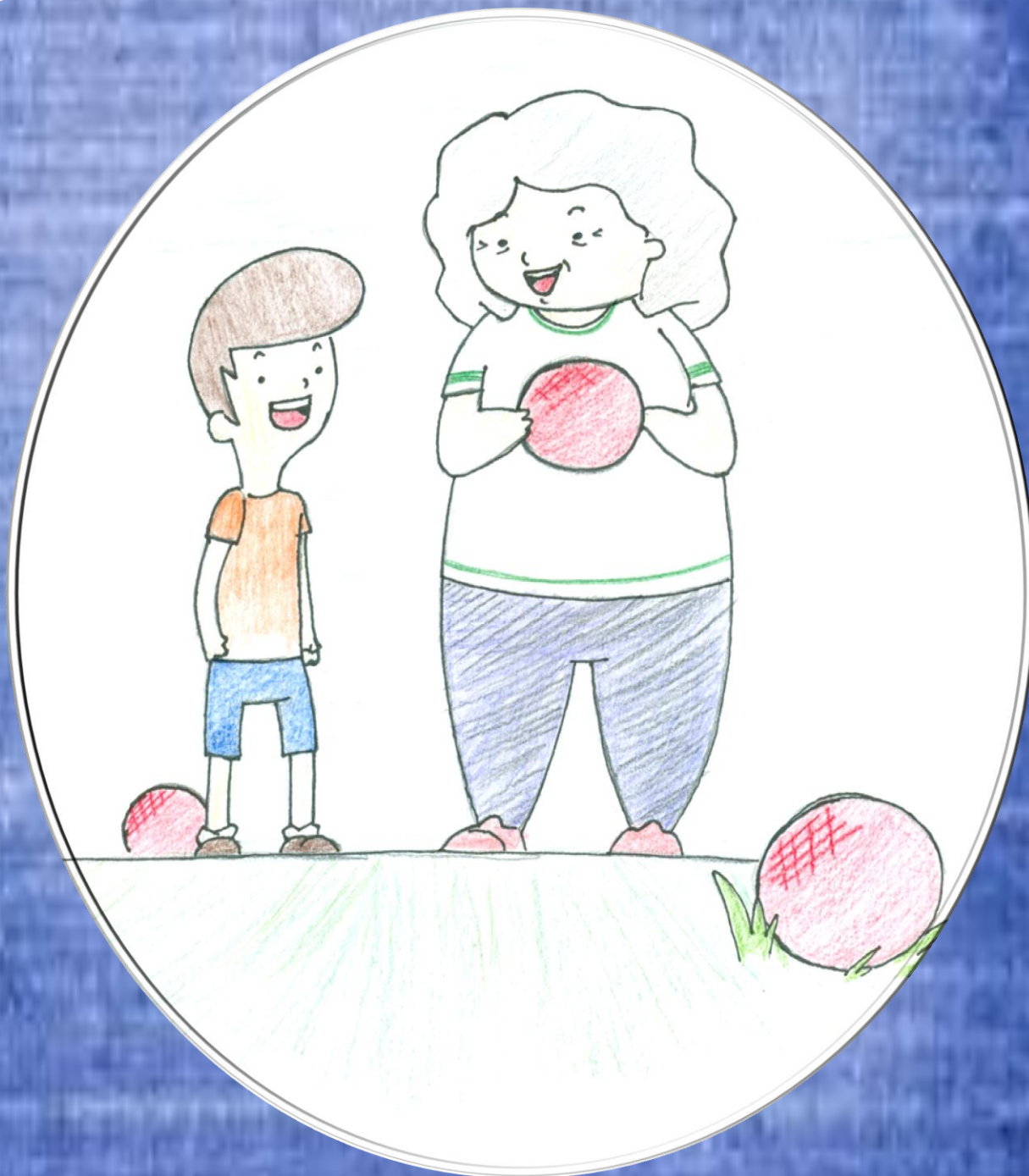




GRAMME'S ENGAGED



WRITER: COLENE SMYER HANK

ILLUSTRATOR: CHAYLEN PIERSON

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Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.



A HEART WARMING STORY THAT SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF ADULT GUIDANCE AND LOVE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD; ROLE MODELING THAT WILL LAST A LIFE TIME AND BE PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

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GRAMME'S ENGAGED DEDICATED TO:

 **TIM TRAFFORD** 

On any given day, as you walk down the hallway at Glendale Gardens in Springfield, Missouri, don't be surprised to hear a male voice laughing and encouraging an individual with such great enthusiasm that you are drawn to it like a moth to a flame. As a reward for following the sound, you'll witness firsthand the arms of Tim Trafford, Activity Director, gently wrapped around the shoulders of a resident whose face is beaming with joy. In anticipation of the kisses that are known to follow, sweet emotions are dancing wildly in the expectant eyes of the receiver. Second only to loving God, there is no greater feeling on earth and in heaven than to love your neighbor as yourself. Not only does it warm the hearts of the giver and receiver, but everyone who enters its path.

Thus, when the writer is asked to give a description of Tim Trafford, she compares him to an eagle; a magnificent bird that flies at an altitude of 1000 feet over open country with the ability to spot an object over an area of almost 3 square miles from a fixed position. Just like the eagle, Tim approaches his career in the same manner by possessing such enormous vision that the environment in which the residents live is electric beyond imagination. As an advocate for the elderly, he leaves no stone unturned in making each day absolutely stellar for every individual living there. The activities planned stretch the boundaries of fun to the maximum level; so much that many residents comment regularly, "I just love it here." No matter the resident's state of health, Tim is constantly contemplating ways to engage them in life. He has been known to place beautiful mobiles above the beds as a source of stimulation, literally push residents in their beds out into the activity area, dance with those in wheelchairs to live entertainment, and offer spa days that make visitors walking by envious with desire. No matter the number of residents, he literally knows the backgrounds and passions for each one and doesn't rest until involvement occurs. This fact is obvious when a spectacular Christmas party is thrown; a time for live entertainment accompanied by outrageously special gifts for each resident. Bocce ball, volley ball, darts, bowling, wheel of fortune, basketball, and cooking classes are just a few of the activities that fill the calendar of each month. These, along with a variety of live performances cause the residents to constantly check the calendar that hangs on their door.

Consequently, after serving several years as a volunteer reader for Tim, the writer can assure one and all that things are always abuzz when Tim is in charge. Then, when a resident is feeling ill, depressed, or afraid, he spends time having crucial conversations at their side. Truly, he has such a servant's heart that his actions serve as a mirror of Jesus; and the reason "Gramme's Engaged" has been dedicated to him. Tim, pause for just a moment and listen as the elderly worldwide send you much deserved accolades and thunderous applause.



My Gramme and I were perfectly matched

Joined at the hip; inseparably attached

Two peas in a pod, we fit like a glove

Head over heels, and hopelessly in love.

Nutty about life, we frolicked in the sun

Savoring God's blessings; one by one

Looking on the bright side, no matter the season

Simply being together was enough of a reason.



**Gramme, like an angel had kept me in her sight
Forever making certain things turned out right
Discreetly choosing places, so as not to interfere**

**There never was a doubt,
but that she was near.**

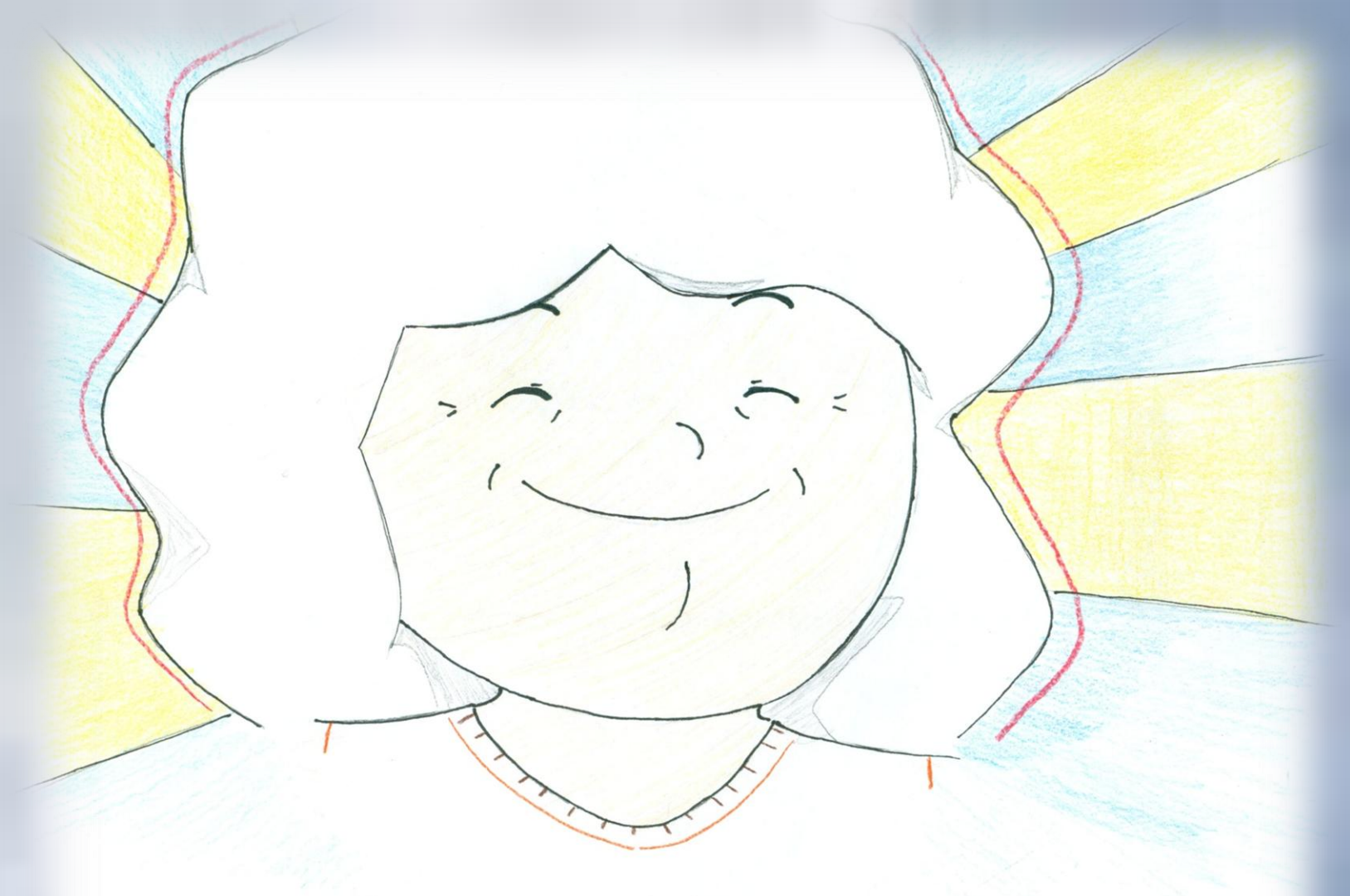




**Once when with my friend, she thought we couldn't see
She watched us from her perch on the branch of a tree.
When we rolled rubber balls across the bedroom floor
We spotted Gramme's nose through a crack in the door.**



**In an effort to be cagey, she would slink behind a plant
Then catching our eyes, like a dog, she'd bark and pant
My Gramme was known by all, to loudly laugh and hoot
When caught in the act, down the hallway she would
.....scoot!.....**



Standing on the outside, was clearly not her style

This you could tell from her large sunny smile!



**When Gramme's body aged, requiring daily care
She'd found a place where others, her needs would share
I'd tried to be brave, wearing a smile upon my face
Modeling her behavior; every gesture filled with grace.**

**But, home alone that night, while rocking in my chair
Worries filled my mind, causing thoughts of despair.
A myriad of random fears danced wildly in my head
Imagining only the worst, caused feelings of dread.**

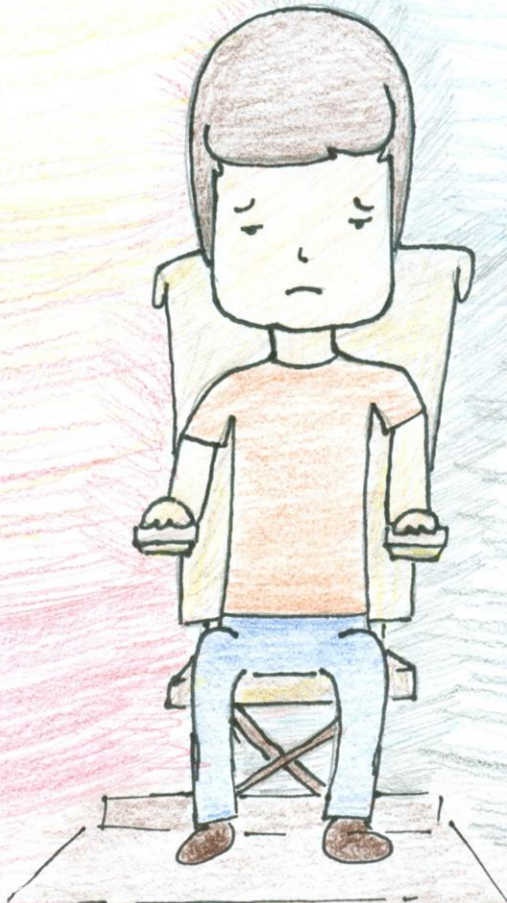
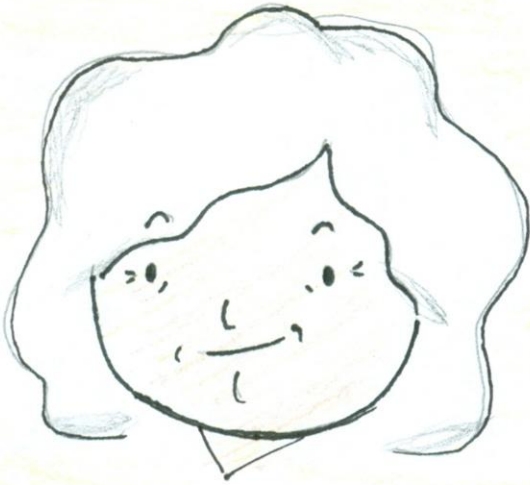


Was my Gramme engaged, or sitting by herself

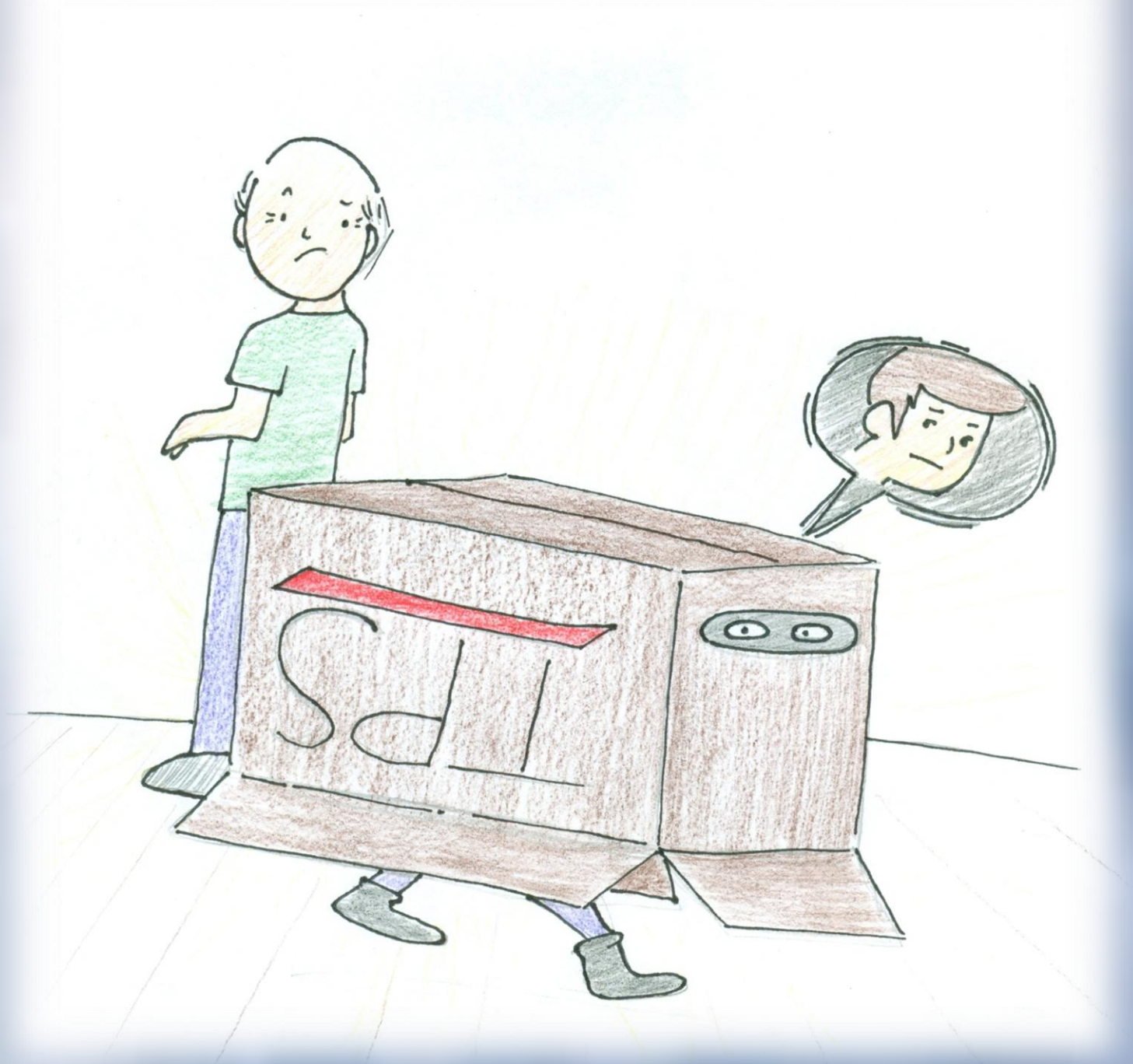
Did she still love life, or was it now on a shelf

Had the aging of the body made her totally distraught

Were the physical limitations now making her overwrought?



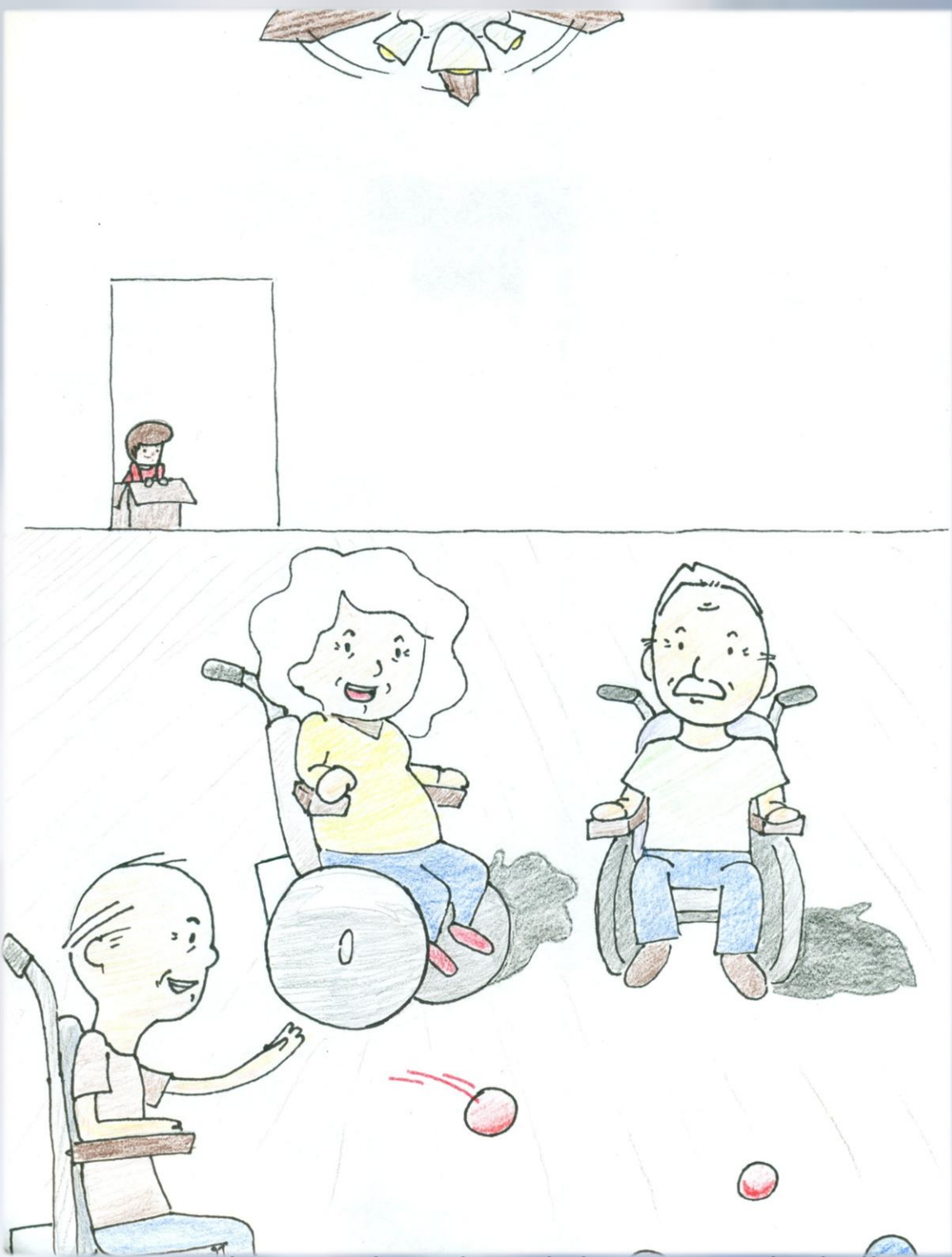
I needed to be certain that my Gramme was all right
'Twas time to sneak a peek, staying discreetly out of sight.
Since Gramme was the master of the "sneak a peek" club
Through following her example; for sure I would not flub.





**'Twas now my time to watch this Gramme of mine
Since she'd taught me her tricks, for sure I would shine.**

**Her rules I recall and would do it just the same
Pretending when caught..... it was merely a game.**



Arriving the next day, I heard shouting in the hall

To my great surprise, they were playing bocce ball

There sat Gramme; the loudest of the lot

Was Gramme unhappy? I certainly think not!



**Convinced I was hidden, completely out of sight
She glimpsed my shadow reflected by the light
Then burst into applause as a smile filled her face
Exerting little effort, she'd found my hiding place!**

Honing my skills, for what the morrow brought
I'd see if she was faking, or truly overwrought?

Hiding behind a pole,
for sure she would not see

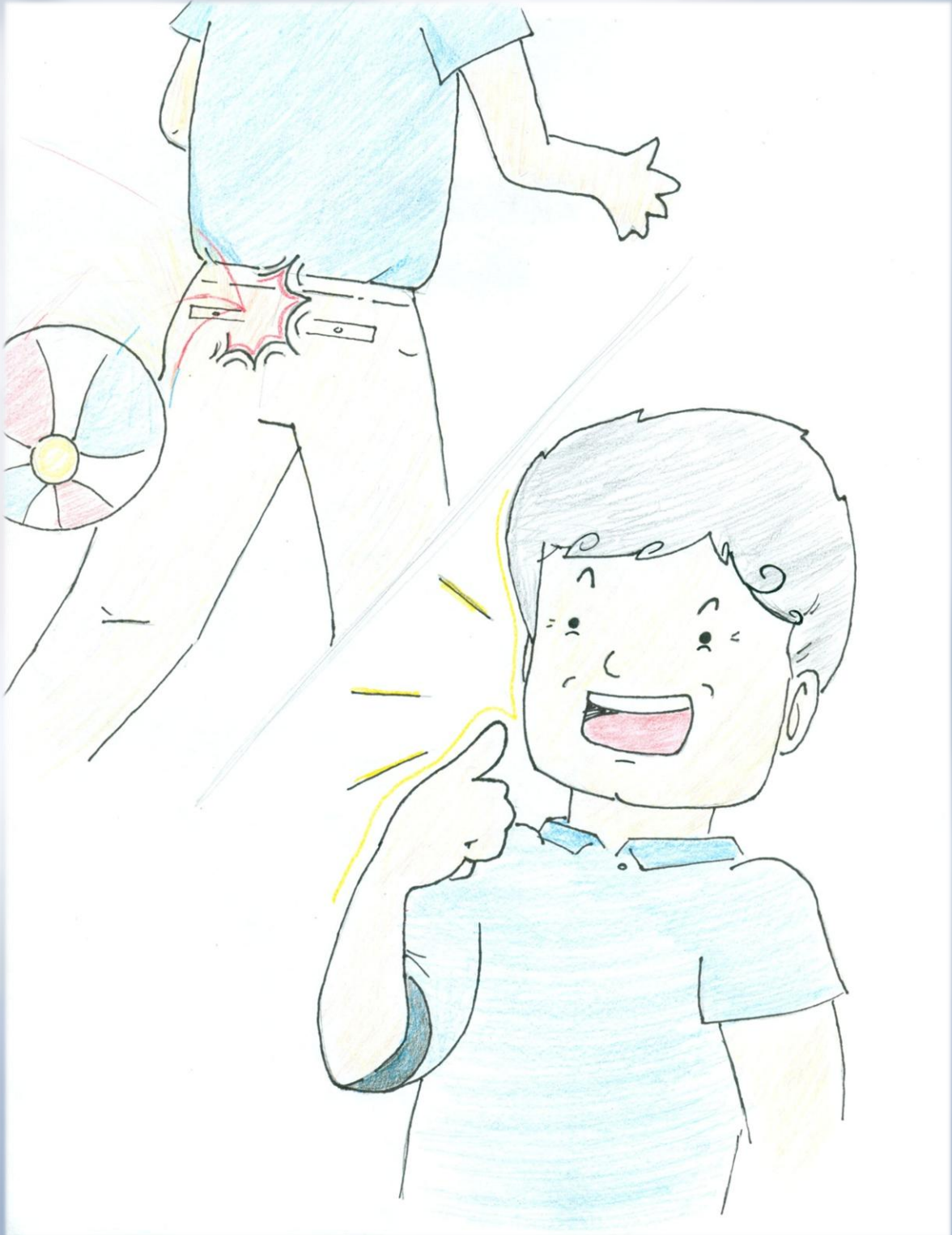
I was shocked to discover,
they were all filled with glee.



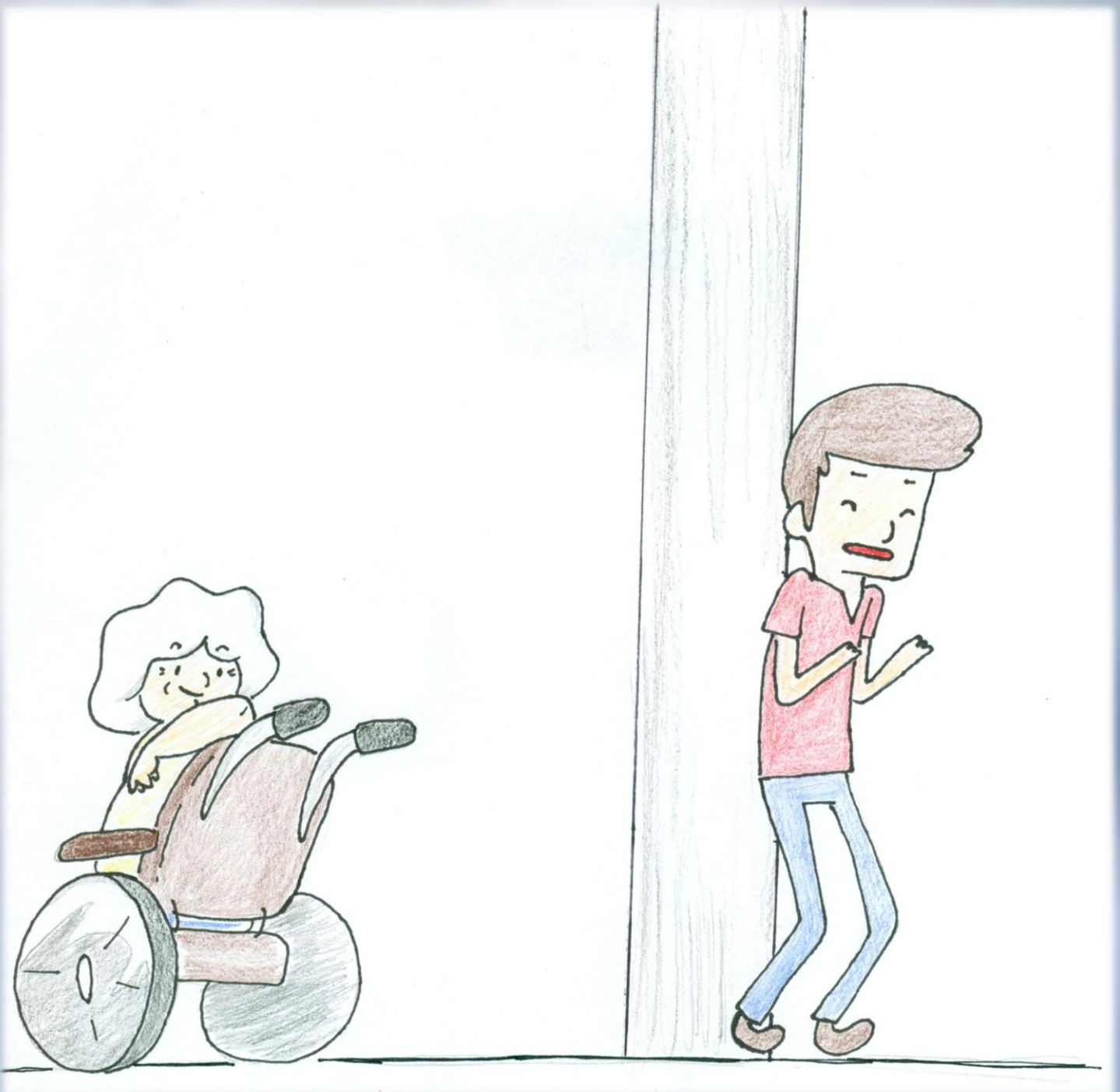
**Playing volleyball, in fits of raucous laughter
Out of control, their noise raised the rafter
Knowing Gramme's strength, they'd asked her to serve
Spotting her target, she took aim with ample nerve.**



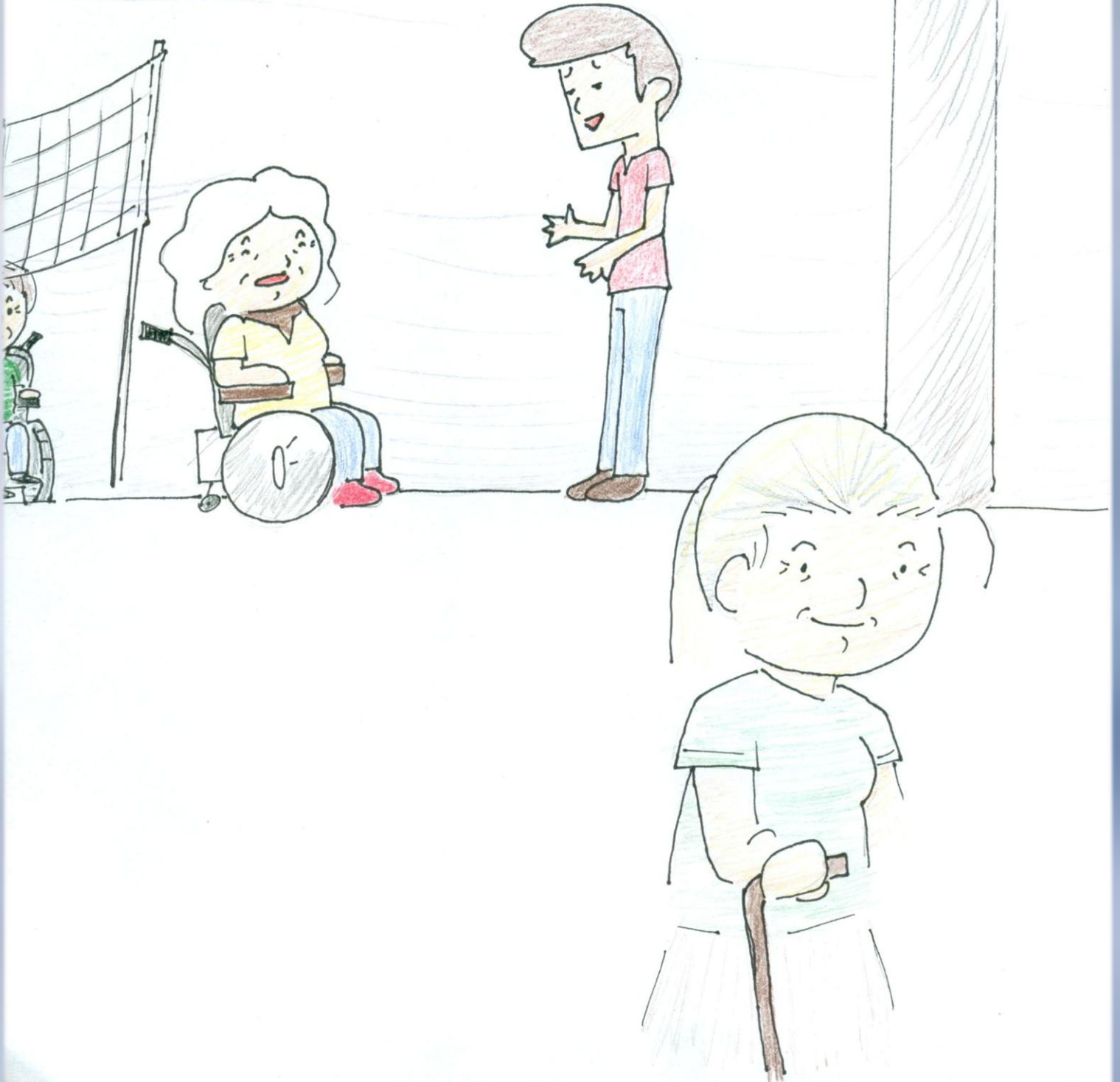
Flying high through the air, her target it did find
On line with Mr. Tim, it smacked him from behind
Looking straight at Gramme, with not a thought of doubt
“Who hit me in the face?” he responded with a shout.



Trying to smother giggles, so my Gramme wouldn't know
She craned her neck around, and her face revealed a glow
That foolish familiar sound, she had recognized as mine
Quickly stirring in her heart, perfect memories divine.



**Sneaking a peek at Gramme was hard I must confess
No matter how great my effort, I failed to have success
The love she felt for me was truly a thing of beauty
A gift bestowed by God; simply not a sense of duty.**



**The answer to my question, over time I did find
My Gramme was engaged, life to her, was not a grind
Things they did together were beautiful and astounding
Causing her winter season, to be alive with joy abounding.**









**Yet, the greatest gift from Gramme was yet to be shown
It would come from her room, when she was all alone
The time we'd spent each evening, kneeling by my bed
Would come full circle, as light on it was shed.**



**Hearing her sweet old voice totally filled with laud
It was obvious to me that she was talking to God
Her intimate tone of voice clearly showed Him as her friend
The Source of her great strength; from beginning to the end.**



**In my sweet old Gramme's mind, prayer was truly everything
Twas manna sent from heaven; spiritual food her God did bring
Since through His great love, He'd taught her how to care
Every morning and evening, she spoke with Him in prayer.**



**As I quietly stood and listened, salty tears drenched my face
Receiving a gift from Gramme, that time would never erase.**

**Hear now the precious prayer she said to God that day
Engraved forever in my mind; a priceless treasure, it will stay.**



Dear Kind Father,

***You're the Alpha & Omega; the beginning and end
I praise you for your Son; to earth you chose to send
Through your sacrifice of love; You so freely did give
My Sonny Boy and I, were offered the chance to live
Even though, I am old; and will soon bid life adieu
I know You'll love my boy and see him safely through
Please help him be strong; and always true to You
Expecting You everywhere, until his journey's through
Give him wisdom to know that we'll never say goodbye
As resurrected people; our spirit will never die
Until heaven is home, he must never cease to pray
Always bringing his cares to You ; without delay.***

Amen.



THE END

ILLUSTRATOR: CHAYLEN PIERSON



As mere humans, our Lord sometimes offers us the opportunity to encounter a special individual he has created to brush our hearts with a sweetness akin to nectar from a fragrant flower. That is exactly what happened the first time the writer was introduced to Chaylen Pierson; the illustrator for “GRAMME’S ENGAGED.” His sunny disposition and million dollar smile set the tone for a crucial conversation about the needs of the elderly. Even though this young man was only completing his last year at Hillcrest High School, Springfield, Missouri, it was obvious to the writer that he possessed the wisdom only God could impart on a person of this age. He understood the special needs of the elderly brought on by the aging process and embraced the concept with an open mind and excitement.

As a result, he studied their photos and visited with them in person; all in an effort to create illustrations that would best represent this season of their lives. Paying attention in detail to their features, personalities and joy caused the residents to vote unanimously for him as the chosen illustrator. They viewed him as an individual who walked comfortably in his own shoes without pretention; a young man without the feeling of entitlement. Even though unaware that Chaylen was involved in chorus, sports, drama, had a job, and still found the time to tutor students from a local school; they simply felt his compassion and, thus, responded in kind.

Please join the writer in wishing the best life has to offer for Chaylen as he continues sharpening his skills in the field of graphic design. His future employer will be blessed just as all of us have been by having him on staff. God’s speed, Chaylen!

THANK YOU HEATHER!



During one's walk on this earth, the moments when being in the presence of an individual who is truly a stand out in life are easily identified and recalled forever. It is immediately obvious that the gift bestowed on them by their Creator is not only extraordinary, but being used in a way that promotes joy and success to everyone who enters their sphere.

Thus, upon entering Heather Ireland Weter's classroom at Hillcrest High School, Springfield, Missouri, these very feelings soared into action because of the energy abounding in the space she had decorated to resemble an art studio. The students were gathered around her excitedly chattering as they poured out their comments and questions on their journey into the world of art. It was truly a thrill to observe her gifts being transported into the hearts and minds of the hungry souls of her students. This very moment had arrived all because Heather had chosen to end a career in the business world and obtain the educational requirements necessary in order to pursue her passion as an art instructor. She had listened to the calling of the still small voice of God and followed with complete obedience; a journey that would take her down the road less traveled.

Consequently, after meeting with the writer, reviewing the ministry for the elderly, and listening to the script of the latest story in need of illustrations called "GRAMME'S ENGAGED," there was not even a moment of hesitation. She quickly ascertained not only the value the elderly would receive worldwide, but also viewed it as an enormous community service opportunity for one of her students.

Thus, with the stage now set, the entire project took off with a launch that involved numerous people; the elderly at a local nursing home selecting just the right student, careful attention by all to the organizational perimeters, and completion of the project as a learning experience for those involved.



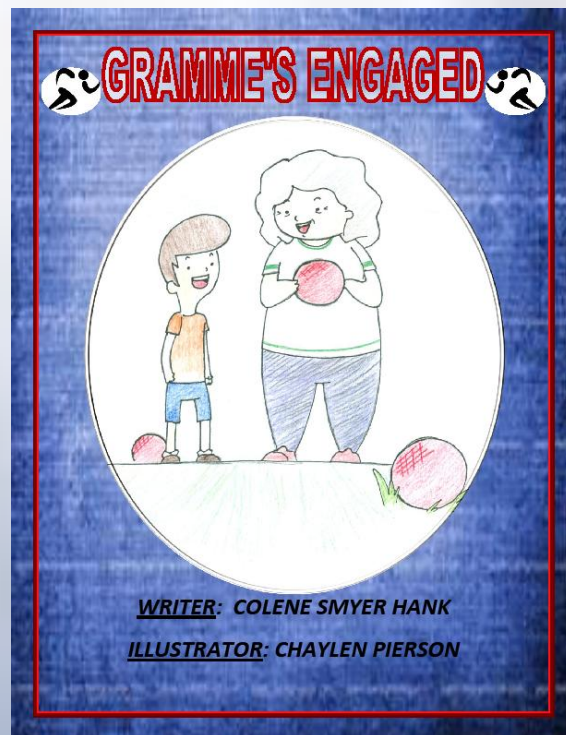
Chaylen was chosen!



Principal Slater looks on!



Crazy ! Wonderful! Fun!



GRAMME'S ENGAGED WAS BORN !