

Picture Day

Story by Kimberly Moore
Art by Foad Ghorbani



Eleven-year-old Abbey shuffled down the stairs. “Mom, I don’t feel like going to school. Can I please stay home today?” she begged.

“Why? You usually want to get there early.”

With worry in her voice, her mom said, “Let me take your temperature.”

As much as she loved school, Abbey had never hoped for a fever so much in all her life.

Looking at the thermometer, Abbey’s mom said, “No fever, and your skin color looks normal. If you get sick, Mrs. Kemp, the nurse, will call me.”

Tears poured down Abbey’s face. Mrs. Kemp was kind, but you had to have proof, such as a fever or vomiting, before she would call your parents.

“Why are you crying?” asked her mom.

“Today is class picture day, and I’ll be the only bald kid in the picture,” Abbey sobbed.

“You can wear your purple hat. It’s your favorite,” said her mom.

“Then I’ll be the only one wearing a hat. Everyone will see it, and I’ll feel stupid.”

Walking to the car, Abbey’s mom said, “You’re a strong girl. You’ve overcome a lot of obstacles in life. Even if you don’t have hair right now, you’re still the kind, caring person you’ve always been. That’s what others will remember.”

When they got to school, Abbey’s mom hugged her as she handed Abbey the hat. “You decide,” her mom said with a smile.

As she entered the classroom, Abbey noticed some of the kids whispering and looking at her—even her best friend, Corina. Abbey was so tired of people

staring at her. She crammed the hat down in her backpack and sat down.

Later, Mrs. Briley asked everyone to get ready for pictures. As Abbey walked to the restroom, she tried to decide whether to be the only one wearing a hat or the only bald kid in the picture. She didn’t like either choice.

Feeling sad and alone, Abbey headed to the nurse’s office instead of back to class. “I’ll tell her I’m about to throw up. She’ll let me lie down, and I’ll have to miss the picture,” Abbey thought.

But the closer she got to the nurse’s door, the more she thought about how sad her mom would be if she weren’t in the class picture.

“I’ll do it for Mom,” she decided. “She’s been there for me through chemotherapy sessions. She always makes things better when I’m feeling down.”

Walking into the classroom, Abbey’s face lit up like the brightest star in the night. Everyone had on hats! Even the boys!

Corina dashed over to Abbey and gave her a hug. “You always look so cool in your hats, so I asked Mrs. Briley if we could all wear a hat with you for our class picture,” Corina said.

Abbey squeezed her friend and admired her blue hat with yellow lightning bolts. “Awesome hat,” she said.

When Abbey’s mom picked her up from school, she said, “I hope you smiled as much for your picture as you are right now.”

“Oh, trust me. I did!” Abbey said, beaming.

