

An illustration of a young boy with dark hair and a blue tunic standing on a grassy hill. He is looking up at a ghostly figure with a pale, featureless face and a long, flowing blue robe. The ghostly figure has its right arm extended towards the right. To the left, a large tree with green foliage and a brown trunk stands on the hill. The background is a soft, light blue sky.

# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

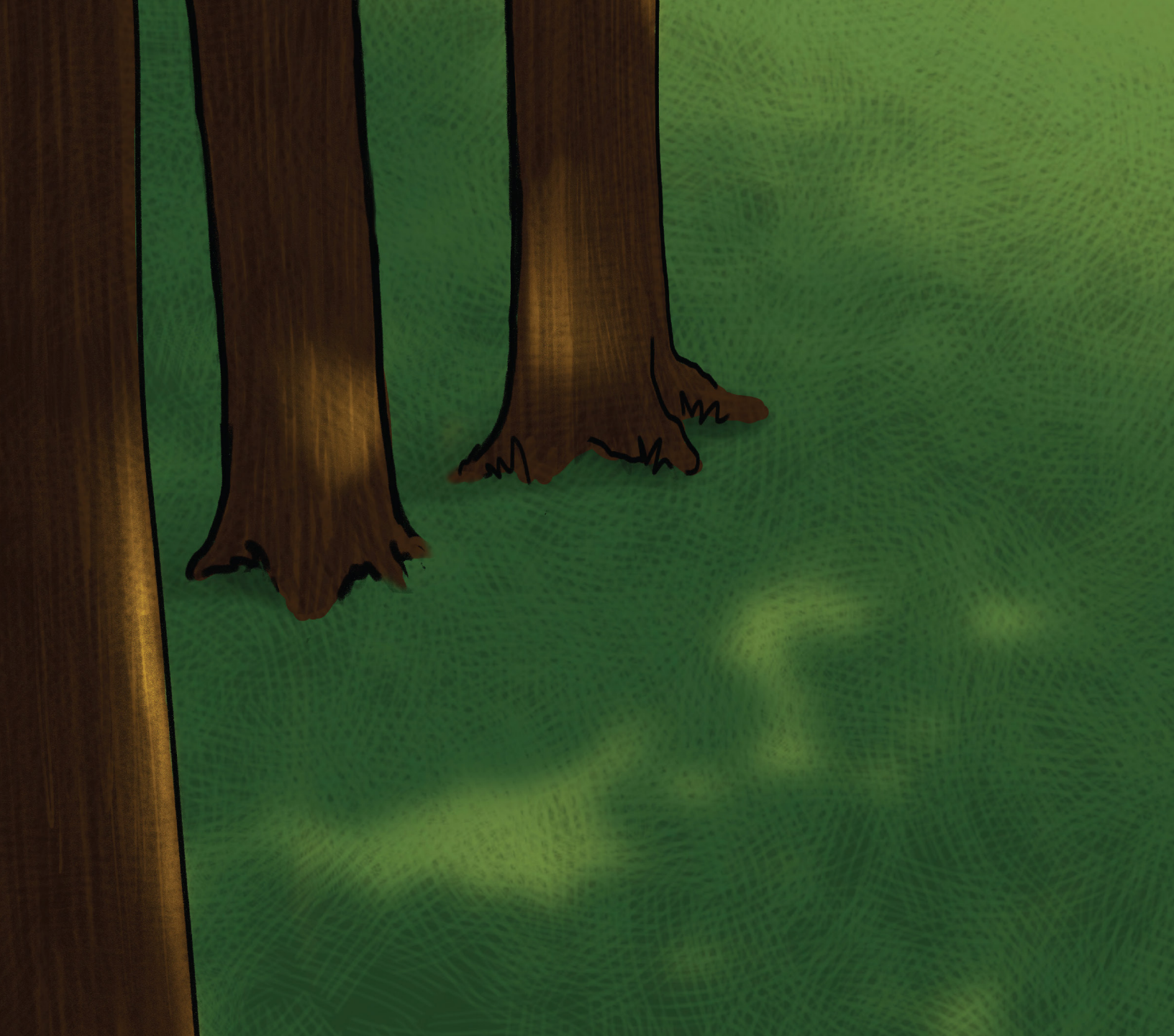
A CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO LIVING  
WHEN A LOVED ONE IS DYING

WRITTEN BY ROBIN HOPKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY NICK GANCI



This book is written in loving memory of  
Terry S. Langbaum, and her tireless dedication to  
ensuring cancer patients and their families have the  
support they need during treatment  
and beyond.



# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

A CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO LIVING WHEN A LOVED ONE IS DYING

WRITTEN BY  
ROBIN HOPKINS

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I got some really bad news today,



and it's hard to talk about.

Mom's cancer is back,



and the doctors said  
she won't get better this time.

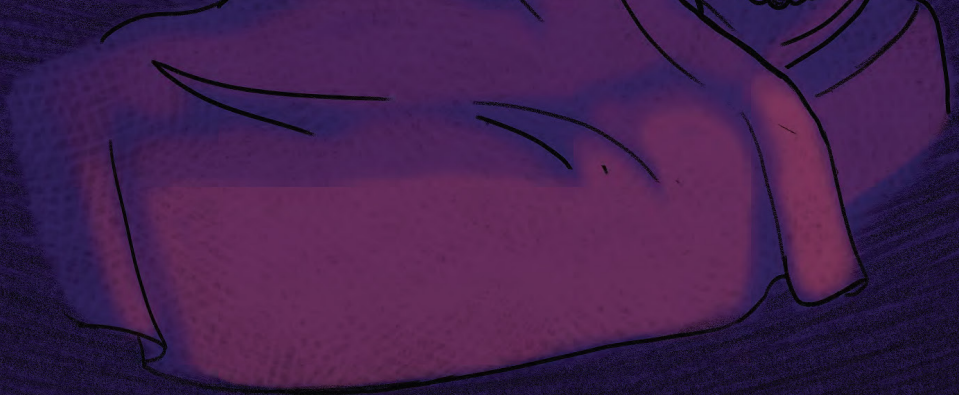
Even though I was little,

I remember from before.

The side effects from  
chemotherapy

made mom feel really awful.

She slept a lot,







sometimes  
she would throw up,

and she lost all  
of her hair.



Grandma took care of us  
while mom was sick, and  
she even knitted mom  
a purple hat.

But Mom got better,

life went back to normal.

There were big  
birthday parties,

days at the beach,



amusement parks,



family breakfasts  
and dinners,



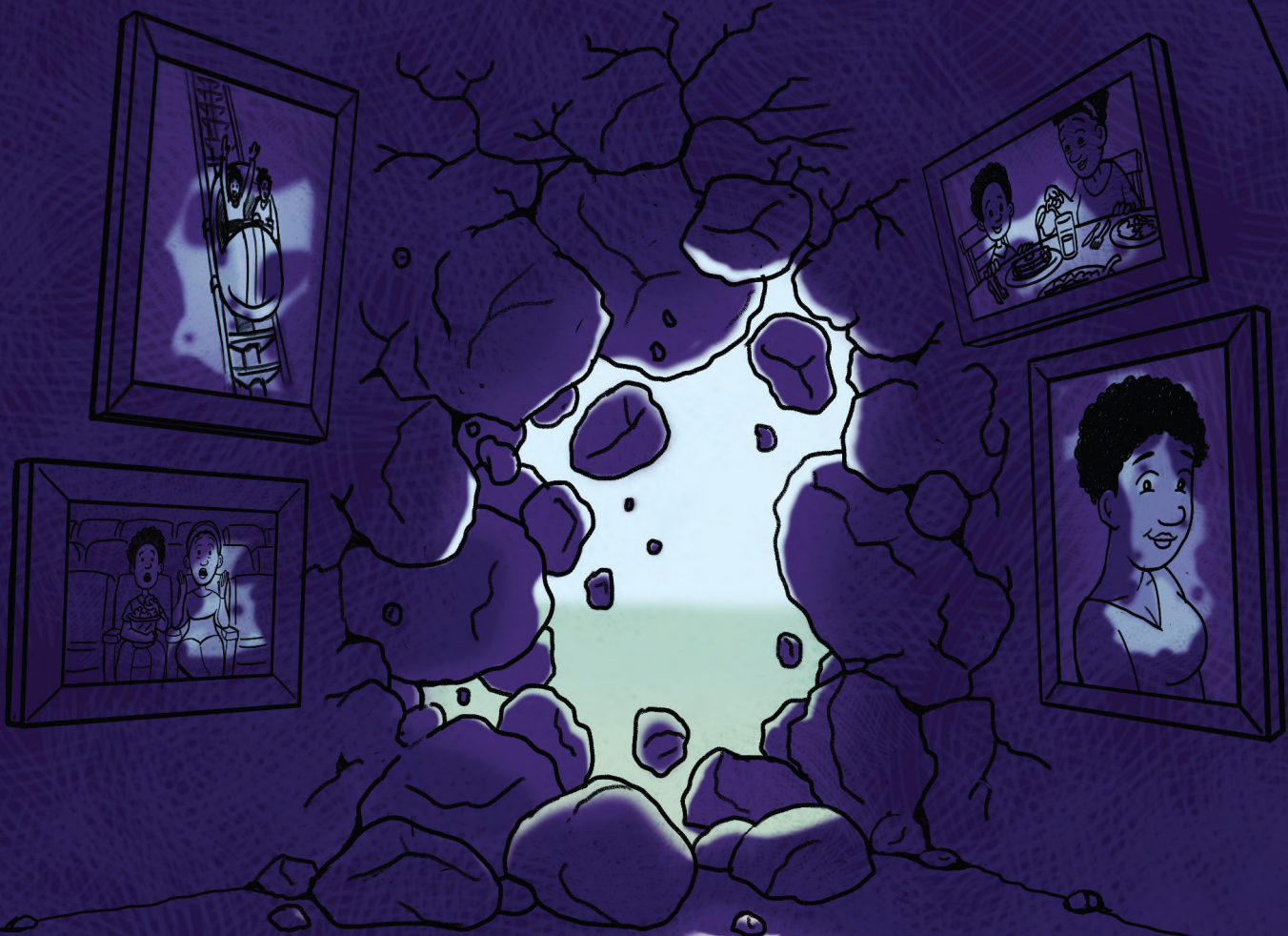
movie nights,



and of course,  
Mom's hair  
grew back!



But Mom's cancer came back, too.



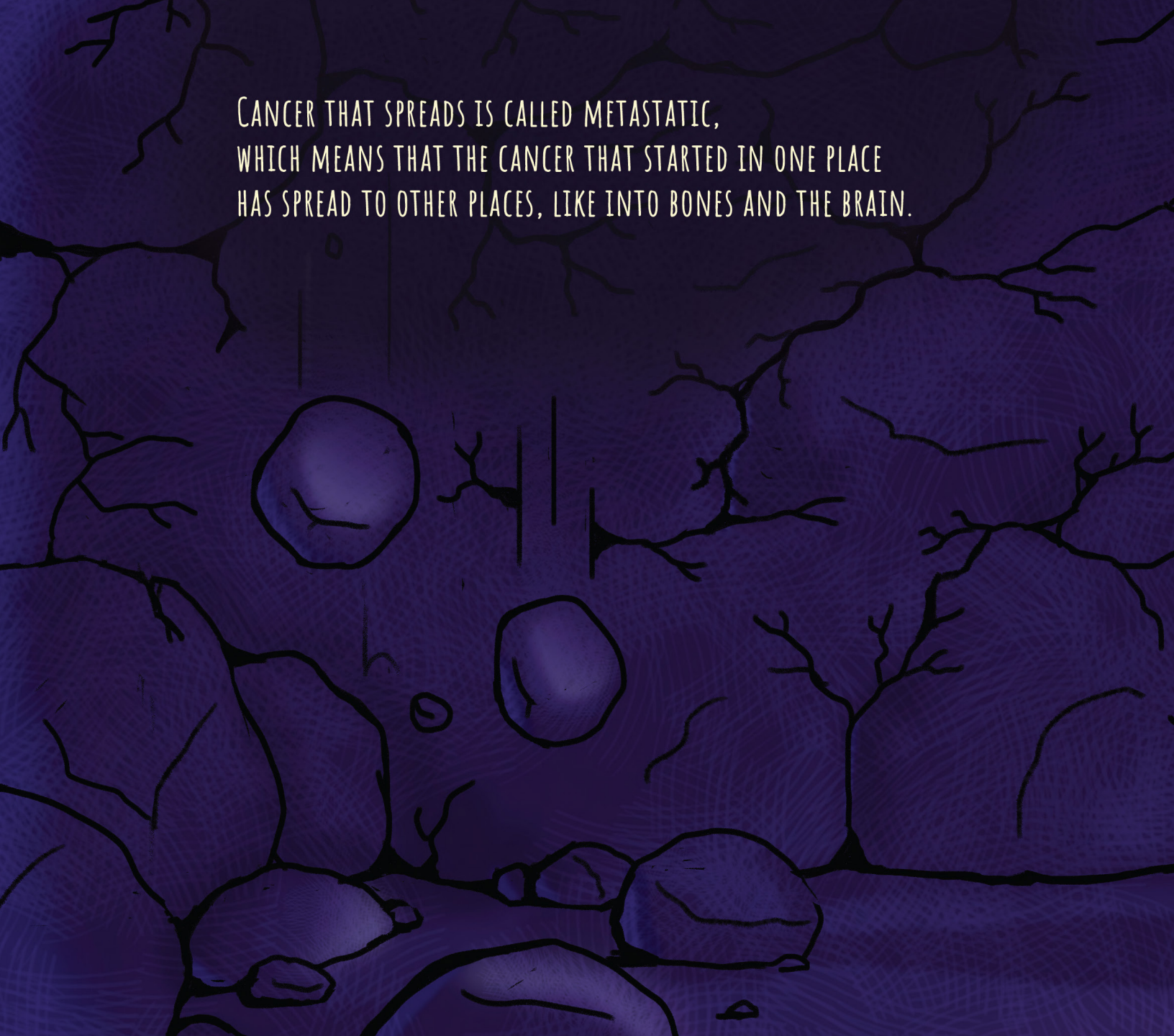
SOMETIMES PEOPLE GET BETTER.  
SOMETIMES THEY DON'T AND THEY DIE.

SOMETIMES, TREATMENTS LIKE SURGERY,  
CHEMOTHERAPY, OR RADIATION  
GET RID OF ALL OF THE CANCER.

BUT CANCER CAN SPREAD OR RETURN.



CANCER THAT SPREADS IS CALLED METASTATIC,  
WHICH MEANS THAT THE CANCER THAT STARTED IN ONE PLACE  
HAS SPREAD TO OTHER PLACES, LIKE INTO BONES AND THE BRAIN.

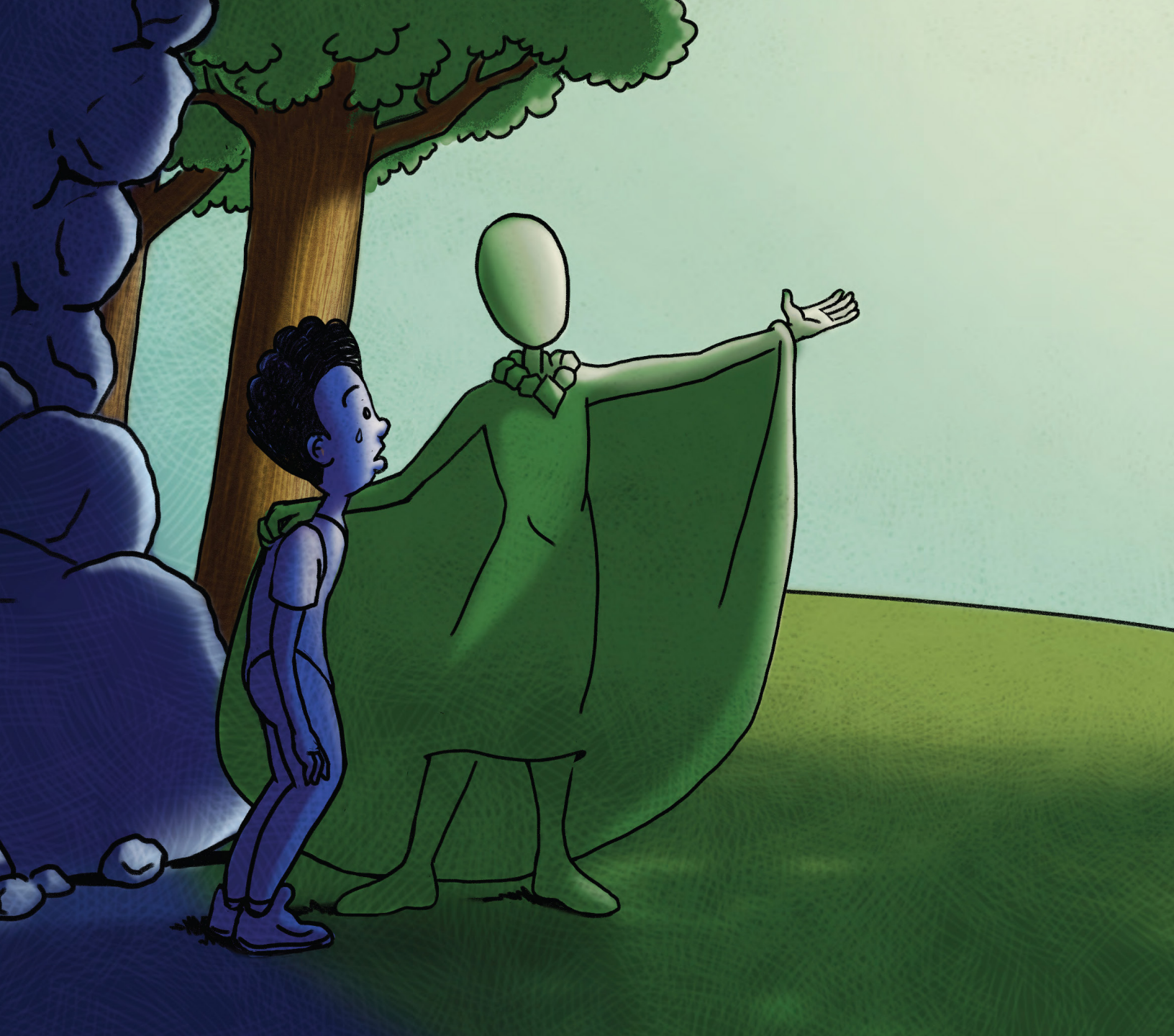


So she's going to die?


YES.

THE DOCTORS DON'T HAVE  
ANY MORE WAYS TO TREAT  
OR CURE HER DISEASE.





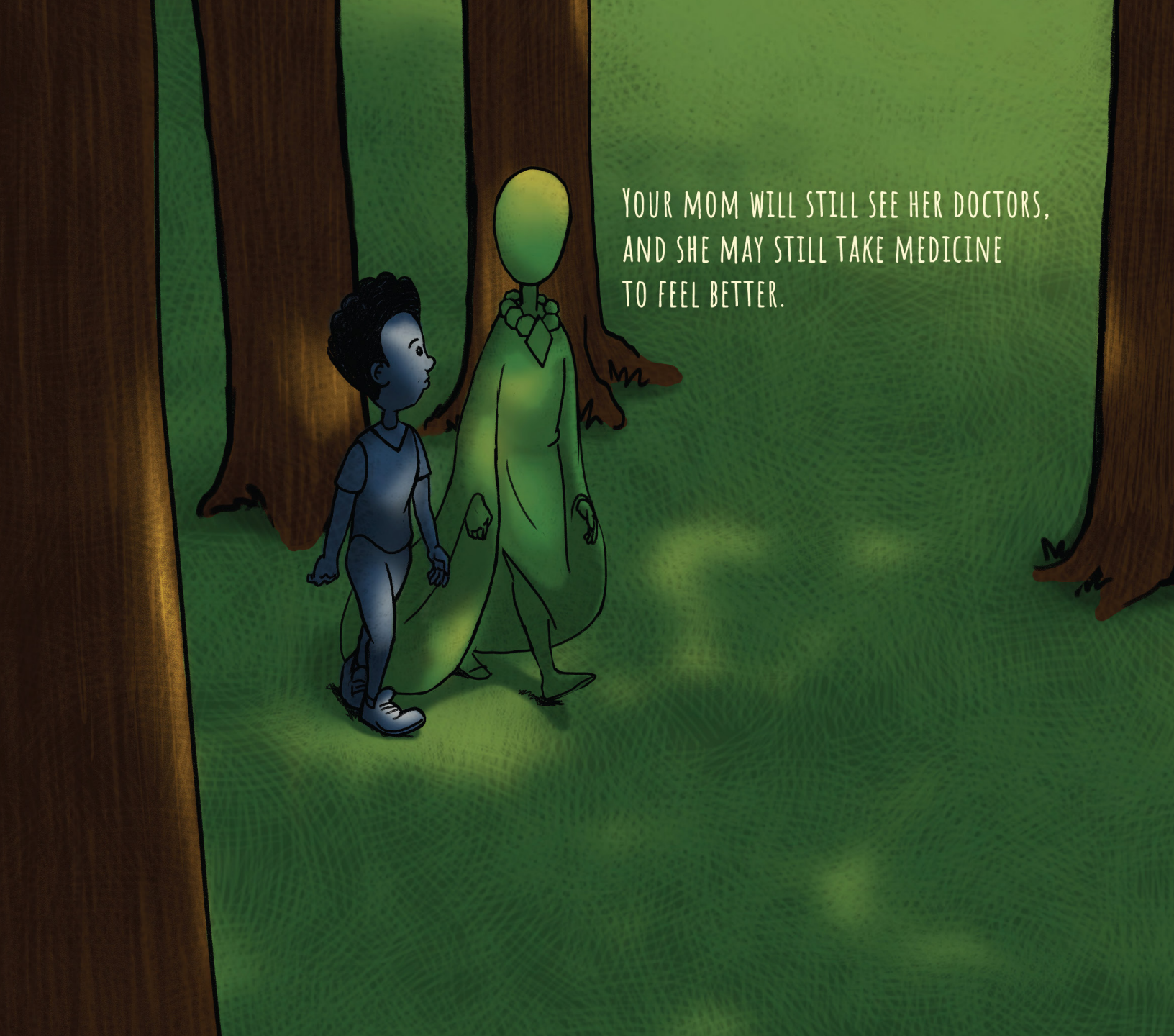





BUT JUST BECAUSE YOUR MOM WILL DIE,  
THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT WILL HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY.

YOUR MOM CAN STILL LIVE FOR MANY MORE YEARS.

SO YOU WILL LIVE YOUR LIFE, AND  
ENJOY THE SPECIAL MOMENTS YOU HAVE TOGETHER.




YOUR MOM WILL STILL SEE HER DOCTORS,  
AND SHE MAY STILL TAKE MEDICINE  
TO FEEL BETTER.

The background is a textured green color, representing foliage. There are several brown tree trunks of varying thicknesses, some with roots visible at the bottom. The style is simple and illustrative.

SHE MIGHT HAVE BAD DAYS,  
WHERE SHE NEEDS MORE REST,  
BUT SHE WILL ALSO HAVE GOOD DAYS!

SHE MAY STILL GO TO WORK,  
HELP AROUND THE HOUSE,  
AND BE HERE TO HELP YOU  
WITH YOUR HOMEWORK.

A cartoon illustration of a person in a white cape and a child in a field at night. The person in the white cape has a white, egg-shaped head. The child has dark, curly hair and is wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants. They are standing on a green field with several trees in the background. The sky is dark and cloudy. The text "How do I act normal when I know she's going to die?" is written in a white, monospace font in the upper right quadrant of the image.

How do I act normal  
when I know she's going to die?



THAT'S THE HARD PART.

WE WON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN  
UNTIL IT HAPPENS.

DEATH IS JUST A PART OF LIFE.

THAT'S WHY IT'S OKAY TO JUST  
BE WITH YOUR MOM.



TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME,

AND TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE  
ABOUT HOW YOU ARE FEELING.



REMEMBER,  
NO MATTER WHERE THEY GO,





I love you.



# Terminology

**Cancer:** Cancer is a disease that happens when the cells in your body start growing uncontrollably.

**Surgery:** Surgery is a medical treatment where doctors use special tools on the patient's body. A doctor who performs surgery is called a surgeon.

**Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy is a medical treatment where doctors use chemicals to kill cancer cells.

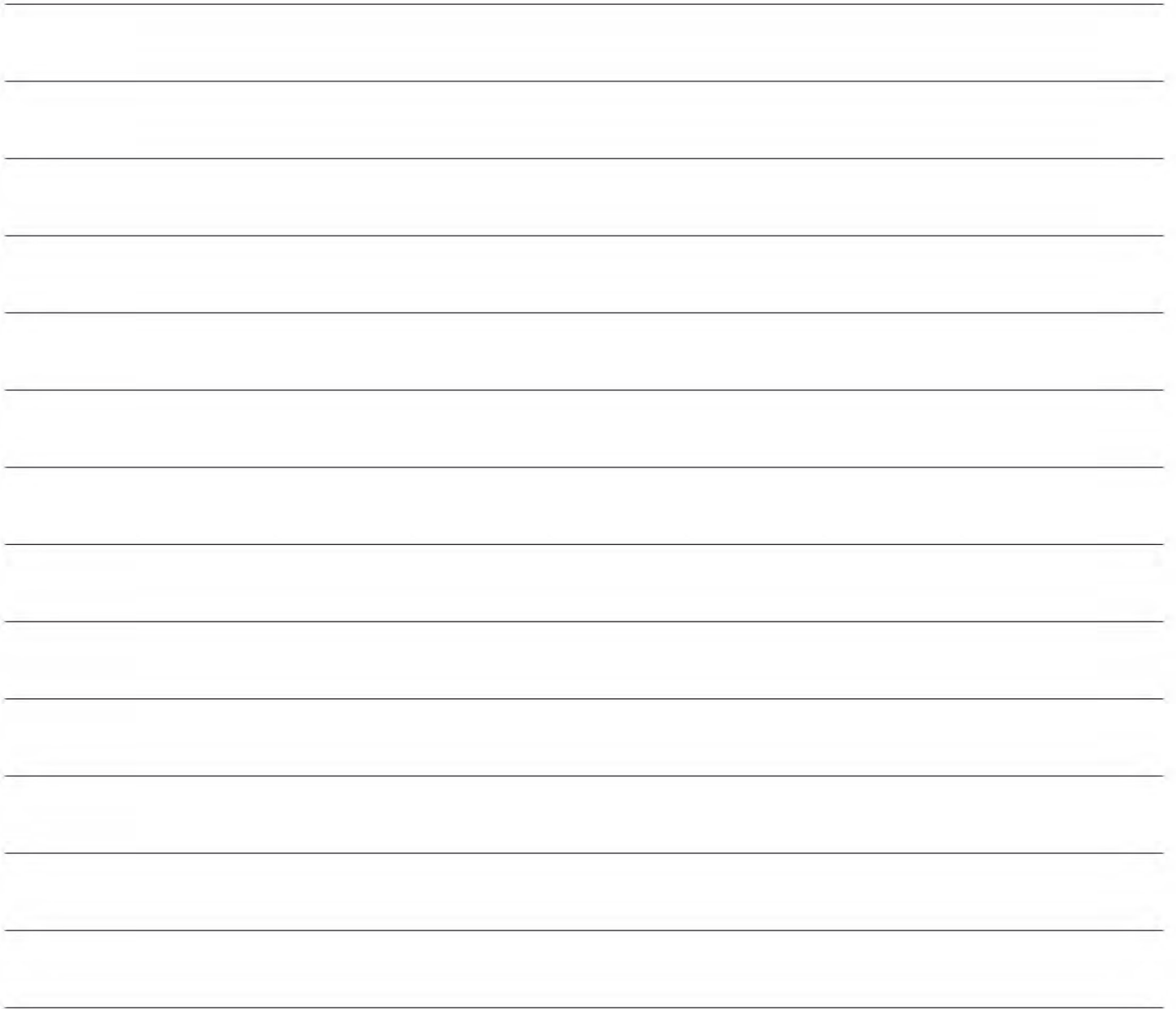
**Side Effect:** A side effect is an unpleasant feeling that can happen after taking medication. This doesn't mean the medicine isn't working!

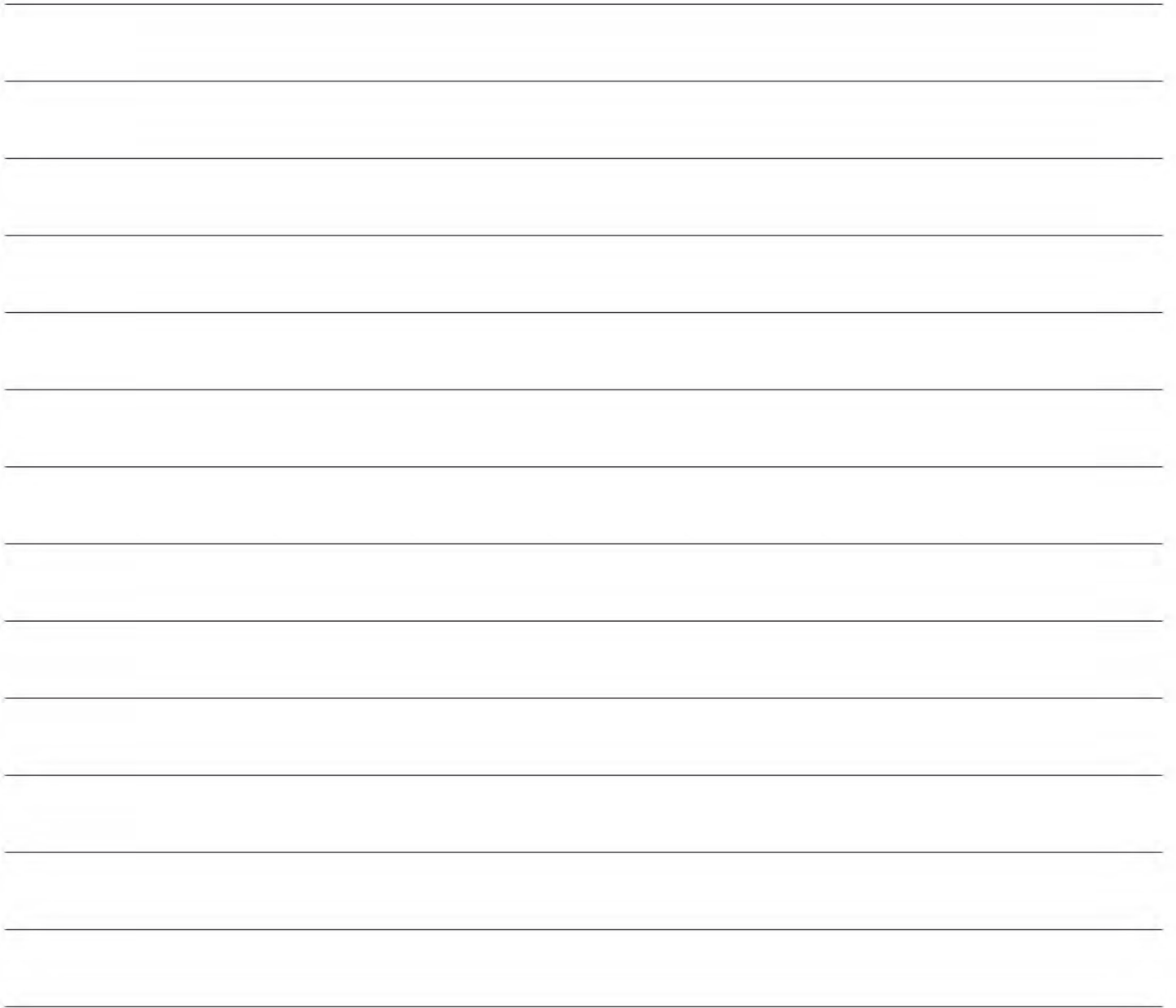
**Metastatic:** Metastatic means that cancer cells have spread from the first place in the body to another place in the body. This means the disease has gotten worse.

**Life-Limiting:** A life-limiting illness is one that will get increasingly worse and cannot be reversed by medicine or treatment. This is sometimes called a terminal illness.

**Survivorship:** Survivorship is the experience of the physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial effects of cancer that begin at diagnosis and continue through treatment and beyond. Family members, friends, and caregivers are also considered part of the survivorship experience.









## Creative Space

Finding the write words can be difficult. Use this space to express your thoughts and feelings anyway that you can.





