

# SYDNEY'S KIDNEY ADVENTURE

## HER BIG WISH FOR MOM COMES TRUE!



WRITTEN &  
ILLUSTRATED BY  
RISA SIMON

## Sydney's Kidney Adventure: Her Big Wish for Mom Comes True!

Written and illustrated by Risa Simon

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ISBN: 979-8-89379-258-4

# SYDNEY'S KIDNEY ADVENTURE

Her Big Wish for Mom Comes True!

Written & illustrated by:

**RISA SIMON**

Founder, TransplantFirst Academy | TransplantStrong  
A Division of Simon Says Seminars, inc.

INCLUDES INSPIRING COLORING BOOK PAGES



## DEDICATION

To all those waiting for a kidney transplant,  
(and their family members & friends)  
I offer you this “feel-good” children’s story  
to fill your hearts with boundless hope.

You’re never too young or old to help a loved one.  
You just need to show how much you care,  
and be vulnerable enough to connect  
to your listener’s heartstrings.

Without “big wish” awareness no one  
can imagine how they can help.

**WISH BIG!    CONNECT!    INSPIRE!**



In a place where kindness is one of the greatest superpowers in the world, a little girl named Sydney happened upon a chance to make her “big wish” come true.

On most days, you’ll find Sydney full of joy and free from worry. When not at school or helping her mother in the kitchen, she’s in the garden skipping alongside her fluttering butterfly friends.

But Sydney’s joy seemed to melt away after she started noticing her mother was tired and sad at the time. She tried to make her mother smile again, but no matter how hard she tried, nothing worked.



A few weeks later, Sydney's father came into her room before bedtime. He sat on the side of her bed and softly whispered, "Sydney, I need to tell you something about Mommy."

Sydney was sure it wasn't going to be good. She squeezed her father's hand to brace herself as he continued, "Do you remember when Uncle Nick's kidneys weren't working well, and he needed a new kidney for his transplant?" Sydney nodded.

Her father continued, "Well, Mommy's kidneys aren't working well now either. To make her feel better, she needs a new kidney so she can get a transplant just like Uncle Nick."

Sydney's heart sank. She loved her mother so much, and the thought of her needing a transplant terrified her. Wondering how she could help, she asked her father, "Can I give Mommy a kidney for her transplant?"



Her father hugged Sydney and said, "Sweet pea, you are too young to give Mommy a kidney."

Sydney quickly responded with another question, "But, what about you, Daddy? Can't you give a kidney to Mommy?"

Sydney's father replied, "I wish I could, baby girl. I really wanted to help Mommy. Believe me, I tried, but the hospital said my kidneys were not a good choice for Mommy."

Her father rested the side of his face near the top of her head and said, "We just have to hope we can find Mommy a new kidney so she can get her transplant and start feeling better."

Sydney rested her worried mind on her father's shoulder. After a short while he said, "Don't worry Sydney, we'll find Mommy a kidney." He then kissed her forehead, wished her a good night, and quietly left the room.



Sydney closed her eyes tight and pulled the covers over her head. But within seconds, she popped back up and stretched her arms up high, as if she were touching the stars in the sky.

Sydney's eyes locked on to the brightest star above. Without thinking, she called out, "Star light, star bright. I wish I may, I wish I might, have this wish I wish tonight!" She continued, "I know this is a big wish, Mr. Star, but this time it's not for me. It's far more important. It's for my Mommy."

Keeping her arms extended overhead, she continued on, "My big wish is to find my Mommy a new kidney for her transplant so she can start feeling better. Please help me make my wish come true. I promise I'll make it up to you."

As Sydney drifted asleep, her smile remained. All her worries seemed to have melted away.



The next morning, Sydney jumped out of bed. It was Saturday, a perfect day to ask her father to walk her down to the pet store where she adopted her pug, Ricky.

Sydney's father had no idea what she was up to but agreed to walk her there and wait outside on a bench. As she entered the store, a clerk approached, "How can I help?" Sydney replied, "I'm looking to adopt a kidney for my Mommy. You see, her kidneys aren't working very well anymore, and she needs a new one now."

The clerk replied, "Precious one, I wish I could help. I really do, but we don't carry kidneys here." She smiled and continued, "I heard Patsy, the bookstore owner next door, gave one of her kidneys to her sister. You might want to talk to her."

Sydney thanked the clerk and walked out to her father reading on a bench between the two stores. She called out, "Keep reading Daddy, I have one more thing I have to do." She pointed to the bookstore and said, "I'll be right back."



As she entered the bookstore, Sydney's eyes locked onto a kind looking lady. She approached and asked, "Are you Patsy?" The bookstore owner replied, "Yes, I am. How can I help?"

Sydney responded, "Is it true that you gave one of your kidneys to your sister?" Patsy smiled, "Yes, I did, and I'd do it again if I could, but they're all taken," she winked. "Why do you ask?"

Sydney described her big wish to find her mother a new kidney.

Patsy responded, "I see. Aren't you a brave little girl." Patsy smiled, "Since most healthy people have two kidneys and only need one to live a normal life, you'll need to find someone healthy enough to share their spare, like I did."

Patsy continued, "No one can offer to help if they're unaware of what your mommy needs, so you'll need to share your big wish with lots of people. Would you like me to help you create a flyer to get the word out around your neighborhood?"



Please  
Help Me  
Find My  
Mom A  
New  
Kidney

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Kidney

Sydney jumped on the offer because that's how she found her dog Buddy, when he went missing. Filled with excitement, Sydney walked Patsy outside to get her father's permission.

Moved by Patsy's offer, her father said, "By all means! I can help you too! I'll get you email addresses, phone numbers—and the transplant center's information."

They immediately went to work. The flyer turned out beautifully with Sydney's big wish boldly positioned at the top. It included a photo of her mother, contact information, and transplant center details for those who wanted to explore living donation.

Sydney and her father posted flyers on lampposts throughout the neighborhood. Readers were encouraged to spread the word about Sydney's big wish—or reach out for more information.



But Sydney didn't stop there. The following weekend, she decided to set up a lemonade stand, like she did the previous summer. Only this time, she handed everyone who passed by a flyer.

Sydney thanked everyone for stopping by, shared her big wish and left them with a Big Wish Ask: “If you're healthy and happen to have two kidneys—but don't think you could share your spare, could you spread the word to help us find someone who can?”

Everyone was moved by Sydney's bighearted desire to help her mother. Many offered to learn more, post online, and tell others.

Filled with excitement, Sydney packed up her table. She never realized how helping her mother could feel so good. There was no time to spare. She was off to plan her next adventure.

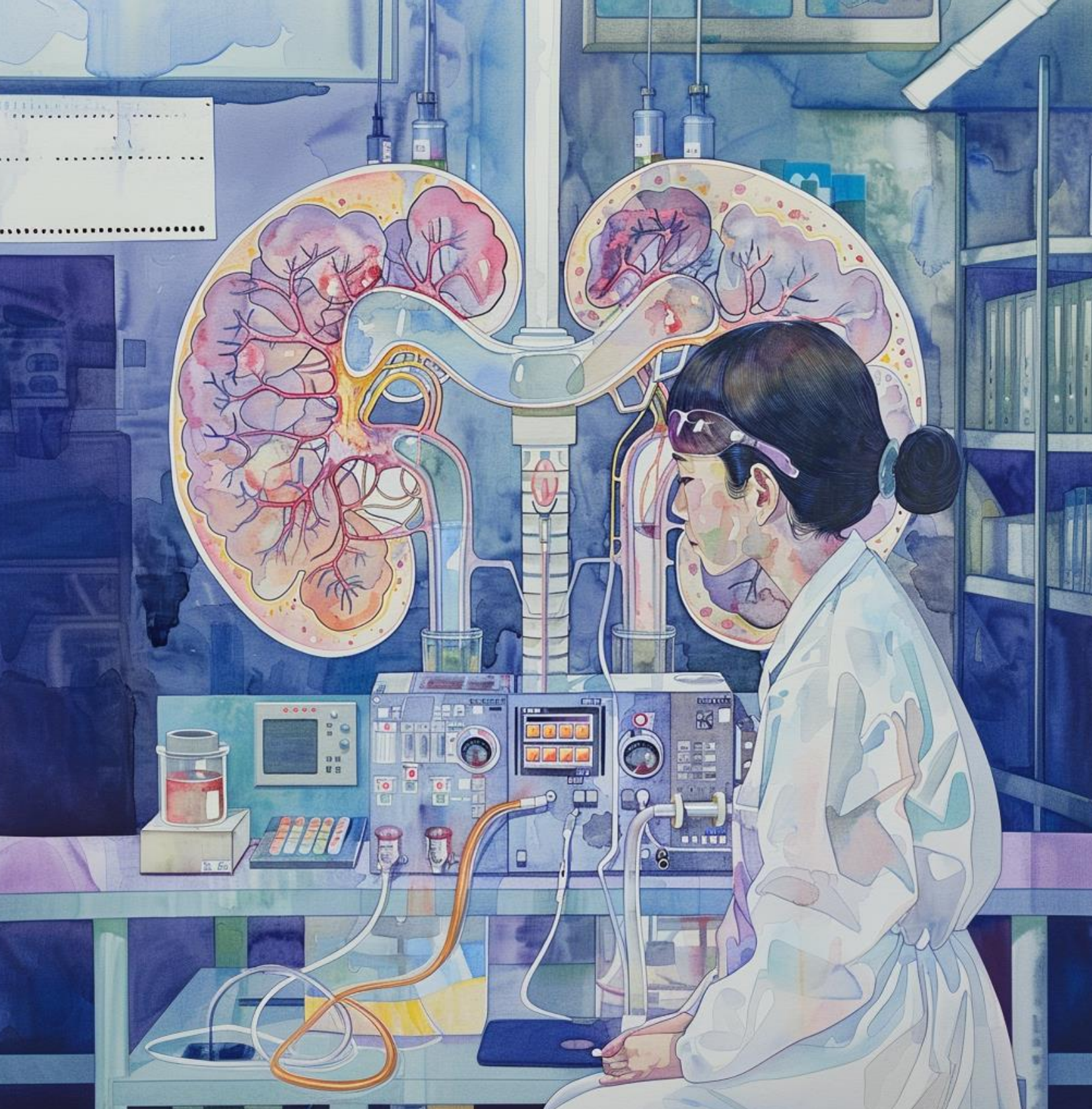


Sydney's next adventure had her posting flyers on bulletin boards at nearby churches, grocery stores, and the community library. Only this time her father added the family's favorite picture of Sydney and her mother making a difference at the beach.

On that special day, Sydney and her mother spent their time skipping along the shore as the waves rolled in. Their goal was to throw as many washed-ashore starfish back into the sea.

They were making a difference for handfuls of displaced star-shaped angels. It was just like the boy in *The Starfish Story* book, an inspiring tale Sydney's mother read to her often.

The message under the picture read, "You can make a difference too by becoming a living kidney donor." Readers were encouraged to contact the family or transplant center to learn more. The message ended with, "If you can't share their spare, please help us spread the word."



Sydney's curiosity led her to discover more about what kidneys do and how living kidney donation saved lives. She couldn't get over how kidneys worked morning, noon, and night, just like a medical wizard making every effort to keep their owners alive.

### Did You Know?

- Most People Have Two Kidneys
- Healthy People May Only Need One Kidney
- Kidneys Filter Fluids & Waste + Control Blood Pressure
- Kidneys Make Vitamins to Keep Bones Strong
- Nearly 90,000 People Are Waitlisted for a Kidney
- Living Kidney Donors End the Transplant Wait

She was also fascinated by the many things kidneys do while their owners are asleep—without making any noise, not even a peep.



As the days went by, Sydney's big wish grew beyond finding her mother a new kidney. She wanted her mother to get healthier and stronger so they could get back to enjoying their time together.

Sydney also wanted to spend lots of fun and memorable years with her family. She hoped they could travel to exciting places and enjoy special events together, like birthday celebrations, her graduation ceremony, and wedding.

She also dreamed about having her own children and bringing her mother grandchildren someday.

This is the life she imagined for her mother after she received her kidney transplant from a lifesaving living kidney donor.



Sydney's next adventure appeared as the perfect school assignment when the teacher asked the class to talk about their goal for the year. It was a perfect fit for Sydney's big wish talk, so it came as no surprise that she volunteered to present first on that day.

Sydney spoke of many things, including what kidneys do, why her mother needed a new one, and how healthy people can donate a kidney and continue to live a normal life.

While handing out flyers, Sydney's classmate Isabella raised her hand and spoke up with joy and excitement, "I can give your mommy a kidney!" The teacher quickly jumped in and admired Isabella's kind heart, while explaining to the class that only grownups could consider donating a kidney.

Isabella was not at all happy with that answer.



When Isabella got home, she told her mother about Sydney's talk, how her mother needed a kidney, how she wanted to help, and how the teacher said kids her age couldn't do that.

Isabella's mother, Hana, was deeply touched by her daughter's desire to help. She always thought her child was sweet and loving, yet she never imagined just how big her little heart was until now.

She hugged Isabella and praised her for wanting to help her friend's mother. She then whispered into her ear, "I'm so sorry, Isabella. Your teacher was right. You are too young to donate, but I'm sure they'll find someone else who can help."

She held Isabella's hand and said, "Isabella, I'll never forget your kind heart. I love you so much. I'm so proud to be your mommy."



Hana knew Sydney's mother from PTA meetings, though she was completely unaware of her medical condition.

And while she never imagined donating a kidney to anyone before, her daughter's desire to help caused her to question why not. That night, her mind started racing as she got into bed. She thought to herself, "Perhaps I can help? I'm healthy. I have two kidneys. If my sweet daughter was considering this, why shouldn't I?"

The next morning, Hana found the flyer Isabella brought home from school with all the contact information. She decided to call the transplant center to learn more. After doing so, she was invited to answer a few questions online to see if she might pre-qualify.

As luck would have it, Hana was informed that she passed all the screening questions and could schedule the necessary medical tests if she wanted to proceed.



After discussing it with her husband and sister Kaia, Hana went ahead and scheduled the tests. The tests took a couple of days over the course of a week to complete. Then came the long wait.

After several weeks, Hana received the call. She was approved to donate. She told her family first to make sure it was okay to tell Sydney's mother the good news. They all agreed.

Both surgeries were performed on one of the most beautiful Spring days in April. By the end of May, both mothers were back to living full and joyful lives.

When asked if they felt any different after the surgery, Sydney's mother replied, "Aside from Hana giving me a second chance to live a better and longer life, she made my daughter's big wish come true. There are no words. Our families are bonded for life."

The news channels covered their stories, inspiring listeners to explore the world's most incredible gift of human kindness.



Several years later, a teenage Sydney was asked to describe what she learned most from her kidney adventure.

She replied with a twinkle in her sparkling blue-green eyes, “My kidney adventure taught me many things, but most of all it showed me how my desire to make a difference, inspired others to do the same.”

“It all starts by getting our big wish out there. Without big wish awareness, no one can imagine how they can lend a hand—or kidney for that matter.”

She winked and continued, “Just one big wish can attract a world of human kindness. We just need to show how much we care and be vulnerable enough to connect to our listener’s heartstrings.”

**89,000  
PEOPLE  
WAITING**

**THE WAIT  
CAN TAKE  
3-5+YEARS**

**UP TO 10 YRS IN  
SOME REGIONS**

**KIDNEY  
TRANSPLANT  
FACTS**

**13 PEOPLE  
DIE EVERY DAY  
WHILE WAITING**

**+ 13 MORE PEOPLE/DAY ARE  
DELISTED BECAUSE THE WAIT  
ADVANCED THEIR ILLNESS**

**TO DATE  
>193,760  
LIVING DONORS  
"SHARED THEIR  
SPARE"**

# A Parent's Guide to Kidney Transplants & Living Kidney Donation

13 people die every day while waiting for a kidney from a deceased organ donor.  
13 more are taken off the list (without the hope of returning)  
because they became too sick while waiting.

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Currently, more than 103,000\* people are waiting on the national transplant list, with 89,000\* waiting for a kidney from a deceased organ donor. Every 8 minutes another name is added to the transplant list. The wait for a kidney from a deceased donor can take 3-5 years, though it can be as many as 10+ years in some regions. \*OPTN DATA '23

Living donors not only end the wait for those in need—they also allow the wait list to gain momentum by freeing up their recipient's place in line for a deceased donor's kidney.

Moreover, live kidney donor transplant recipients tend to live longer and healthier lives, compared to recipients who receive their kidneys from deceased organ donors.

To date, there have been 193,763\* goodhearted people who have donated a kidney.

In 2023, 15,471 transplants were performed by procuring kidneys from deceased organ donors. An additional 6,300 transplants were performed using kidneys from living kidney donors. There's an urgent call to increase living donation opportunities.

Living Kidney Donors Embody our World's Highest Level of Human Kindness.

Learn More Here: <https://unos.org/transplant/living-donation>

\*<https://www.organdonor.gov/learn/organ-donation-statistics> and <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data>

# COLORING BOOK SECTION



*Enjoy Life.*



**Sydney Dancing In  
The Garden with Butterflies**



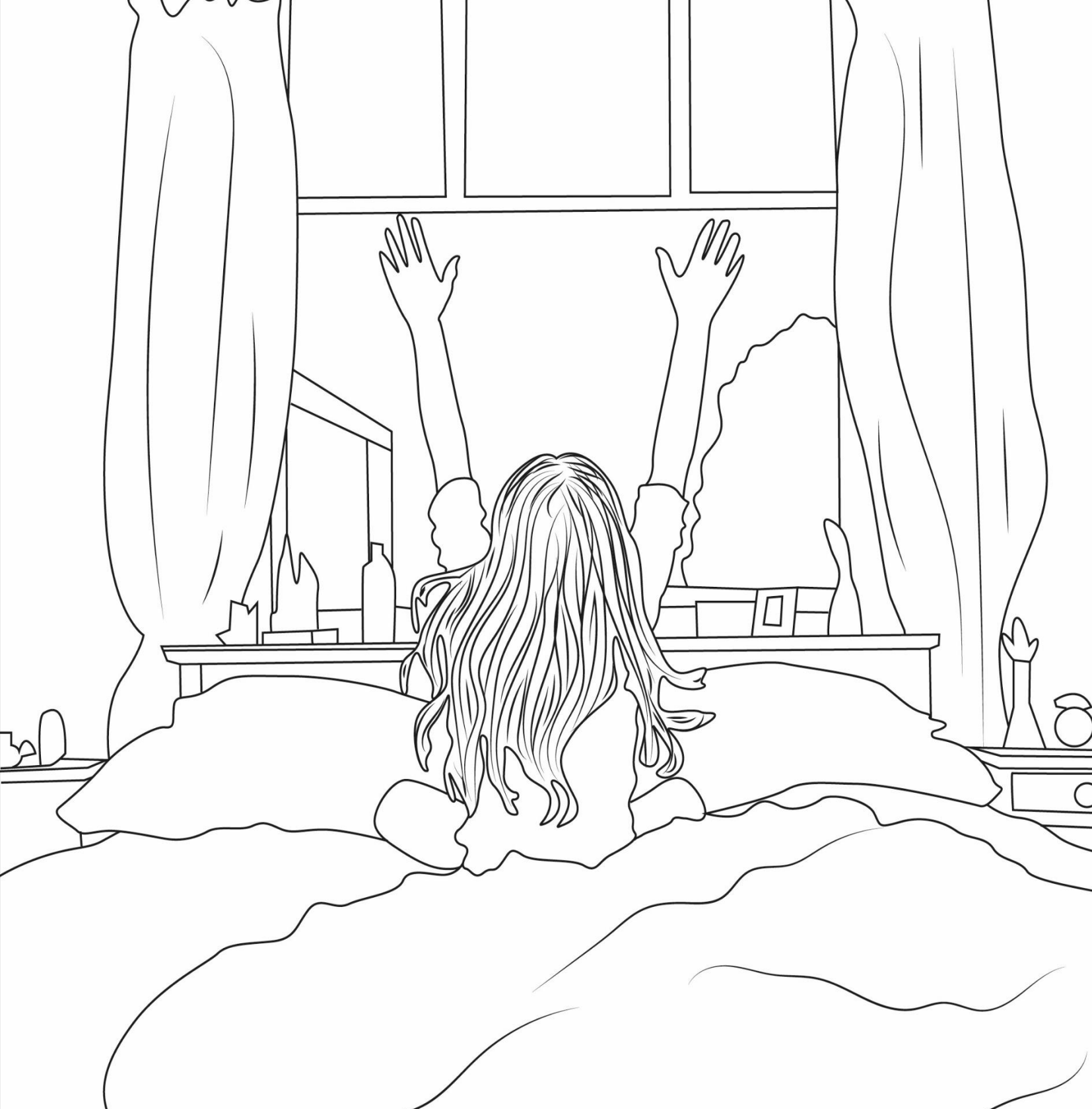
*Being Sad Shows You Care.*

Sydney's Dad  
Talking To Her About  
Her Mother's Need  
For A Kidney



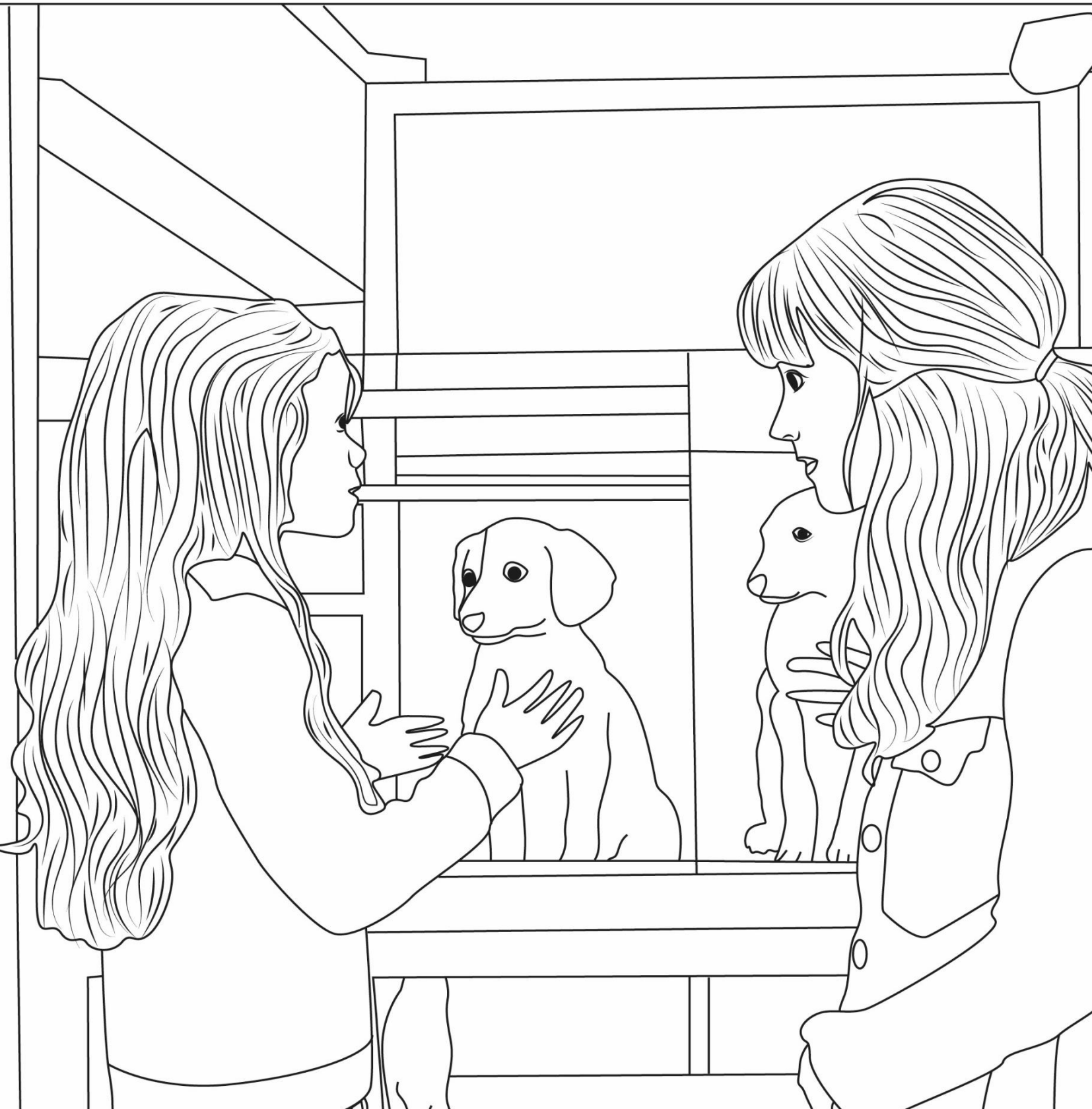
*Inspire Hope.*

Sydney Making Her  
“Big Wish”



*Explore your Options.*

**Sydney Visiting  
The Pet Store**



*Learn From Others.*

**Sydney Asking Patsy  
About Her Kidney Donation**



*Spread the Word.*

**Sydney's Flyers Posted  
Around the Neighborhood**



Please  
Help Me  
Find My  
Mom A  
New  
Kidney

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Find My  
Mom A  
New  
Kidney

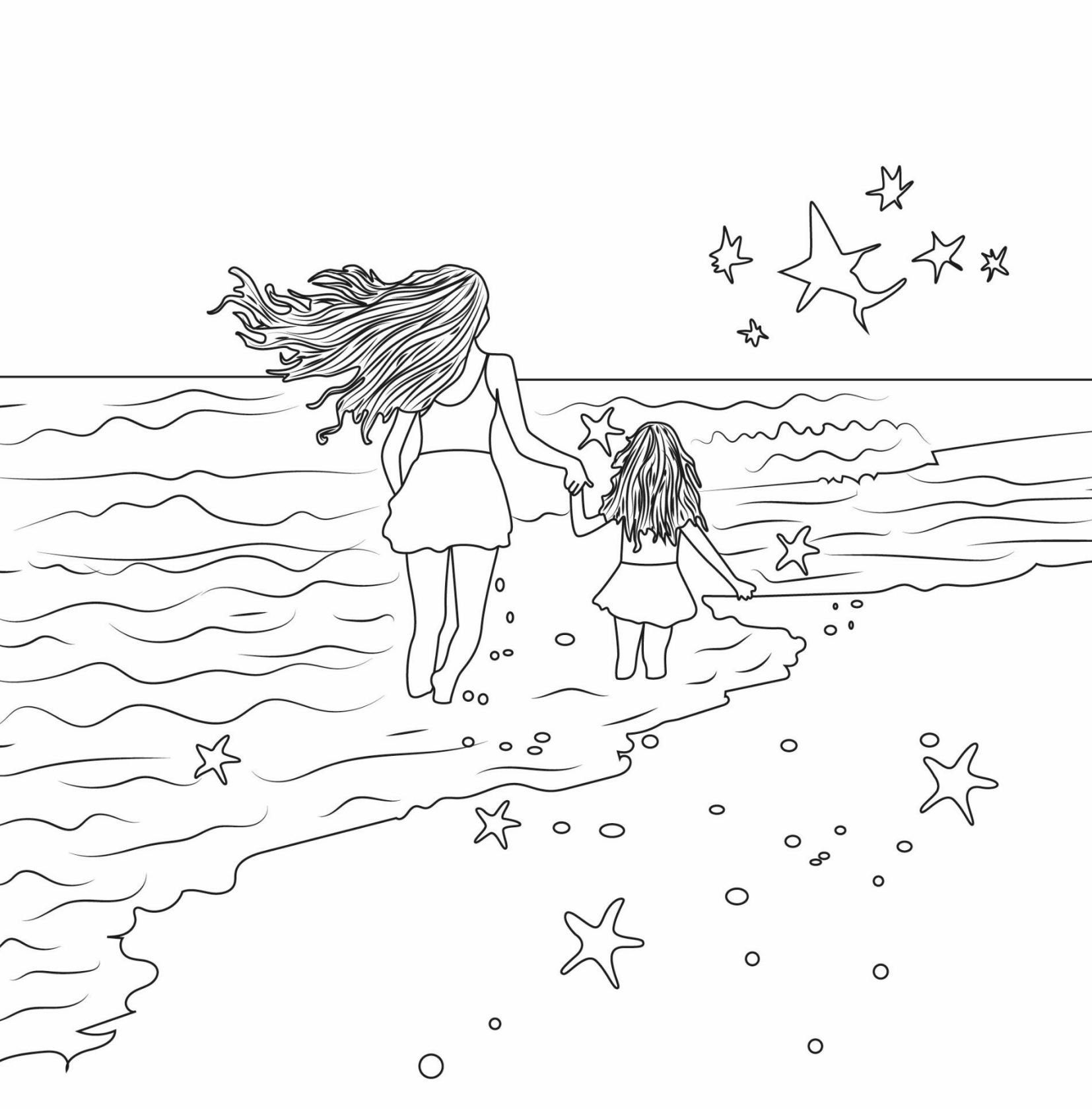
*Be Brave.*

Sydney At Her Lemonade Stand  
Talking About Her “Big Wish”  
To Find Her Mother  
A New Kidney



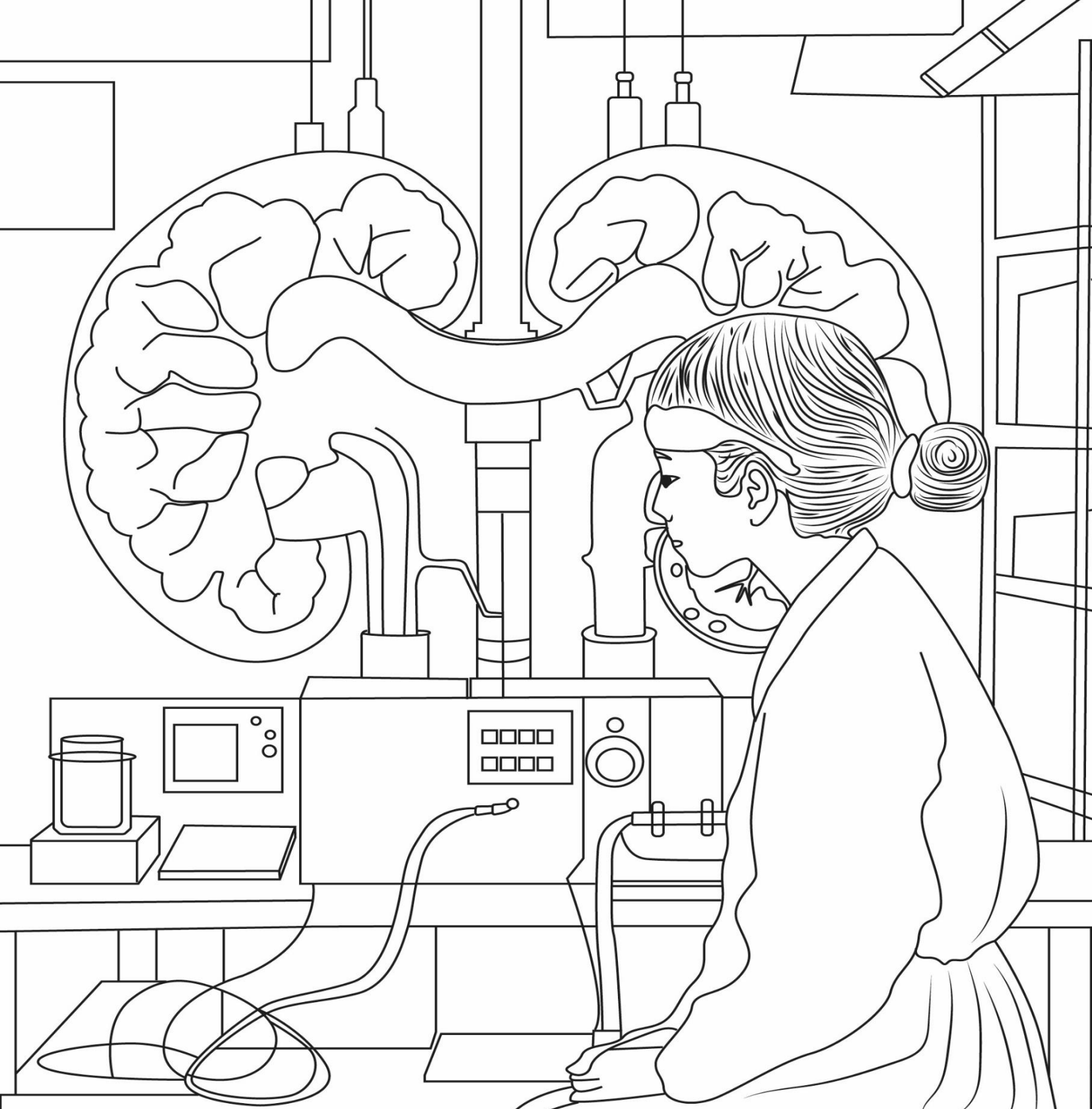
*Be Kind.*

Sydney And Her Mother  
Throwing Washed-Up Starfish  
Back in the Ocean



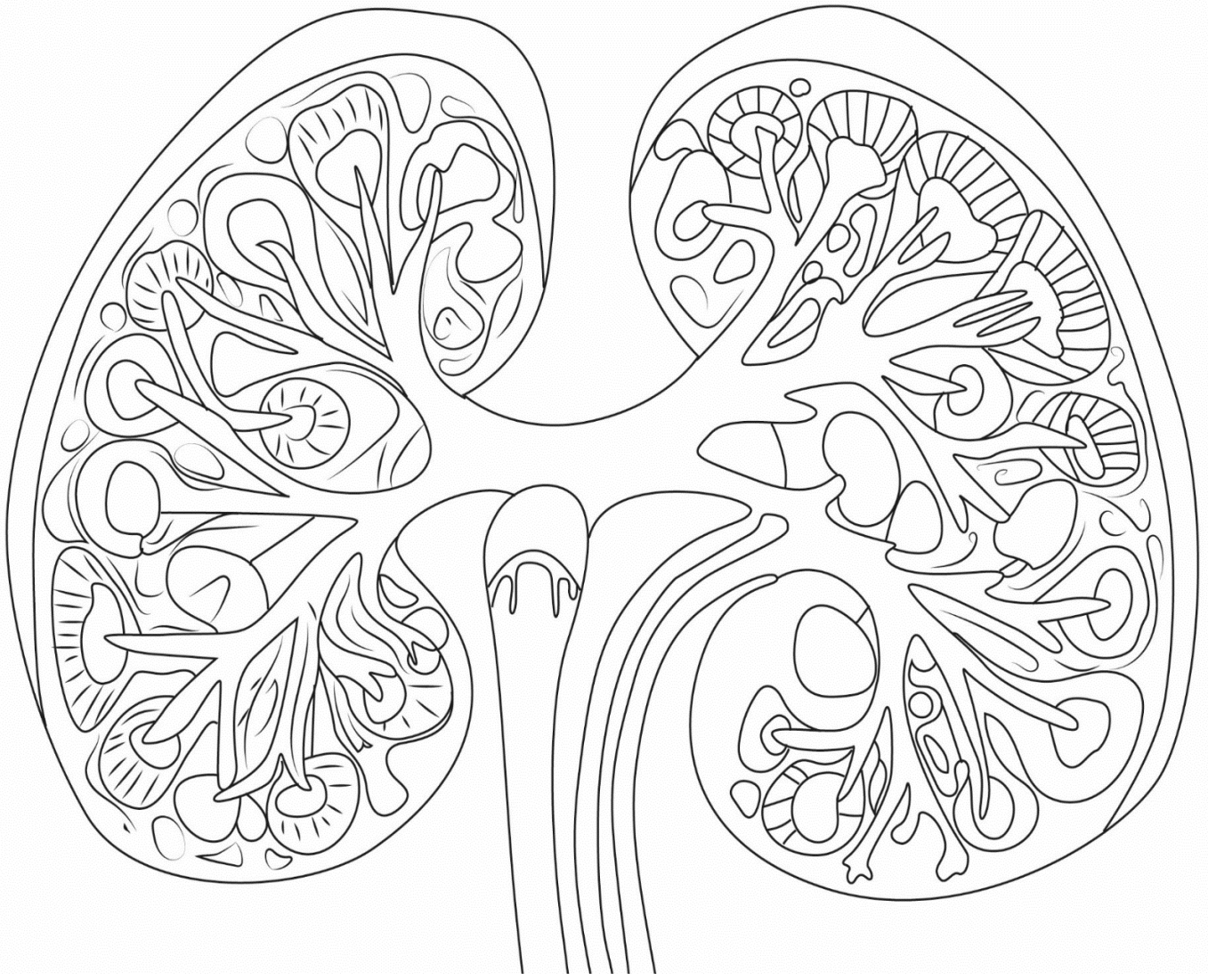
*Be Curious.*

Your Kidneys Work  
Round-The-Clock Just Like  
A Chemist in the Laboratory



*Imagine What Things Look Like.*

Most Healthy People Have Two  
Kidneys, But May Only Need  
One to Live a Full Life



*Stay Hopeful.*

Sydney Walking with Her Mother  
With the Hope of Giving Her  
A Better & Longer Life



*Offer to Help.*

**Isabella Volunteering  
To Give Sydney's Mother  
One of Her Kidneys**



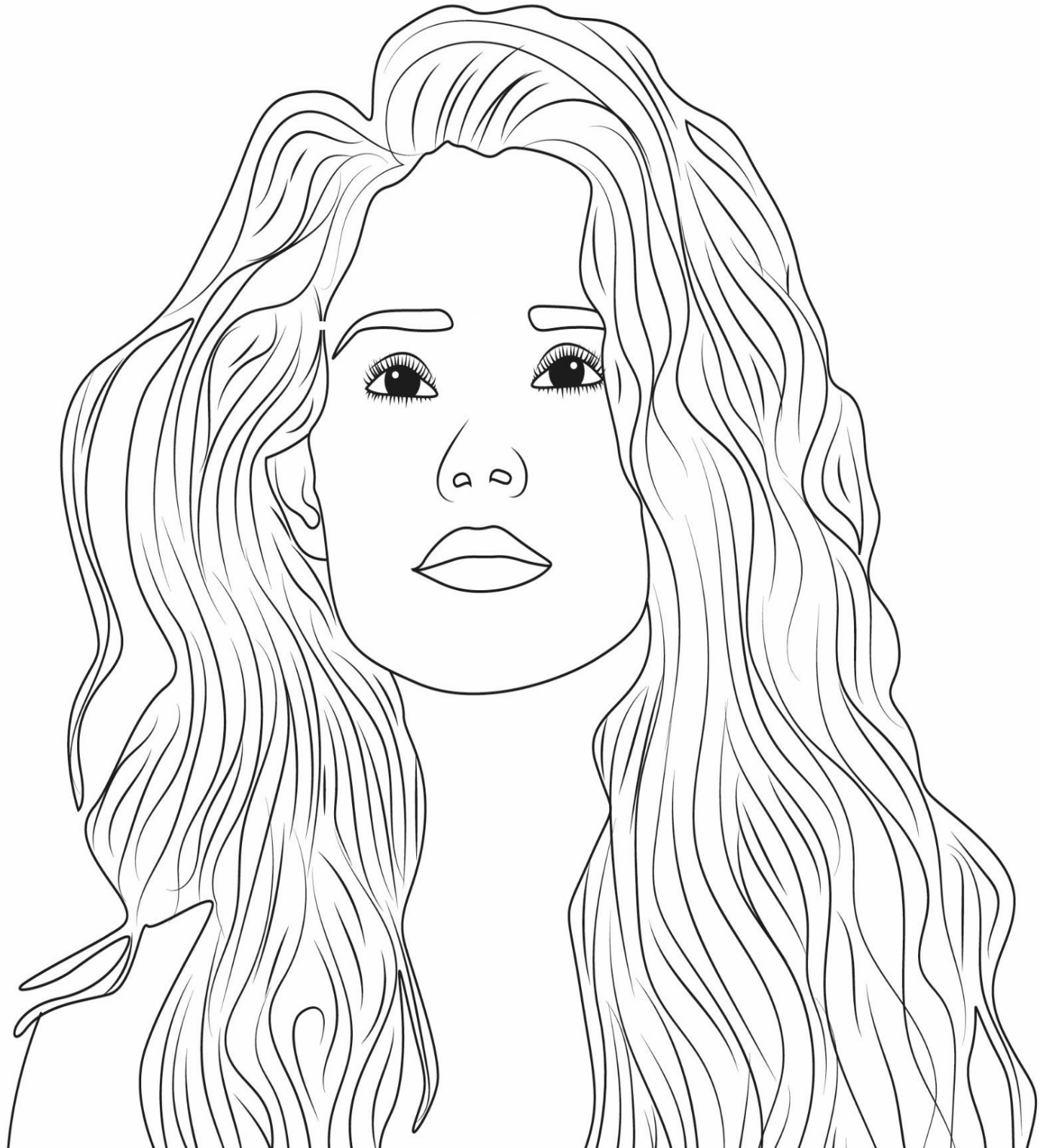
*Be Loving.*

Isabella's Mother  
Admiring Her Daughter's  
Desire To Help



*Inspire Greatness!*

Teenage Sydney Thinking About  
How “Big Wishes” Attract  
Human Kindness



*Additional Resources*

For More Information On:

THE “DONOR SEEKER” MOBILE APP



GET READY TO UNLEASH YOUR  
**DONOR-MAGNET®**  
**SUPERPOWER**

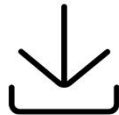


SCAN - IPHONE



SCAN-ANDROID

“DONOR SEEKER”  
**DOWNLOAD  
FREE APP!**



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**TELE-COACHING**



Learn More Here:

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For More Information On:

**AUTHOR'S COMPANION BOOK COLLECTION**



Learn More Here:

[https://transplantstrong.com/how\\_to\\_find\\_kidney\\_donors/](https://transplantstrong.com/how_to_find_kidney_donors/)

# About the Author

Sydney's Kidney Adventure: Her “Big Wish” for Her Mom Comes True was written by preemptive (live-donor) kidney transplant recipient, Risa Simon, a 5x published author, fierce kidney patient advocate and coach, transplant community consultant, motivational speaker— and the trailblazing creator of the Donor-Seeker® app.



Risa

Risa gets what it's like to search for a living kidney donor as if your life depends on it. Her own experience compelled her to write and produce several motivational “How to” books and videos. She also created the first ever, fast-tracked Donor Seeker® mobile app to help patients team-up and talk-up their search for a living kidney donor.

As a bright light for the kidney patient community, you can find Risa empowering transplant hopefuls to fight for their best life possible. The life Risa—and many of her followers now live.

This book was written to offer parents a way to ease into difficult conversations about a loved one's struggle with kidney disease, their need for a transplant, and the power of family support while searching for a living kidney donor. Sydney's courageous character allows readers to feel the enormity of family love through the lens of a little girl's desire to wish big.

This inspirational story was also created to encourage kidney patients, (and their family, friends—and even strangers) to explore living donation to end the life-threatening wait for deceased donor kidneys.

**\*Learn How to Team-Up and Expand Your Living Donor Search. Scan QR Code for [Donor Seeker](#) app**

iOS Apple App Store (iPhone)



Google Play Store (Android)

