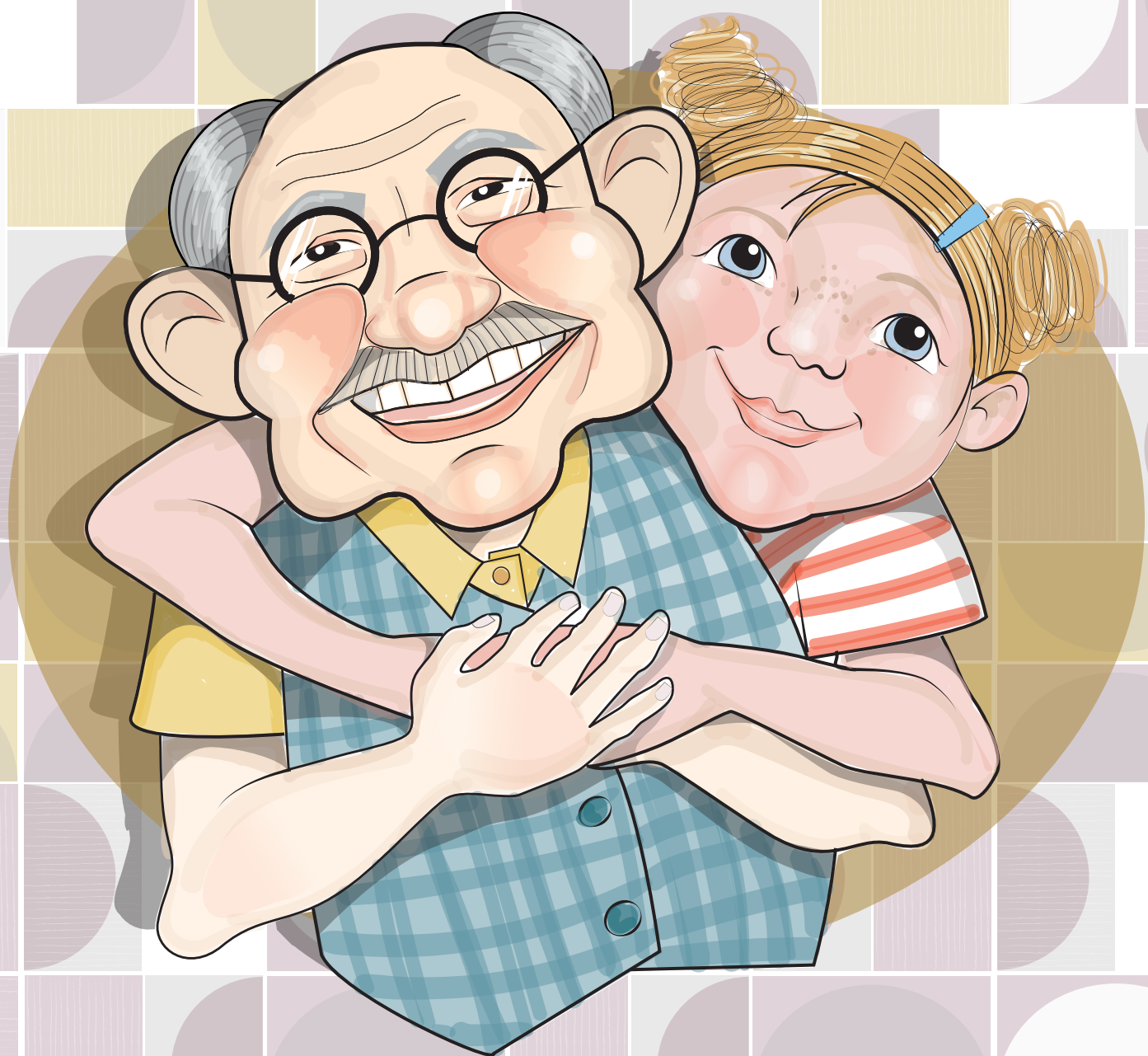


# George's Race

Stay strong, stay steady



As we get older we can become more at risk of having a fall, but falls are not an inevitable part of ageing. As you will see in this book, there are lots of easy things we can do to reduce the risk of a fall happening. It is important that people of all ages are aware of falls, as we can help each other to stay active and do the things we enjoy. I hope my story helps you or someone you know!



Our story is great for children and adults to read together. Try to spot the ladybird on each page!



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
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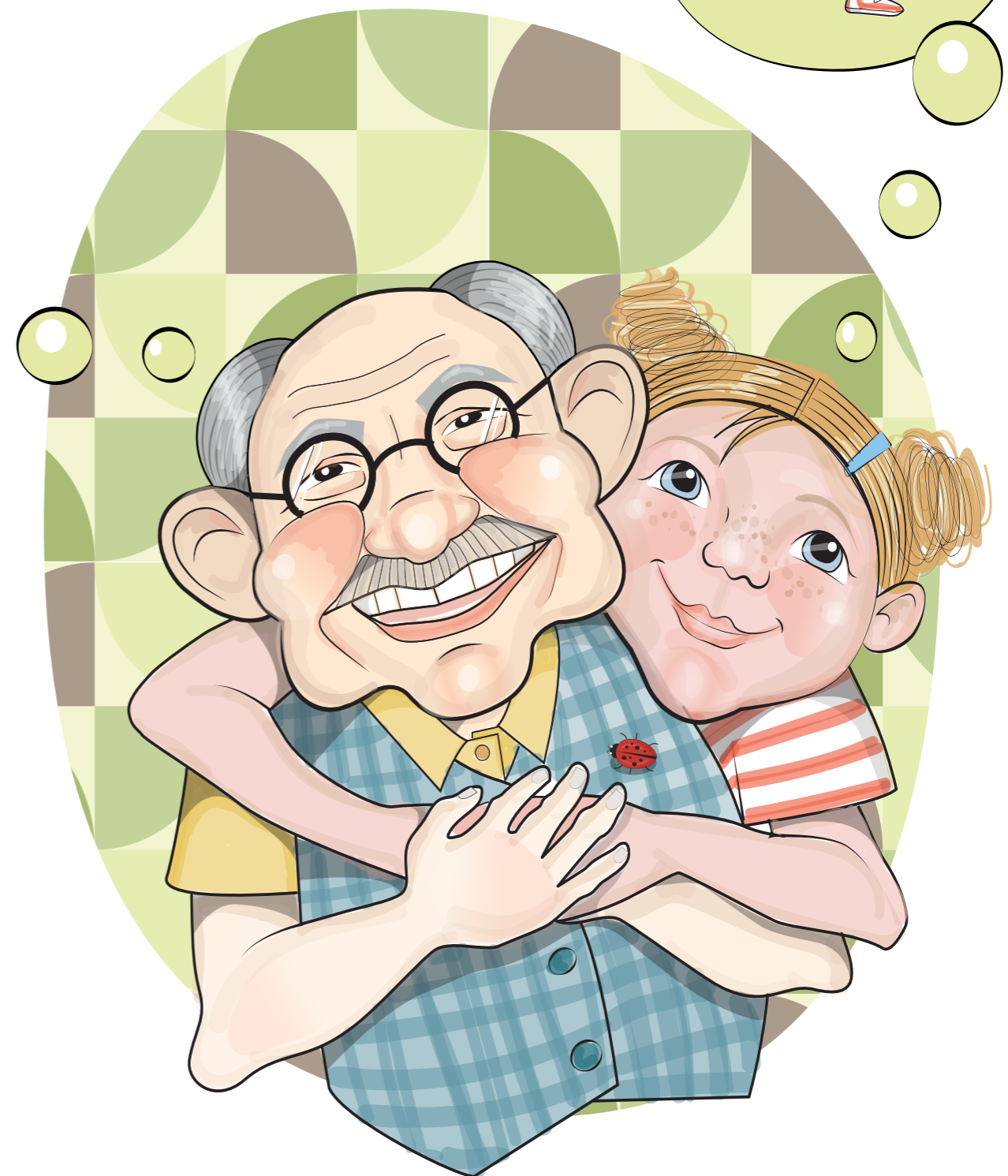
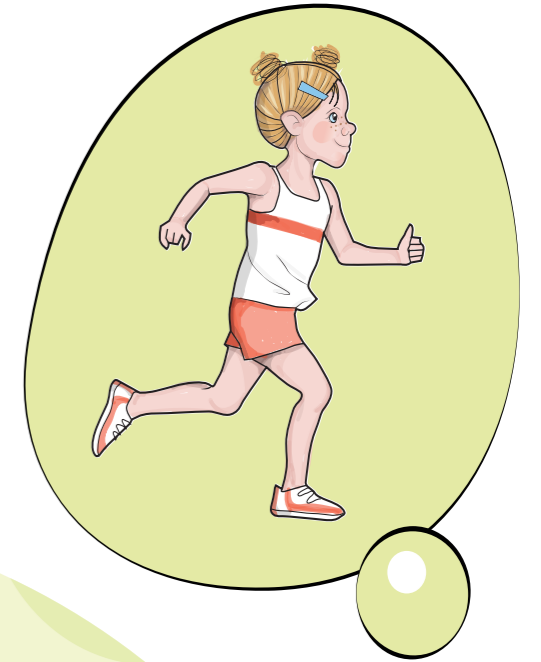
For further information on healthy ageing, including reducing the risk of falls,  
visit the Ageing Well in Wales website at [www.ageingwellinwales.com](http://www.ageingwellinwales.com)

Steady on...  
Stay SAFE



Martha was 7 and a half years old. Her two favourite things in the whole world were running and her granddad, George.

George was 79 and a quarter years old. His two favourite things in the whole world were running and his granddaughter, Martha.



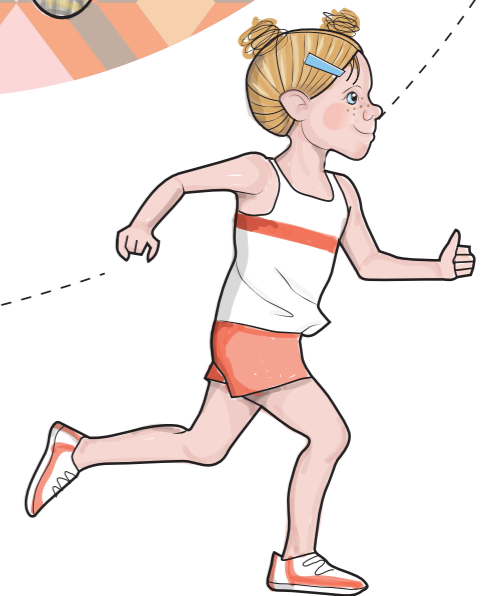
Martha ran around a lot:

inside,  
outside,  
in and out,  
side to side...

George didn't run a lot anymore.  
He mostly stayed inside and didn't go outside much.

Martha dreamed of running in the Olympics one day and winning a medal, like George had done when he was a young man.

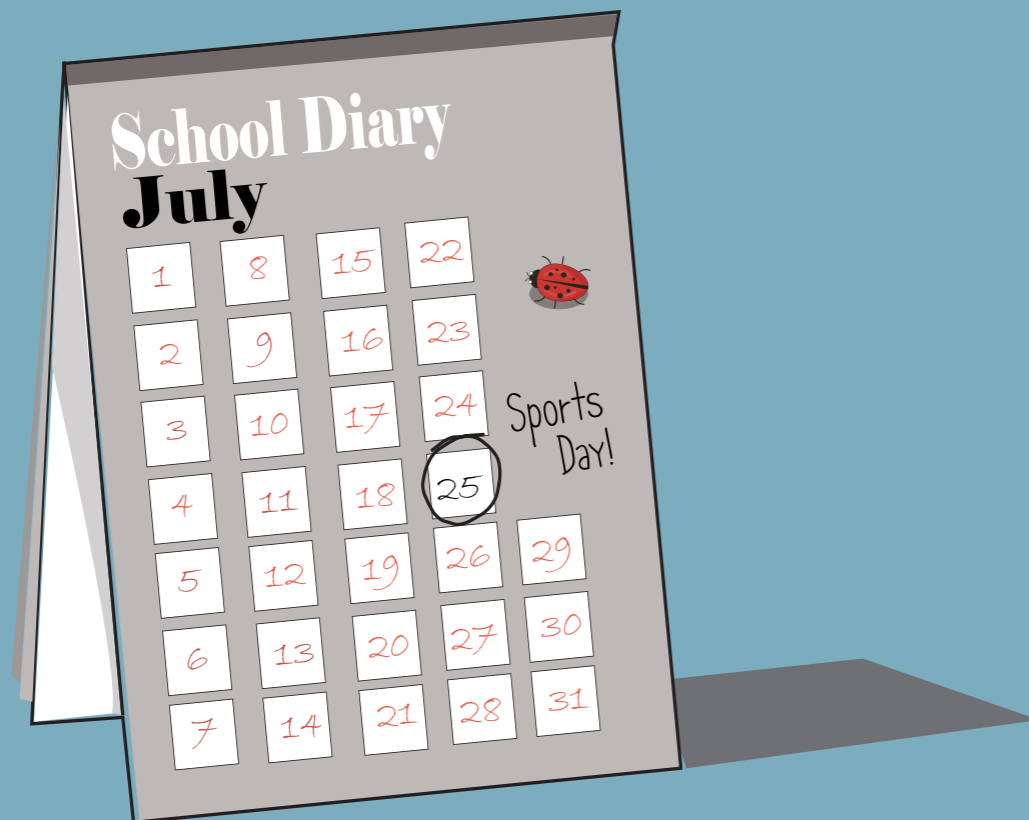
George dreamed about the day he had run at the Olympics and won a medal, like Martha was hoping to do when she was a young lady.



Sports-day at Martha's school was coming up.

Martha loved sports-day. It was a great chance to run and George always came to watch, bringing his Olympic medal to show the other children.

"I can't wait for sports-day" Martha told George excitedly. "There's a new Dad's Race this year, you should do it! I know you're not **MY** dad, but you are Mum's dad, so you are a dad."



George was very quiet. He seemed sad. "What's wrong?" asked Martha. She'd never seen George look sad before.

"You know how you run around a lot and sometimes you fall over because you run so fast?" he said, "but you don't hurt yourself, you just get up and start running again?"

Martha nodded.

"Well a few weeks ago I fell over when I was in the garden. It happened so fast. I tripped over the door mat. I didn't have the strength to get back up, the postwoman had to help me, she was very kind".



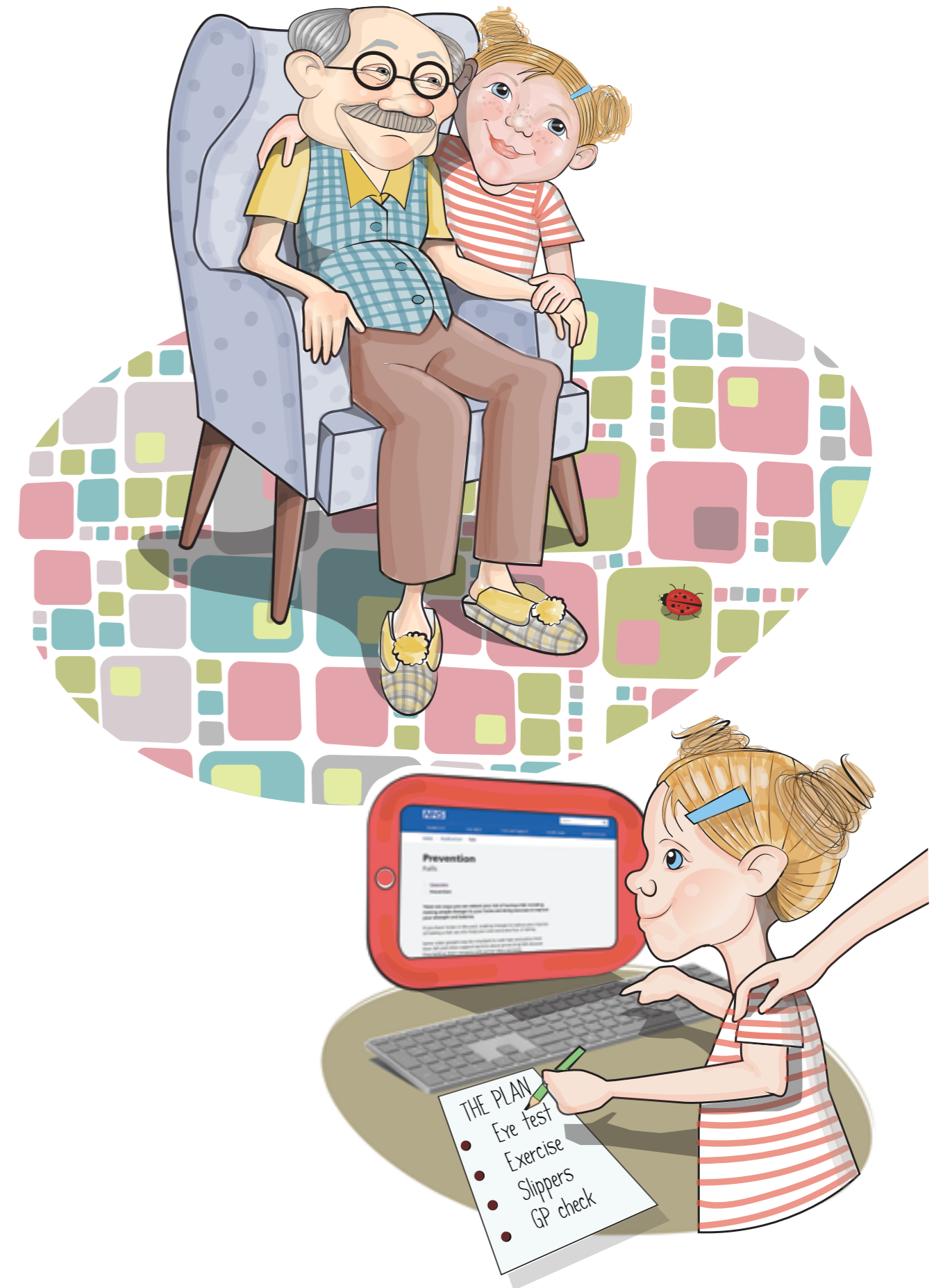
“Did you hurt yourself?” asked Martha, “I can’t see any cuts or bruises?”.

“No no, luckily not” said George, “not like that. But sometimes people hurt in other ways that you can’t see. It sounds a bit silly really, but since it happened I’m afraid to go in the garden, I feel nervous about getting up and moving around. I don’t think I can come to sports-day this year. I’m sorry...”.

Martha didn’t know what to say, so she gave George a big hug. “Don’t be afraid” she said, “that doesn’t sound silly at all. I’ll find a way for us to help you get better”.

George smiled. Martha was very kind.

That night Martha did some research with her mum and dad. She really wanted to find ways to help George. They found lots of useful information on the NHS website. By the time she went to bed she’d made a list of things they could try.



The next day Martha went to see George. She ran into his house waving her plan around on a piece of paper.  
“Granddad! Granddad!” she shouted, “I know what you can do to not be afraid anymore!”.

“OK then, let’s hear it” said George, a bit nervous about what Martha had planned...

“Right” she said, becoming very serious, “when you ran at the Olympics you had a coach to tell you what to do. Well, I’m going to be your coach now, and our Olympics is going to be at sports-day next month! Before we do anything though you need to get checked over by your Doctor, just to make sure you’re well enough for my plan”.



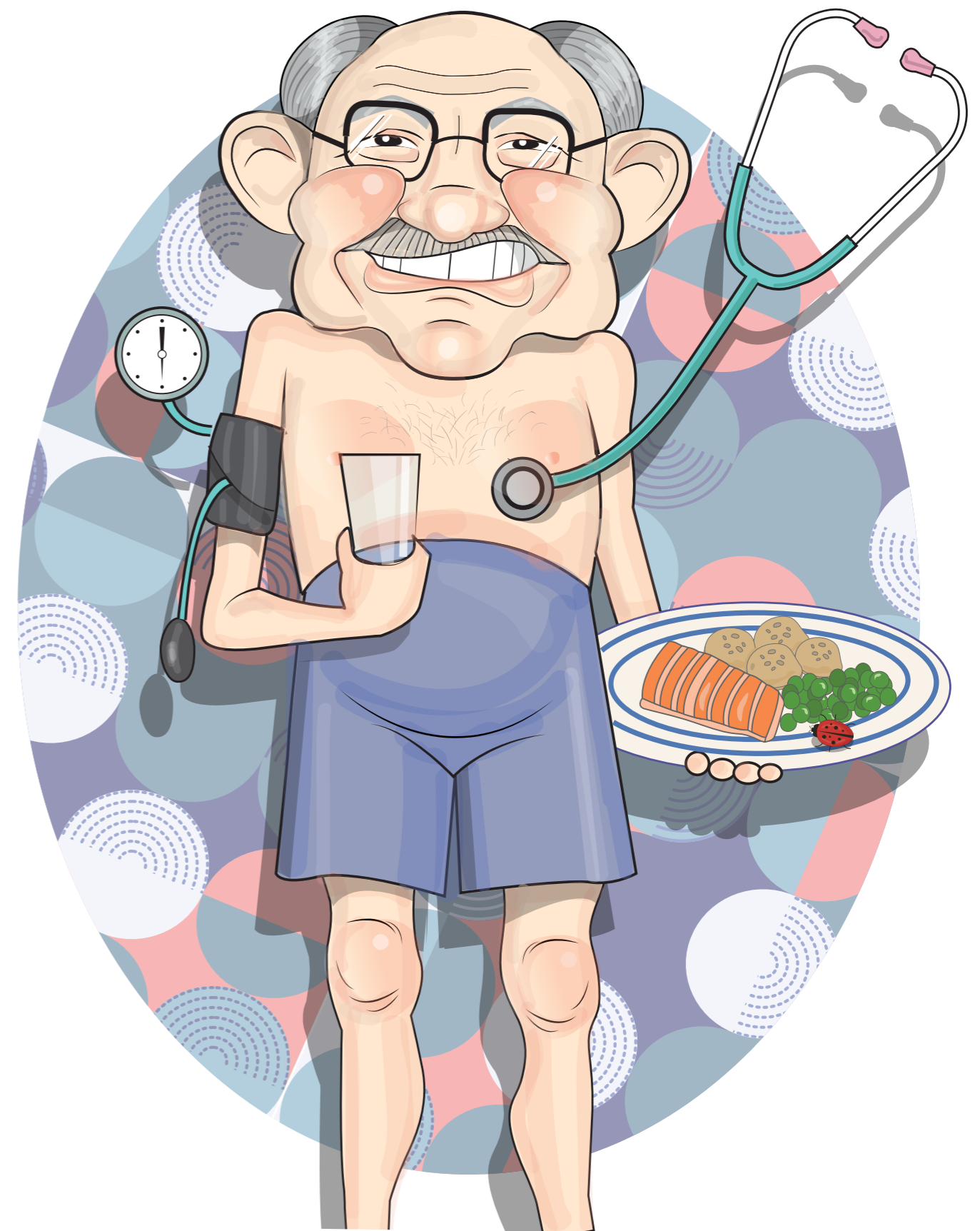
So Martha and her mum went with George to see his Doctor, where he had a full check of his health, including his medicines and blood pressure.

Everything was OK and the Doctor said that George was well enough to start training for his sports-day Olympics!

Martha told him the plan...

“When you raced before, you drank water regularly to stay hydrated and ate the right food to give you enough energy. Now you don't drink enough mum says, and you always say you're not hungry and don't eat much, so you don't have much energy to move around”.

So they bought a drink bottle, like Martha's, to have plenty of water each day, and a new cook book to make nice meals together.

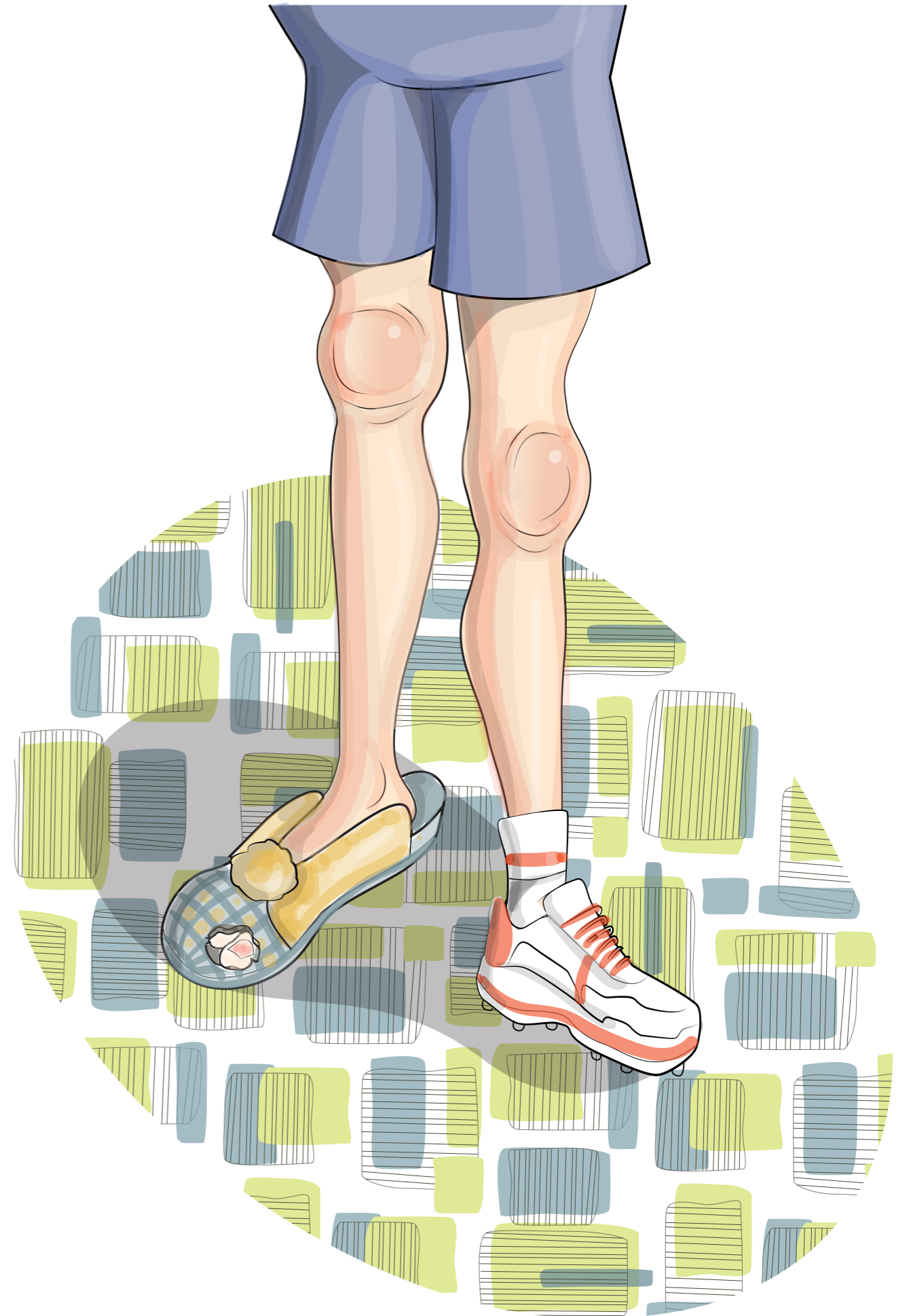


“When you raced before, you had proper shoes with spikes to give you grip, and they fitted you well so they wouldn’t fall off. Now you wear old sloppy slippers that keep falling off and have no grip”.

So George bought some new shoes that fitted well and had a good grip.

“Also when you raced before, you looked around so you didn’t bump into people, and you’d never go running in the dark as you wouldn’t be able to see. Now you can’t see so well, but you haven’t had your eyes tested for ages mum says, when you should have them checked each year. AND you don’t turn the lights on here when it’s dark”.

So George went for an eye-test and had some new glasses, and he started turning lights on when he walked at night.

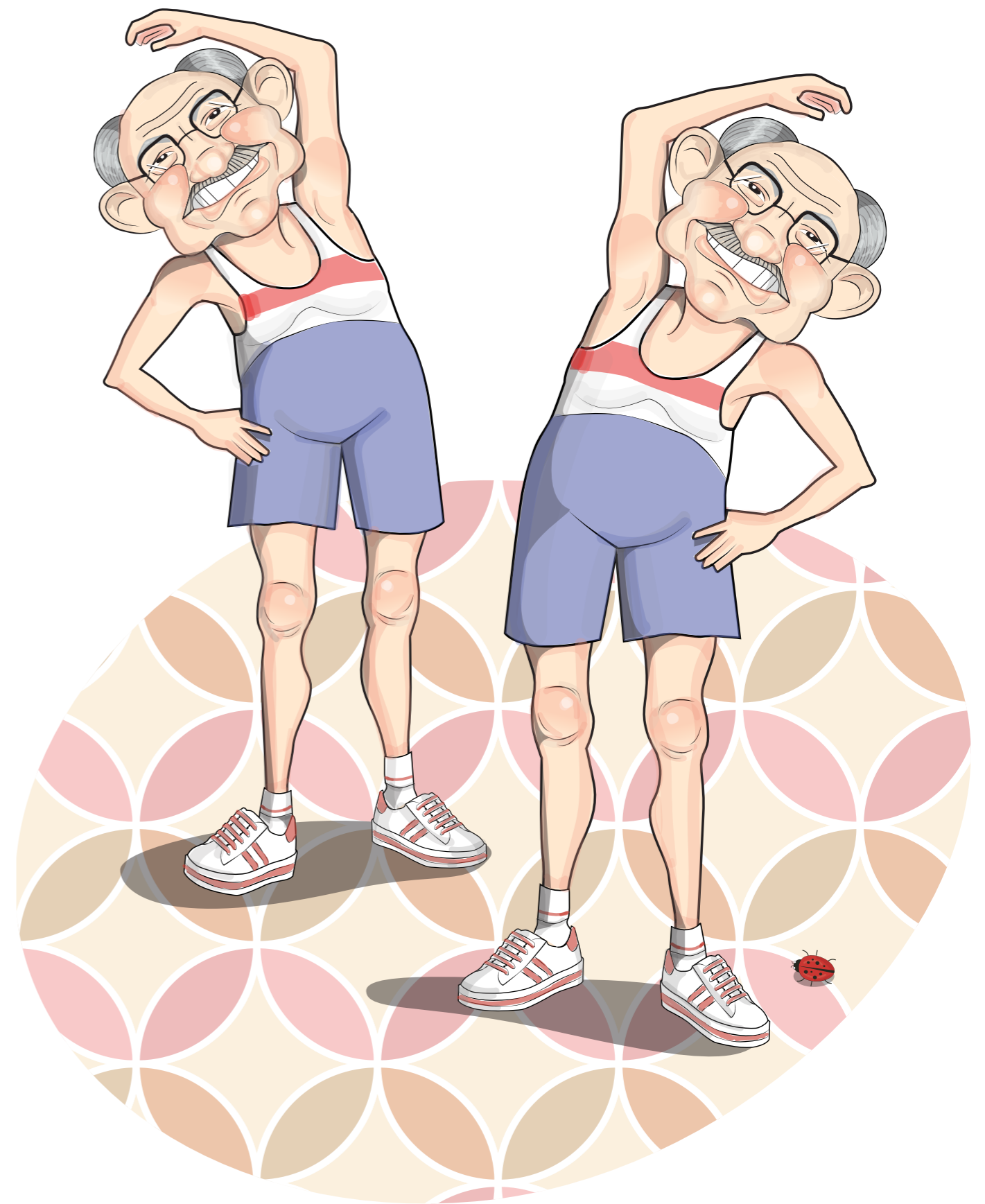


“When you raced before, you did lots of training to make you stronger and quicker. Now you aren’t very active, so your legs don’t work as well as before as they aren’t as strong”.

So George started getting up to walk every hour, worked in the garden with Martha’s help, and joined an exercise group at a local centre to help improve his strength and balance.

“When you raced before, you wouldn’t have had things in your way that you could trip over, you would have made sure the running track was nice and clear. We need to do that around your house now and make it clear to move around”.

So they went around George’s house together and removed any rugs and clutter that George could trip over.



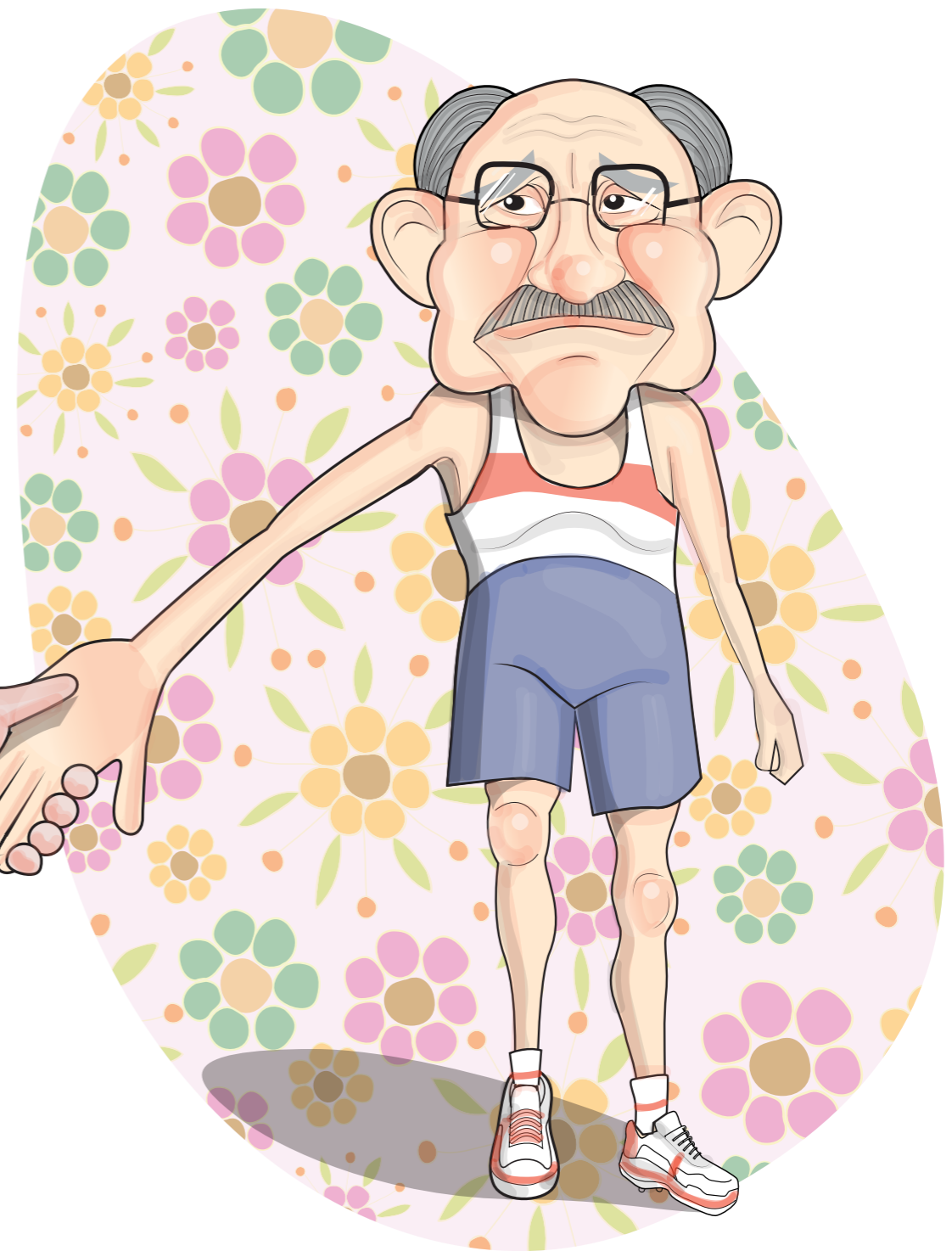
Sports-day soon arrived. It was a nice warm day and lots of people came to watch.

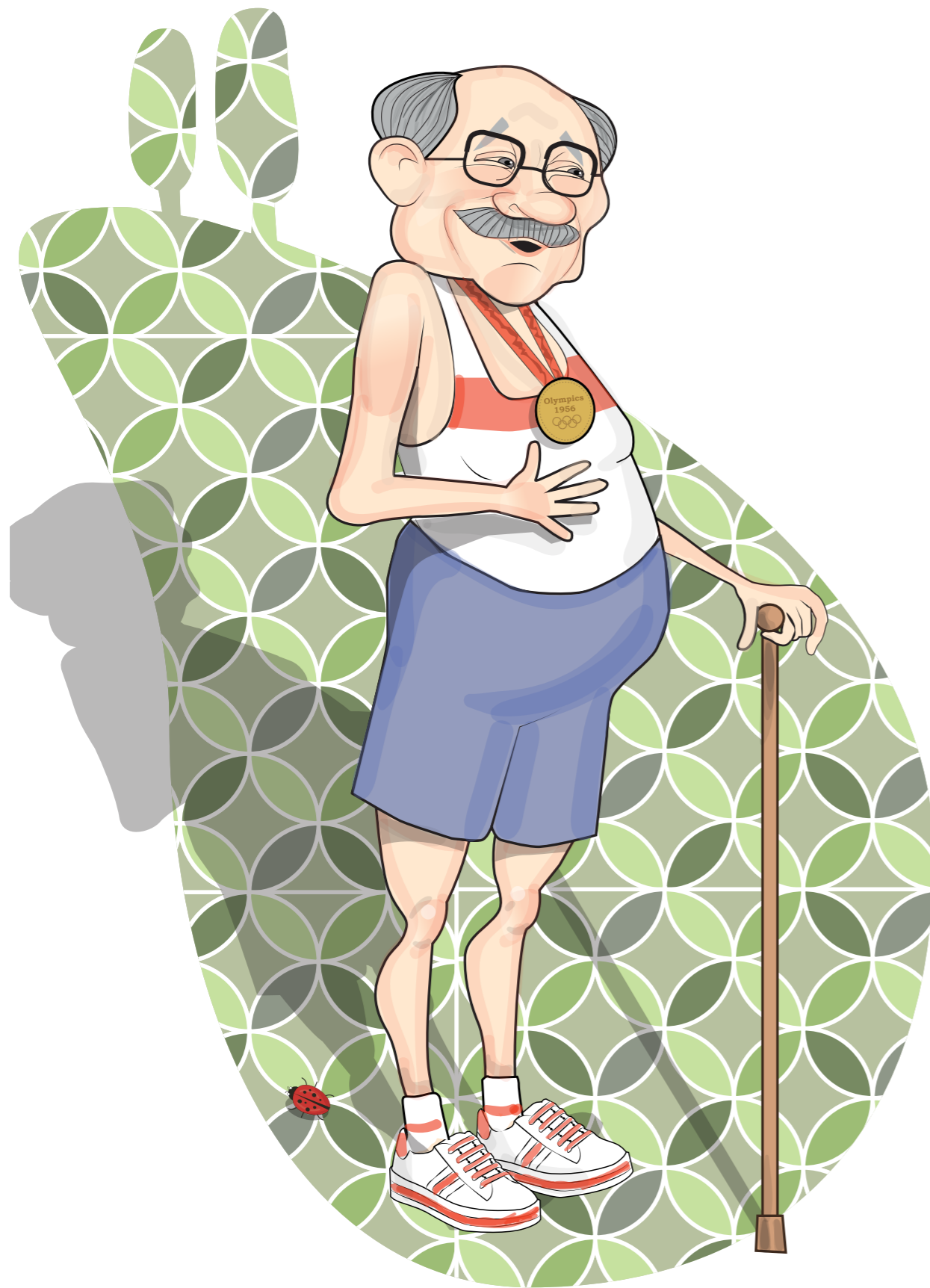
Martha ran over to George excitedly. "C'mon Granddad, this is it!".

George didn't look so excited. "Oh I'm not sure" he said, "maybe it would be better if I just watched...".

Martha held his hand. "You can do it Granddad! You've got your new shoes for good grip, new glasses so you can see clearly, you've been eating and drinking well, and you've been doing all those exercises that have made you stronger!".

"OK OK, you're right. Let's give it a go then shall we" said George, winking.





George placed his walking stick on the start-line and looked down the 50m straight, telling himself he could do it.

Ready! Steady! GO!!

The other dads looked like they were already half way before George had even crossed the start-line. "Don't worry about them" said Martha, walking just behind him, "your only opponent is your fear, and it's already miles behind you".

George pushed on, one foot after the other, faster than he'd walked in years. His medal bumped against his chest with each step. Martha was his personal cheerleader, shouting constant encouragement and clapping him along.

He glanced up to see how far was left. All the other dads had already stopped, but he was only half way and felt exhausted. He came to a stop, leaning on his walking stick to catch his breath.





George suddenly became aware of the crowd cheering:  
“GEORGE! GEORGE! GEORGE! GEORGE! GEORGE!”

“They’re cheering for me!” he exclaimed.

“Of course they are!” said Martha, “you’re doing great!!”.

The crowd’s cheers gave new energy to his legs and he forgot how tired he was as he began to walk again. Closer to the finish he noticed that the other dads were standing in two lines each side of his lane, creating a pathway to the finish as they clapped and called his name.

George walked down the middle, smiling from ear to ear as he realised he was going to do it!





George realised that none of the dads had finished yet. They were going to let him break the finish tape!

Martha stood the other side of the tape, jumping up and down in excitement. George lifted his walking stick to pull down the tape, stepping across the finish line to the sound of deafening applause and cheers.



Martha threw her arms around him and gave him a big tight hug, “You did it! You did it!”.

From that year on, the dads race at sports-day was renamed ‘George’s Race’, and George always attended – wearing **BOTH** of his Olympic medals!



