



When the Virus Came

*A story for the Children
(and for the adults who love them)*

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When the virus came, everything felt different.
It felt like something very big was happening in the world.





It was a new virus and everyone was talking about it.

Scientists and doctors and many people all over the world were working together to help stop the virus.

Some people were scared.
Most people felt many
different feelings.

One of the hardest parts
was not knowing what
would happen next.





It was a time when the children could not go to school and friends could not gather together and playgrounds and libraries and swimming pools were closed and everything that made life so sweet just felt too far away.

It was a time when the people wanted to reach out and join hands and hold on tight to each other. That would have felt so good, the whole community gathering together and being with each other through the virus time.

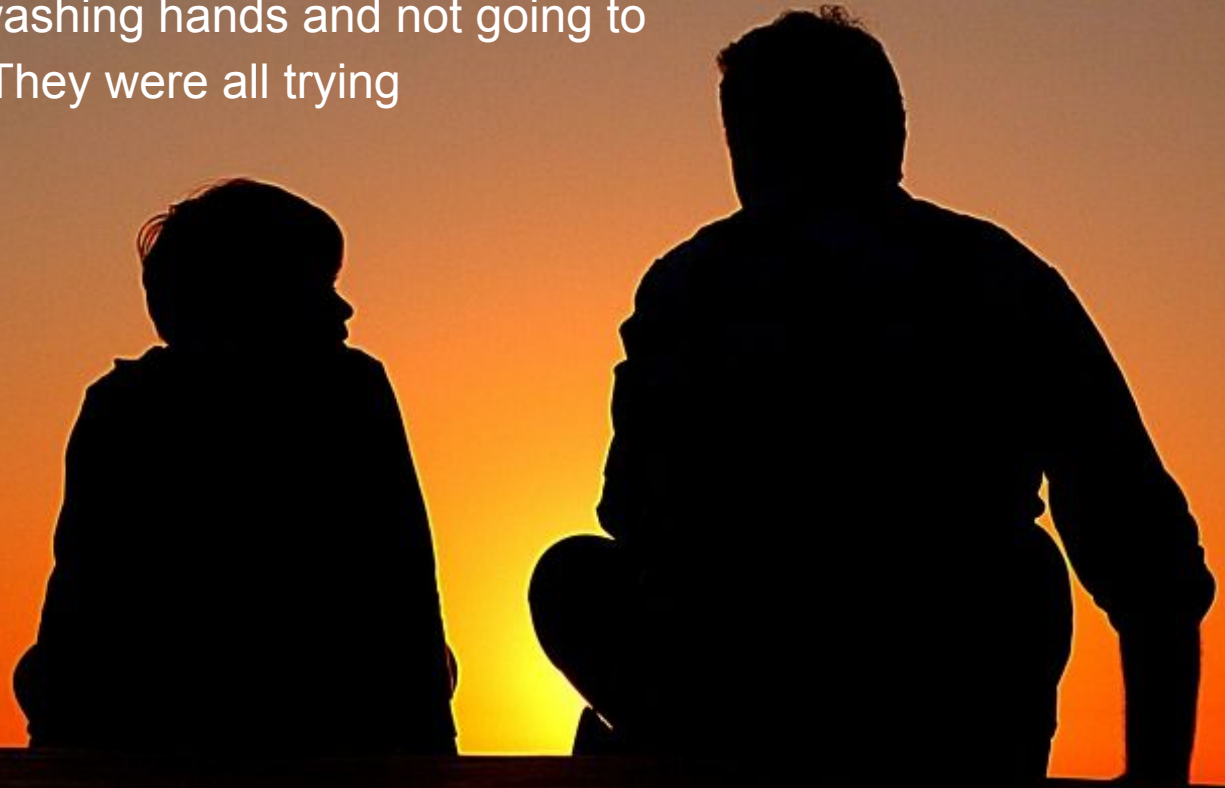


But they could not.



The
children
asked,
Why?

They learned that the virus was contagious. They learned that a contagious virus is when germs are passed on from one person to another. That's why the people were keeping distant and washing hands and not going to each other's homes. They were all trying to keep the virus from being passed on.



Most people who got sick were okay after just a little while, but the virus was very hard on the elders and on some whose bodies were not as strong or as healthy as the children.



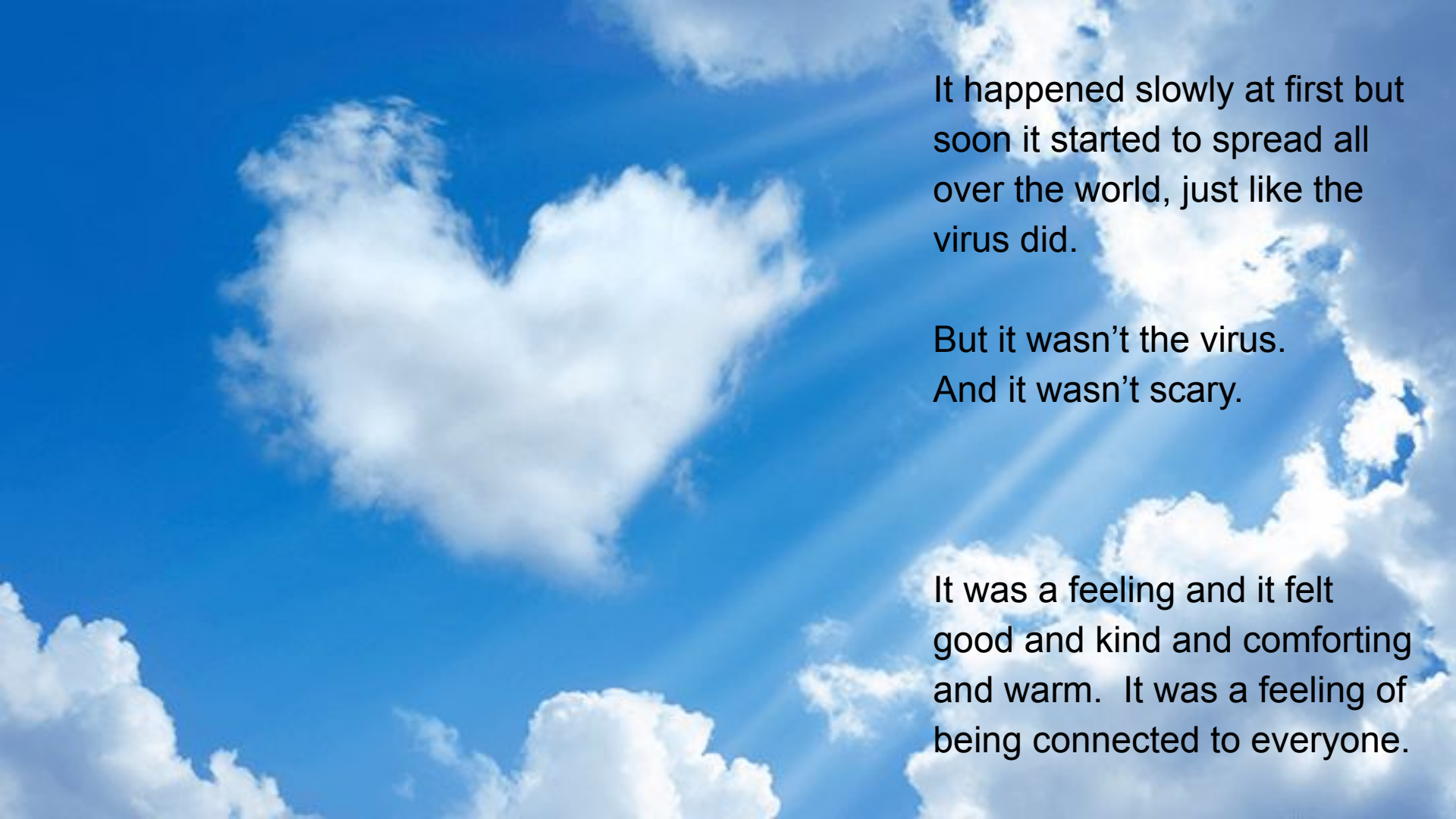
And because it was contagious, everyone was told to be careful.

They knew that being careful meant that they needed to take great care of themselves and each other.



Even though they wanted to be together until the virus was gone, the people had to learn a whole new way to love and support one another.

And they did.



It happened slowly at first but soon it started to spread all over the world, just like the virus did.

But it wasn't the virus.
And it wasn't scary.

It was a feeling and it felt good and kind and comforting and warm. It was a feeling of being connected to everyone.

No one really knows how that feeling started, but it spread as far and wide as the little seedlings that were popping up everywhere after the long winter.



And just like the flowers that bloomed from those seedlings,
the feeling brought beauty to the world.





It was hard for the children when schools were closed and they weren't able to play freely with their friends.

Sometimes they wondered if things would ever be okay again.

They needed that warm and hopeful feeling to help them remember that the virus would not last forever.

Everyone needed it.



And when they felt it, people began to see that the warm and loving feeling in the world was contagious too.

It was a wonderful kind of contagious.

It was the children who understood it first. When adults around them were calm and reminded them that they were safe, it helped their scared feelings to feel a little less scared. The calm and the love from the adults was contagious.





It was the children who understood this word in a brand new way. They began to see that smiles were contagious, even at a distance.

And kindness was contagious. It spread no matter how wide the space was between them.





All over the world, people began singing together. They helped strangers and they joined in the cheers each night to say thank you to the health care workers and all the helpers. They reached out to one another at a distance. They made art and put hopeful signs in their windows.





They reminded each other that a caterpillar has to cocoon before it can emerge as a butterfly and that they were all in a cocooning time.

And when people felt scared or lonely, they were never really alone because everyone was in the cocoon together. They helped each other to remember that they would emerge again.

The children had an idea.



It all started with some beads and a ball of string.

They decided to pay close attention to the kindness and love and hope that was contagious everywhere. They noticed how it felt inside when people were warm and loving and when they heard stories about all the goodness in the world. They noticed how they, too, were kind helpers and that they were part of all that goodness. They wanted to remember.

They wrote their memories down.



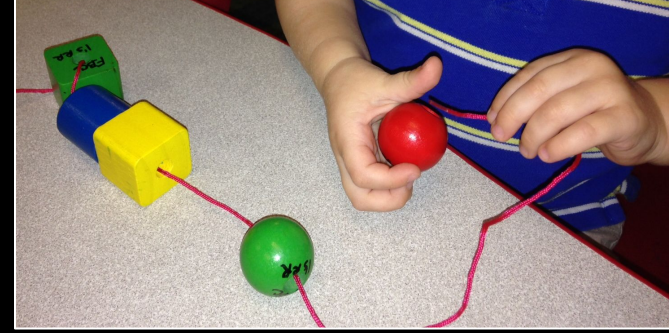
And with each memory,
they strung a bead.





They strung leaves and petals
and pom poms and pasta.
They strung berries
and dough that they baked themselves.
They strung whatever they wanted to string.
And all the people joined them.





The beads were strung by young hands, old hands, hands of all different colours and sizes. And as they strung, they remembered that the day would come when they would all be together again.





When the time comes to gather again, perhaps they will share the stories of their beaded strings. Stories of how they were connected through a time when they had to stay apart. Stories of all the goodness in the world that was contagious.

Perhaps they will tie them all together, their strings and their stories...



once the cocooning time is over.