



My name is Anca.

I am a snowshoer from Romania.

This is the story of my journey to the Special Olympics World Winter Games Turin 2025!



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Illustrated by
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Anca's Snowshoeing Adventure



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My name is Anca.

I come from Romania, a country full of forests that whisper, castles that rise like old giants, and traditions where people dance with bright steps and even brighter smiles.

It is a place that feels alive with music and stories, and I carry all of that inside me.



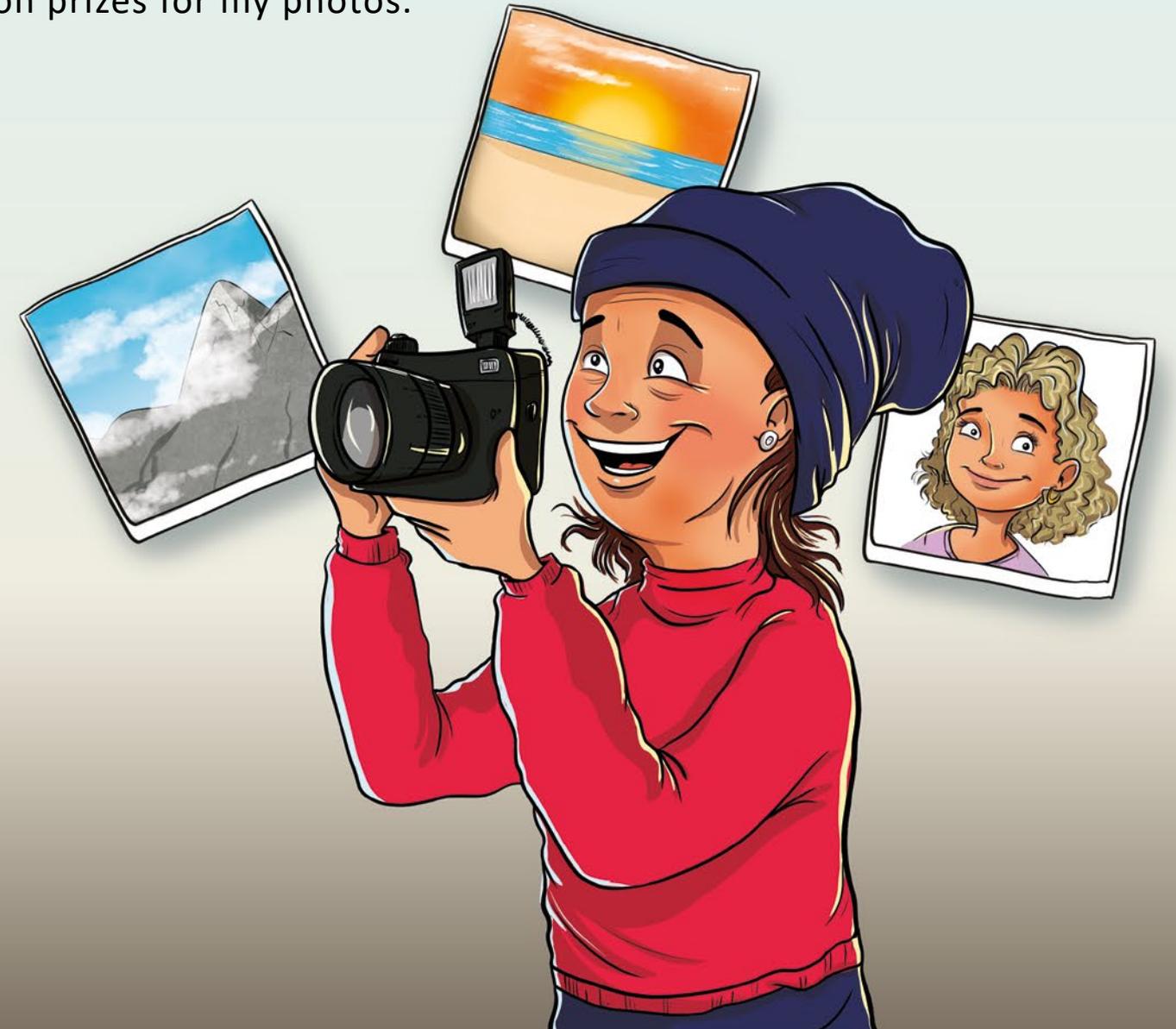
I love to dance. I dance folk dances with twirling skirts and careful footsteps, and I dance modern styles where my whole body feels like it's flying.

Dancing makes my heart sparkle. When the music starts, it's like a gentle fire lights up inside me, warm and bright.



I also love taking photographs. When I hold a camera, the world stands still for me.

I can catch the shape of a mountain, or the smile of a friend, or the way snow glows under the sun. I have even won prizes for my photos.

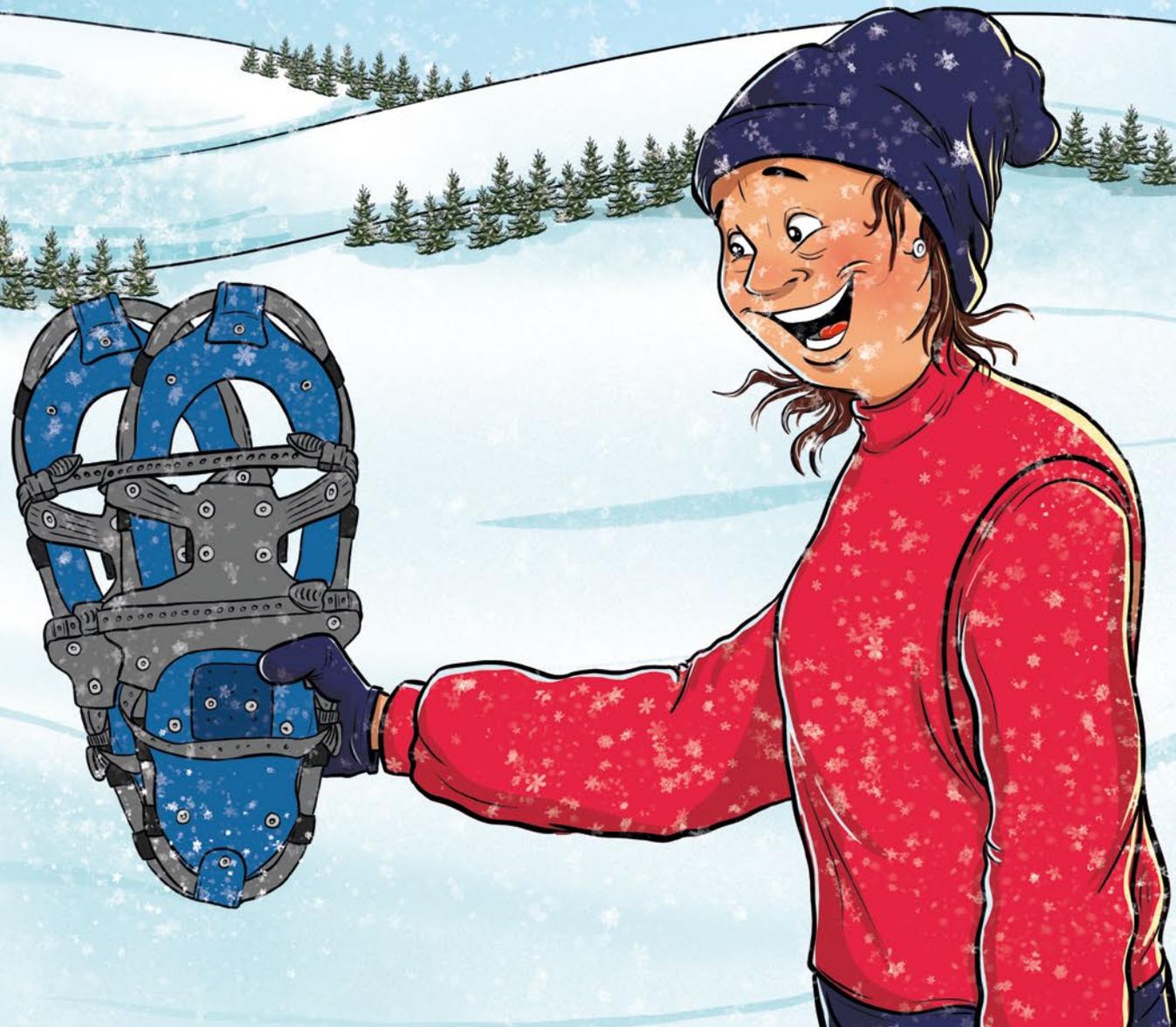


And I am a Special Olympics athlete. I race across snow on big, funny shoes called snowshoes.

The first time I saw them, I laughed. But when I run in them, I feel powerful, like each step could shake the snow.

I have an intellectual disability. That simply means I learn in my own way, in my own time.

Sometimes it takes me longer. Sometimes I need more help. And that's okay — but when I was younger, not everyone understood that.



Some people were not always kind. They whispered or stared, and their looks felt heavy on my shoulders.

When people don't understand you, it can make the world feel a little smaller.

But even on the hardest days, I kept dancing, taking photos, playing sports, and trying new things.

My heart didn't want to give up.



One day, at a Special Olympics ski camp, I tried snowshoeing for the very first time. The snow was soft and bright, and the mountains stood tall around us like giant guardians.

I felt excited... and nervous... and curious all at once.

It was hard. I fell — a lot. My legs tangled, my balance wobbled, and sometimes I landed in the snow with a puff and a giggle.

But every time I fell, I got back up again.

My determination kept me warm, even in the cold.



Soon, I became fast. Faster than I ever expected.

People began cheering for me and shouting my name.

Their voices felt like wings lifting me forward.



I became famous in Romania after I went on a television show about adventures.

I hiked and laughed and showed people what I could do.

Later, I was featured in a big magazine too. Seeing my face on a page felt strange and exciting — like the world had suddenly discovered me.



My family and friends were so proud.

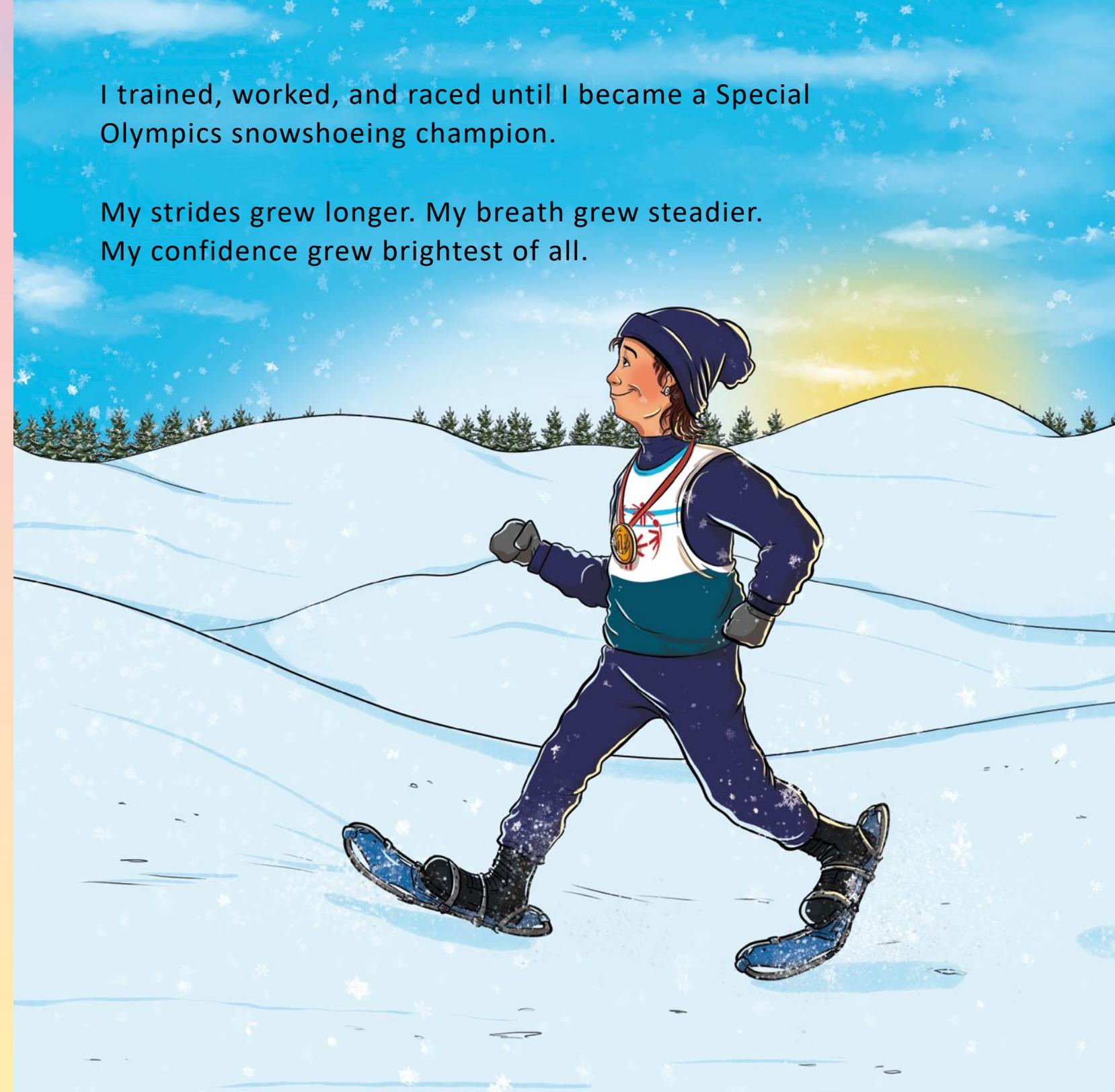
Sometimes they looked at me with eyes full of happy tears.

I was proud too — not because of cameras or magazines, but because I kept going, even when things were hard.



I trained, worked, and raced until I became a Special Olympics snowshoeing champion.

My strides grew longer. My breath grew steadier.
My confidence grew brightest of all.



And then came one of the most significant moments of my life:
I competed at the Special Olympics World Winter Games.

I travelled all the way to Turin, Italy, where thousands of athletes
with intellectual disabilities came together — skiing, skating,
dancing, snowboarding, snowshoeing and playing floorball.

Everywhere I looked, someone was chasing their dream.



There, in the snow and excitement and cheering crowds,
I raced my way to a silver medal. The moment I crossed
the finish line, I felt my whole chest fill with light.

My medal reminds me of every step I took to get there —
even the shaky ones.



If you ever want to feel strong and brave too,
try something new, just like I did.

You never know — the thing that feels impossible today
might become your next great adventure.

