



My name is Stephanie.

I am a figure skater from Great Britain. This is the story of my journey to the Special Olympics World Winter Games Turin 2025!



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Written by
SO Europe Eurasia Foundation

Illustrated by
Yevheniia Lisova

Stephanie: A Butterfly on Ice



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Stephanie: A Butterfly on Ice

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Stephanie: A Butterfly on Ice

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Yevheniia Lisova

My name is **Stephanie**.

I come from a town called Runcorn in Cheshire, England. It's a place full of busy streets, friendly voices, and skies that sometimes feel as wide as my dreams.

And inside those dreams... there is always ice.

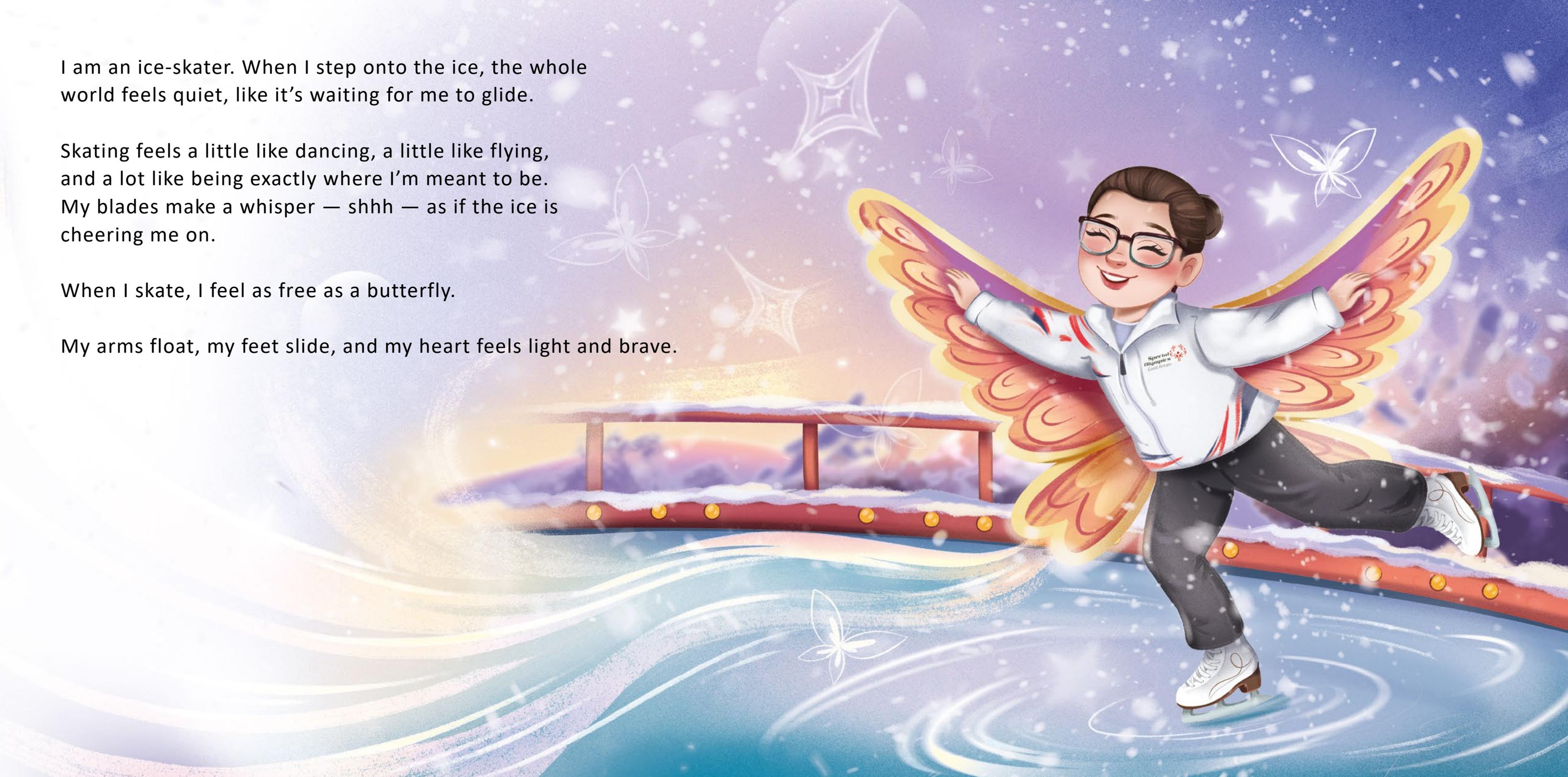


I am an ice-skater. When I step onto the ice, the whole world feels quiet, like it's waiting for me to glide.

Skating feels a little like dancing, a little like flying, and a lot like being exactly where I'm meant to be. My blades make a whisper — shhh — as if the ice is cheering me on.

When I skate, I feel as free as a butterfly.

My arms float, my feet slide, and my heart feels light and brave.



But I didn't always feel like a butterfly. Growing up, my body and my brain worked differently.



I have an intellectual disability, which means I sometimes need more time to learn things.

That's okay — but not everyone understood that.



Some children laughed because I learned differently,
or because my arms and legs moved in ways that
weren't like theirs.

Their laughter felt sharp, like cold wind on bare skin.

It made me feel small... and a little scared inside.

Sometimes I wished I could curl up like a caterpillar in its shell.



But on my fourteenth birthday, everything changed.
I got ice-skating lessons — just for me!

The rink looked shiny and smooth, like a secret world
waiting for me to step inside.

When I started learning, something sparkly woke up
inside me, and my fantastic coach, Pam,
encouraged me every step of the way.



I had tried other sports before, but never felt good at them. But this time... I felt happy. I felt confident. I felt like maybe I had finally found my wings.

So I kept going and continued practising.

Some days I trained for three hours!

Slowly, the scared caterpillar inside me began to stretch... and grow.

All that practice helped me become a Special Olympics athlete. I skated with athletes from around Great Britain who, like me, had an intellectual disability.

I travelled to Austria for the World Winter Games and won a bronze medal. My medal felt cool and heavy — but my heart felt even heavier with pride.



One day, something amazing happened. I was chosen to join Special Olympics Great Britain at the World Winter Games in Turin, Italy!

I squealed so loudly that Mum rushed in... then she squealed too! Soon, the whole house cheered, like popping fireworks.

My whole family – my mum and dad, my sisters Suzanne and Angela, and my brother Chris – were so excited!



We flew over land, sea and snowy mountains.
I pressed my face to the window.

The mountains looked like giant scoops of ice cream.

I felt nervous — the good kind — the kind that means something important is coming.



When we arrived in Turin, there were athletes everywhere — all ready to shine. They all had intellectual disabilities, too.

No one laughed. Everyone understood.

It felt like a garden full of butterflies — each one different, beautiful and brave.

The crowd cheered like a storm of joy.



Then my moment came. I stepped onto the ice.

The lights sparkled. My heart fluttered.

And suddenly I wasn't nervous anymore. I felt like the brightest butterfly in the world — dancing, spinning and soaring.



And guess what? I won two medals — one silver and one bronze. I held them close and felt their weight, but the real treasure was the feeling inside me: I did it.

I really did.



Everyone deserves to feel free like that — like a butterfly.

Maybe you'll find your wings in sport, like me.
Or maybe in music, drawing, reading,
or something else you love.



Whatever your butterfly feeling is, keep it close because
we can all be butterflies.

