

TONI'S
TUMMY
OF
SCREAMS
AND
DREAMS

DR CATHERINE WILKINSON CHARLOTTE WOOD





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Toni was a bright, bubbly child
with big dreams.

At school they loved English and Art,
but most of all...

They loved dancing!



Toni dreamed of
twirling under sparkling
stage lights in the annual
school show.

But Toni also had something that
made school tricky...

They had a tummy that sometimes...

screamed!



Toni had a condition called Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

Some days, Toni's tummy felt like a balloon blown up as far as it could go...
Before it might

pop!



Other days, their joints hurt,
and they felt incredibly tired.



Sometimes they needed to
go to the toilet very quickly,
and other times they felt
right as rain.



So, while Toni packed their bag in the morning with pencils and books like any other school child,



...they also packed their toilet pass, medicine and a spare change of clothes, just in case they needed them.

At school, Toni knew where every toilet was.
Sometimes they had to rush out of class,
their heart thumping as they held up their pass.



Most teachers understood.
But some who didn't know would ask,

“Do you need to go *now* though?”

But Toni did, they really couldn't wait.



At lunchtime, the canteen smelt of pizza, sausage rolls, and chocolate brownies.

Toni used their pass to get to the front of the queue – sometimes waiting was difficult for Toni because their IBD caused pain, or they needed to make an urgent toilet trip.



Toni's school uniform didn't help.
Their school trousers were really, really tight
around their swollen tummy, leaving it feeling
bruised and uncomfortable.



Sometimes Toni unfastened their
trousers under their jumper to ease
the pain.

It was the only way to make
the pain fade,

... even for a moment.

P.E. days were tough.

Some days, Toni's tummy screamed so loudly they couldn't join in.

Other days Toni ached just a little too much, or they were too tired to muster the energy.



Toni felt left out, but their teacher showed them another place they could go to do work, and brought Toni a warm beanbag to hug.

Then things seemed a little better.



On their worst days,
Toni left their lessons and curled up into
a ball in a quiet tent in the library.
It had soft cushions and books.

It was Toni's safe place.



Some classmates didn't understand.

They whispered,

"Why does Toni get a pass
out of class?"

"Why do they leave
school early?"

"Where is Toni?"



One day, Toni decided to tell their class.
They shared their story at a bake sale in the school
playground, raising money for an IBD charity.

They explained what it was like to have a tummy
that sometimes screamed.



After that, things changed.

People smiled at Toni in the hallway,
and classmates understood why Toni needed to leave the class.
Some even asked if Toni needed help with their heavy bag.

Toni felt lighter, like a balloon floating high.

Dance was still Toni's favourite thing.

"When I'm on stage," they reflected,



"I'm not thinking about IBD.

I'm thinking about the moves and what I have to do next."

During lessons, Toni dreamed of dancing on a big stage, with lights shining down and music filling the air.

Toni's tummy might scream sometimes, but their dreams were louder.





Toni knew they were more than their IBD.
Toni was funny, brave, and kind.



They were a good friend, a brilliant dancer,
and someone who never gave up.



Some days were tough.
Toni's tummy would scream at the top of its lungs.
Toni would feel exhausted, worried, and sore.



But Toni also knew,
they were strong enough
to get through.



And as Toni stepped onto the stage at the annual school show, they had the chance to prove to everyone that their tummy wasn't just full of screams...

It was full of dreams too!



TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING IBD AT SCHOOL!

(FROM CHILDREN WITH IBD)

- If you feel comfortable, you and your parents/ carers can inform the teachers of your condition so they are able to support you.
- Identify a safe person to talk to, this could be a friend or staff member.
- Request a discreet toilet pass, and keep it handy.
- Arrange to skip the canteen queue if you need to.
- Use a scented spray if you're worried about smells.
- Bring any medicine and heat packs you need to school and store them somewhere you can access them as required.





Toni's Tummy of Screams and Dreams follows Toni, an aspiring dancer, navigating school life while managing the unpredictability of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

The book opens up conversations around sudden toilet trips, dietary restrictions, fatigue and pain, the value of safe spaces and supportive staff, and the power of kindness and empathy from peers.

Toni's story highlights not only the challenges of attending school with a bowel condition (the screams), but also the possibilities (the dreams) when schools listen, adapt, and champion inclusion.

Words by Dr Catherine Wilkinson

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