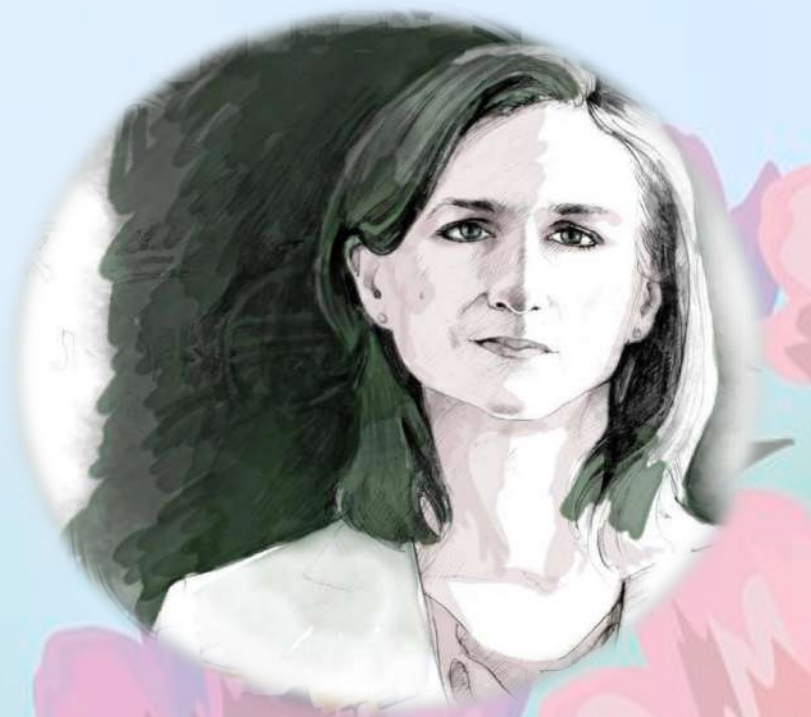


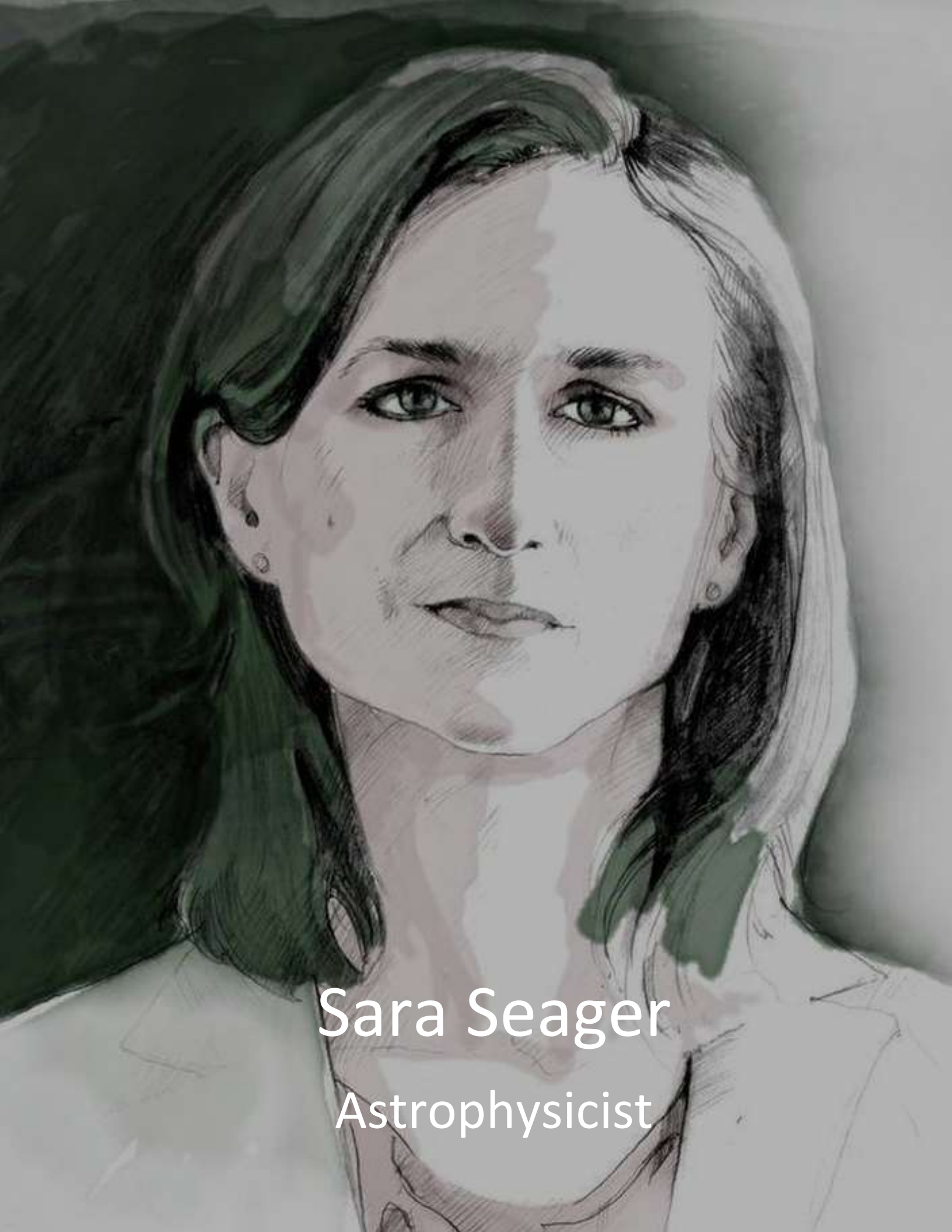
Girls Who Grew Up to Change the



Sara Seager

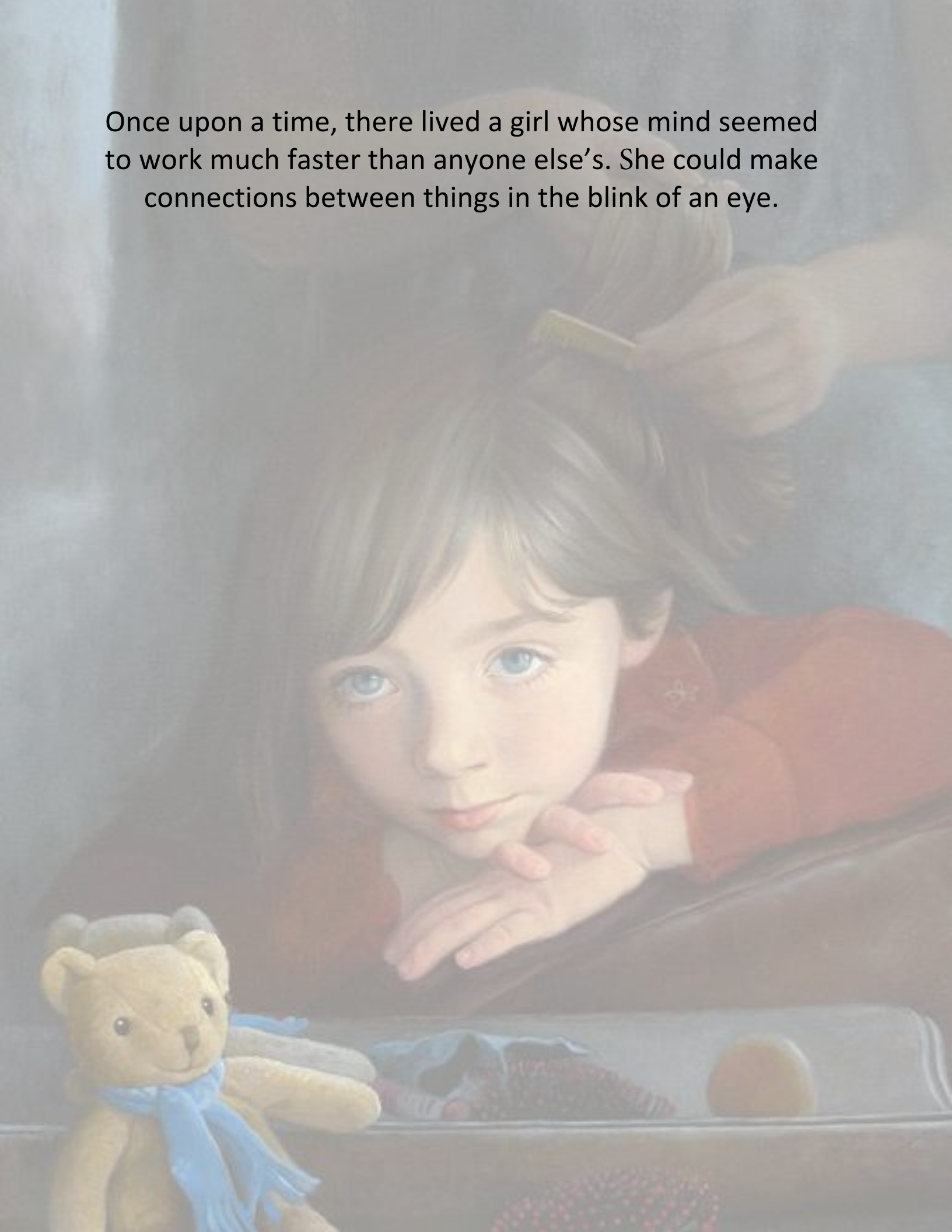


Sofia Lonescu



Sara Seager
Astrophysicist

Once upon a time, there lived a girl whose mind seemed to work much faster than anyone else's. She could make connections between things in the blink of an eye.





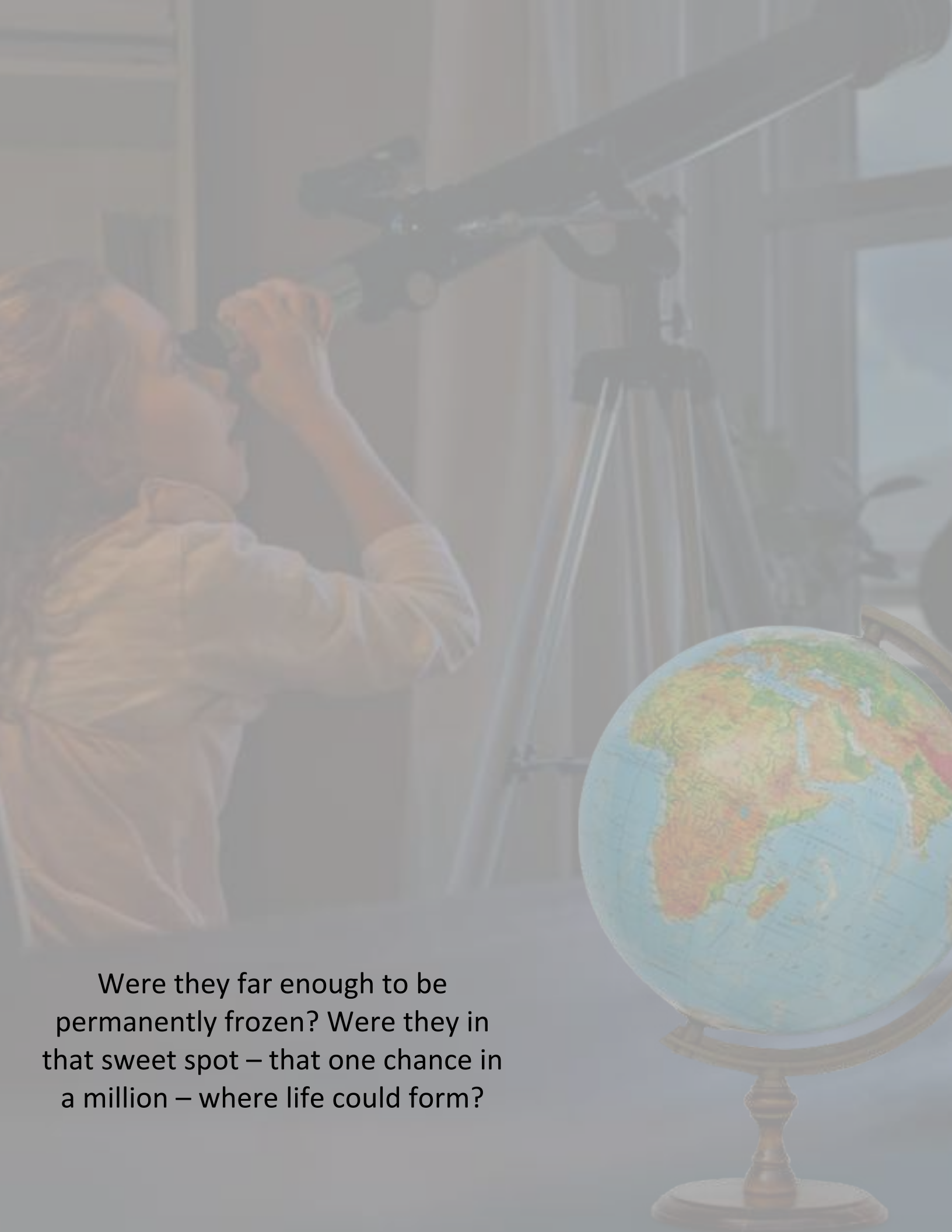
She didn't watch TV because it seemed slow and boring. She preferred to be up in her bedroom looking through her telescope.

While other people looked at the moon or the stars. Sara looked at the space in between.



She knew that in the dark space, there were billions more stars and that most of those had planets circling around them, just like the earth orbits the sun.



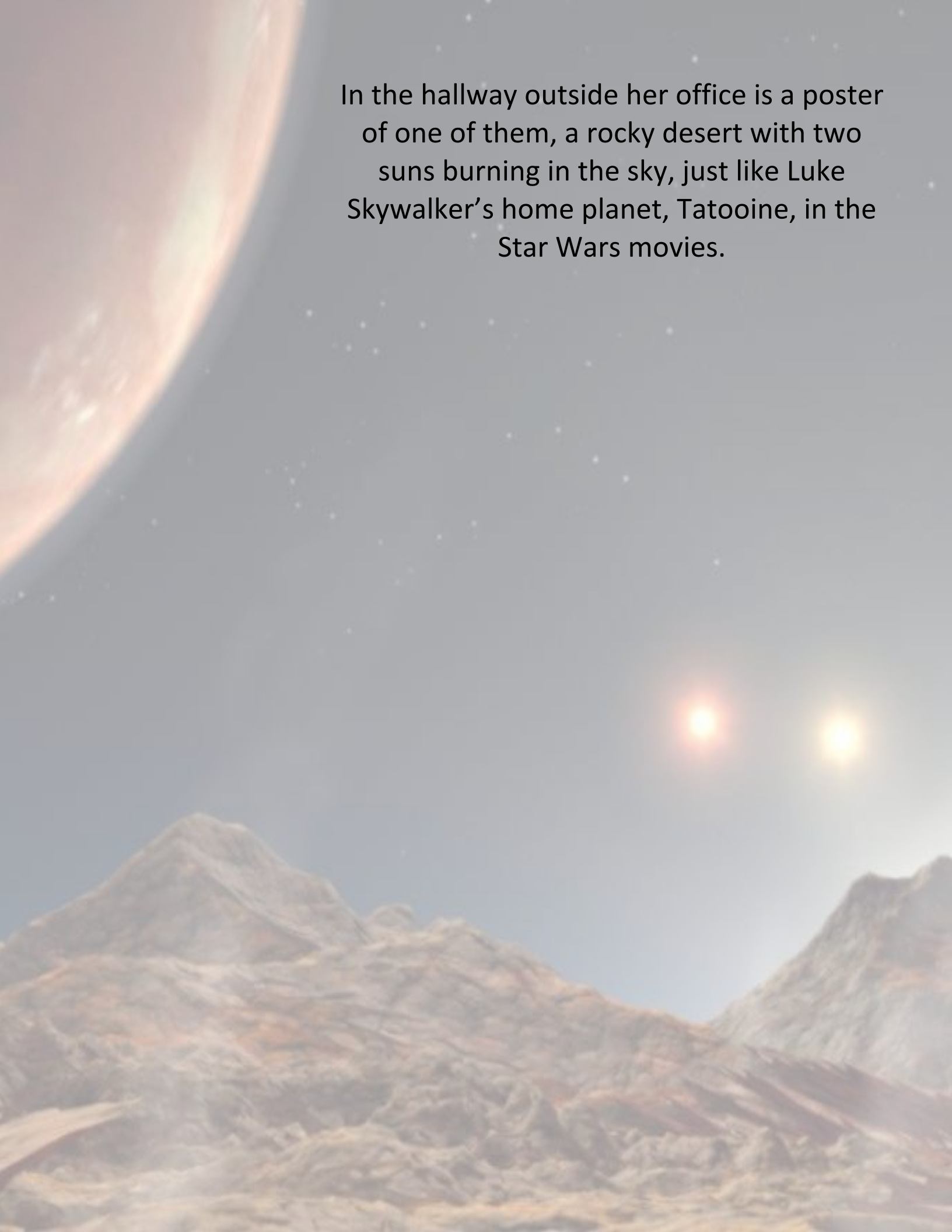


Were they far enough to be permanently frozen? Were they in that sweet spot – that one chance in a million – where life could form?

Sara Seagar grew up to be a real-life alien hunter. Her job at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is to look for signs of life on exoplanets, which are planets beyond our own solar system that orbit stars in distant galaxies.



In the hallway outside her office is a poster of one of them, a rocky desert with two suns burning in the sky, just like Luke Skywalker's home planet, Tatooine, in the Star Wars movies.

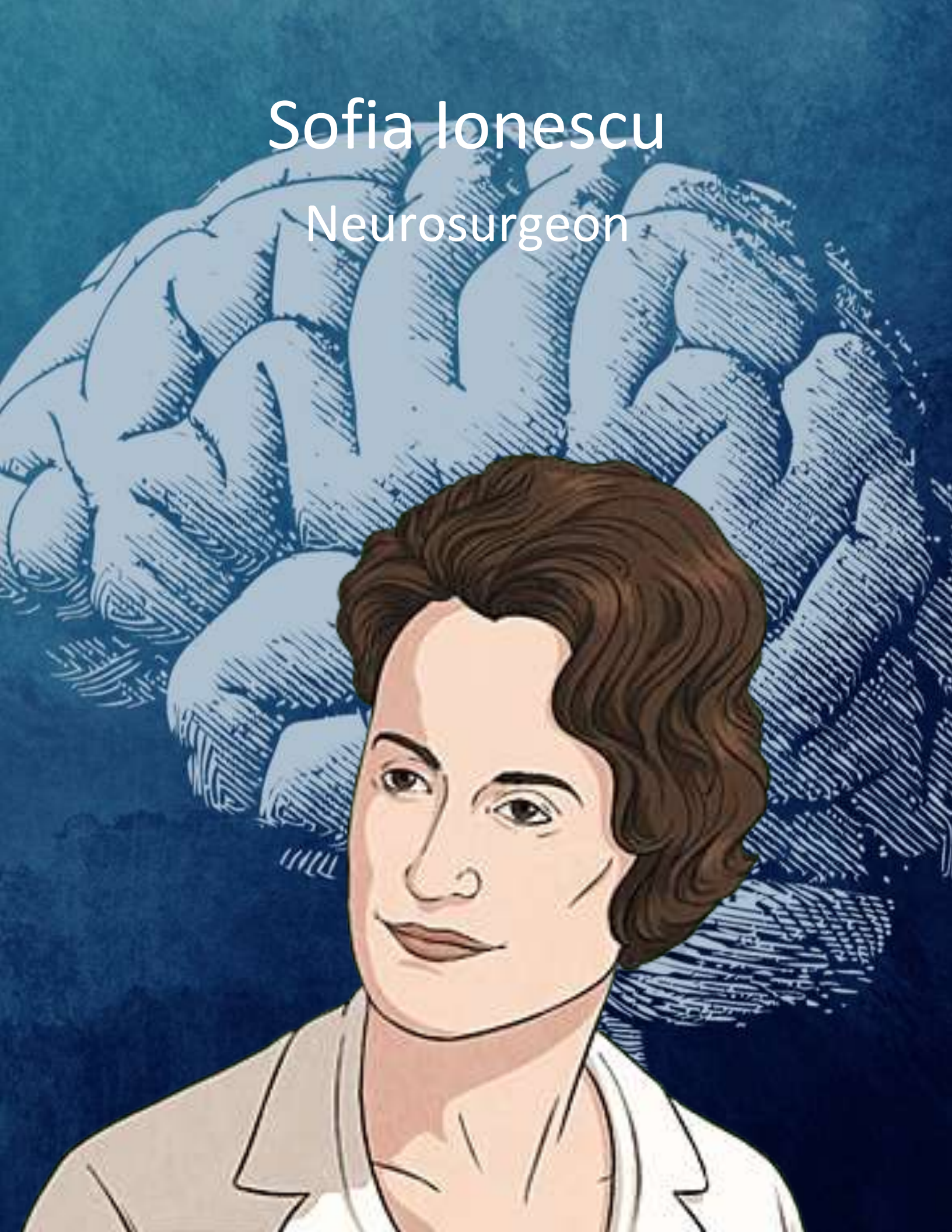


Sara is not very practical and admits she couldn't change a light bulb at home. But her two boys are proud of their mom – a certified and one of the top astrophysicists in the world. She sometimes can't find their socks, but she might just find a whole new Earth!

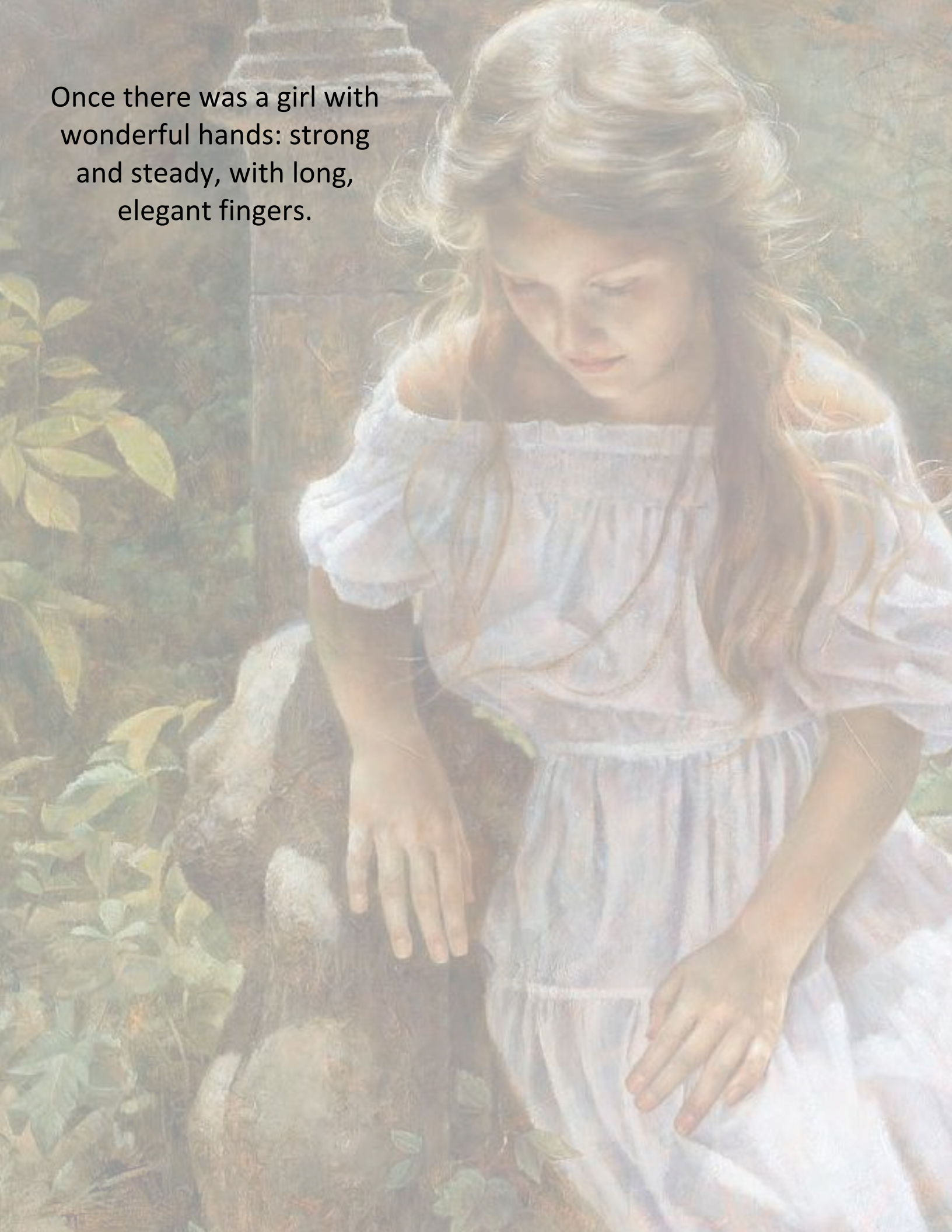


Sofia Ionescu

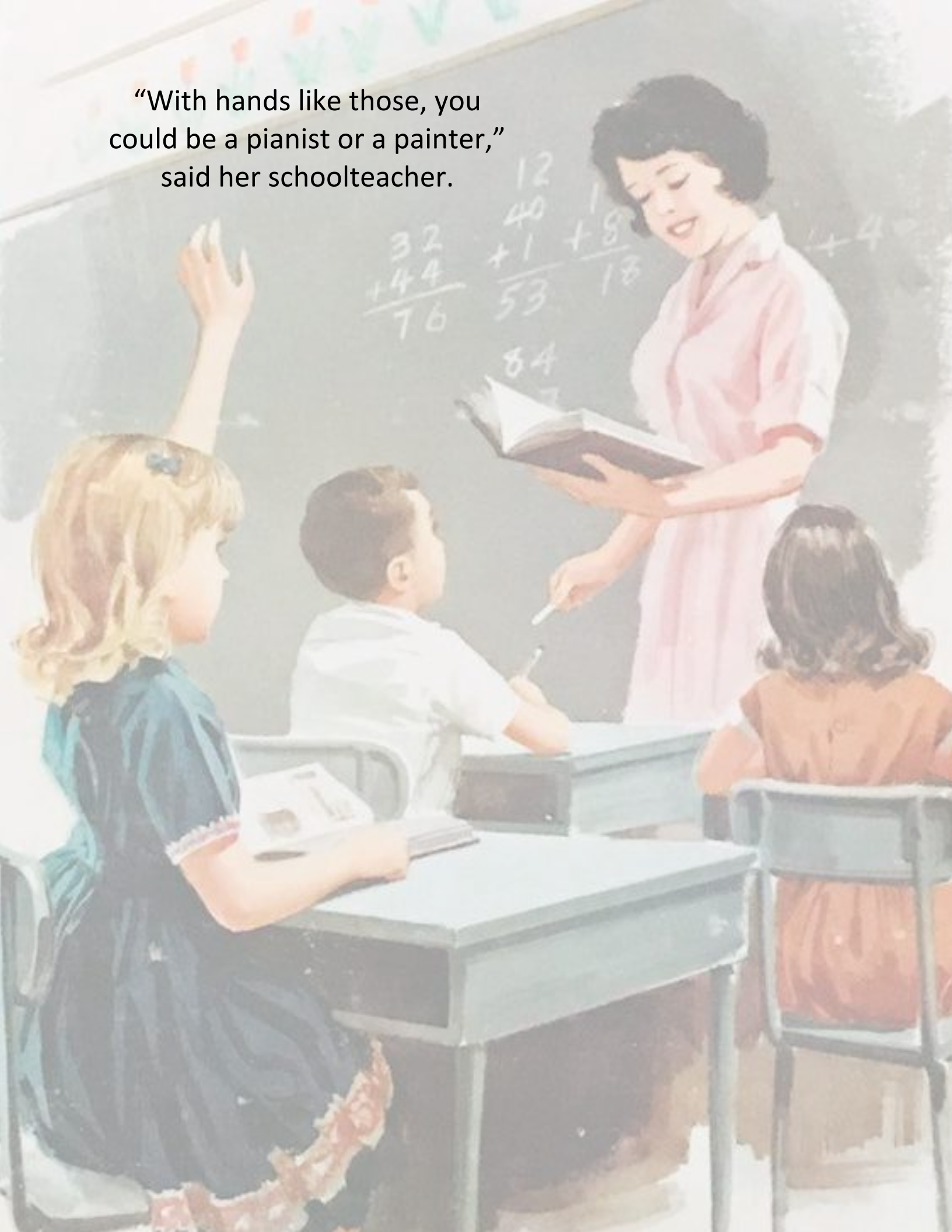
Neurosurgeon



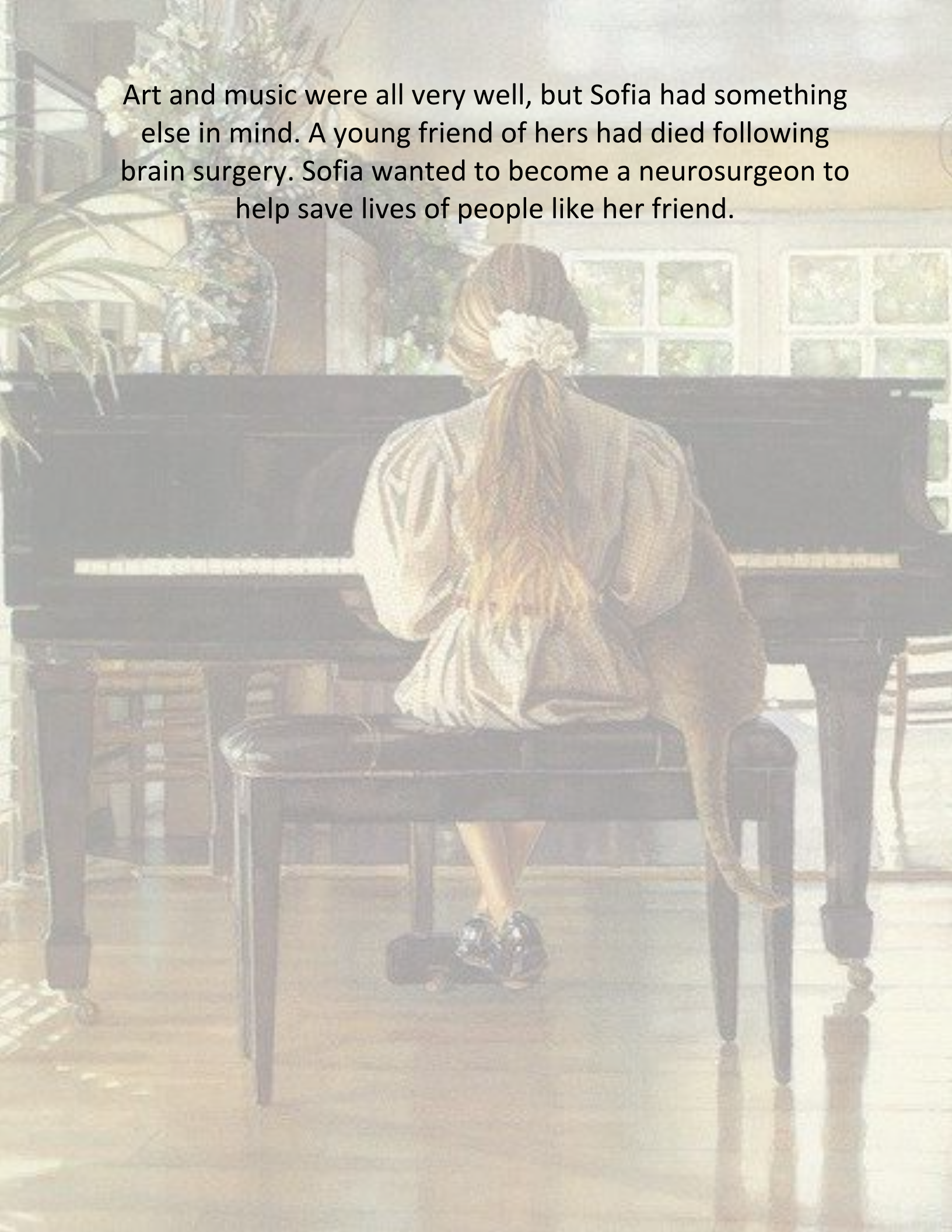
Once there was a girl with
wonderful hands: strong
and steady, with long,
elegant fingers.



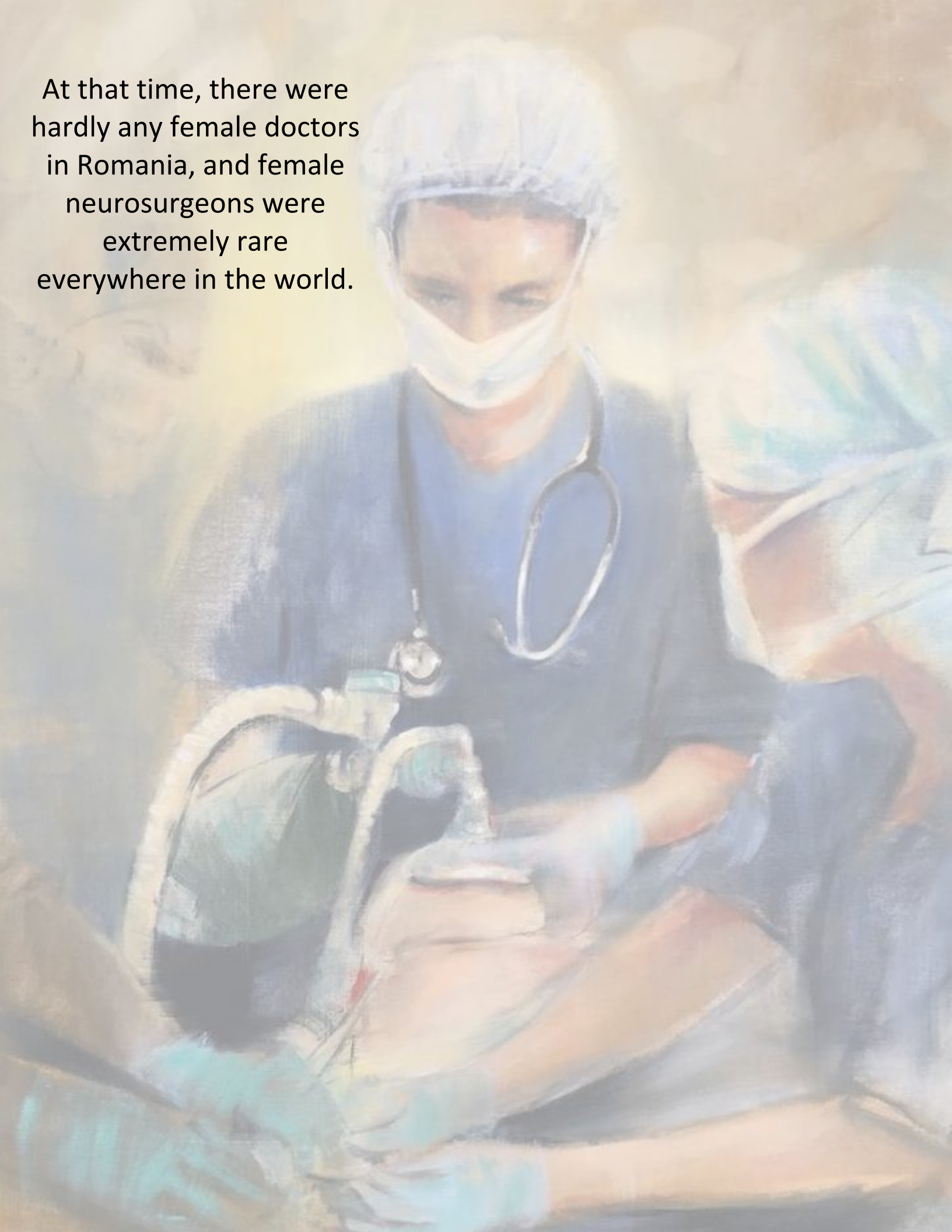
“With hands like those, you could be a pianist or a painter,” said her schoolteacher.



Art and music were all very well, but Sofia had something else in mind. A young friend of hers had died following brain surgery. Sofia wanted to become a neurosurgeon to help save lives of people like her friend.



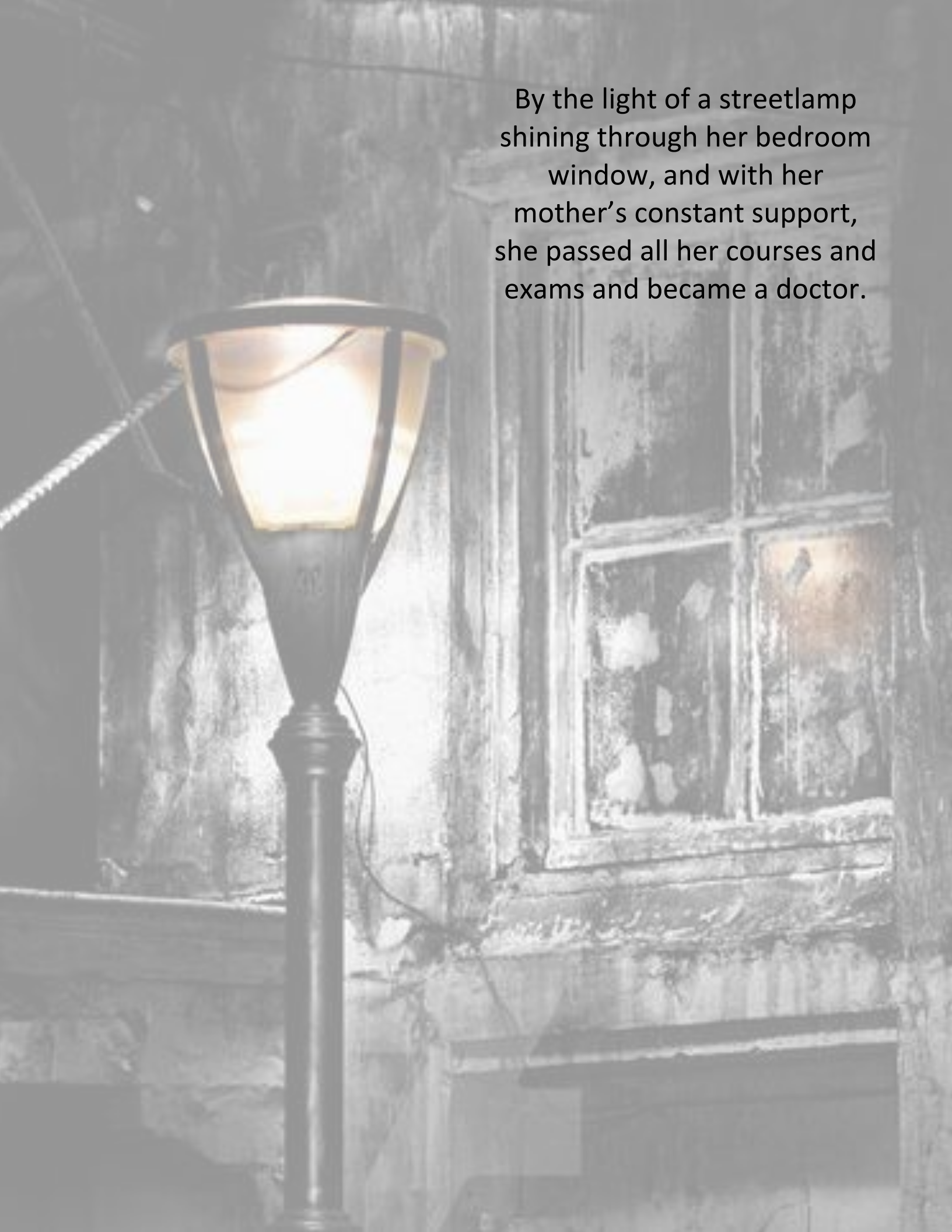
At that time, there were hardly any female doctors in Romania, and female neurosurgeons were extremely rare everywhere in the world.



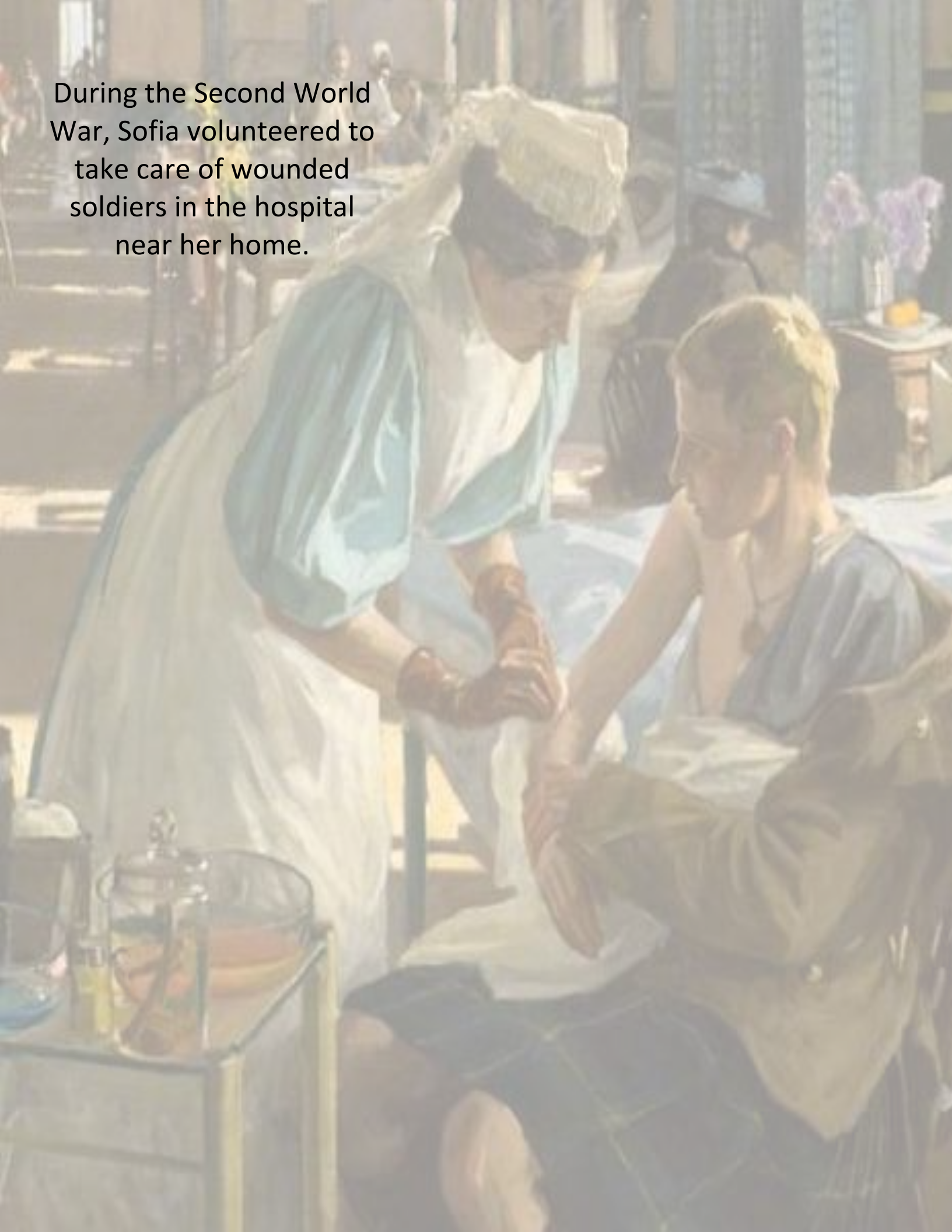
Sofia's teachers didn't think she was smart enough even to get into medical school. But she studied hard.



By the light of a streetlamp
shining through her bedroom
window, and with her
mother's constant support,
she passed all her courses and
exams and became a doctor.



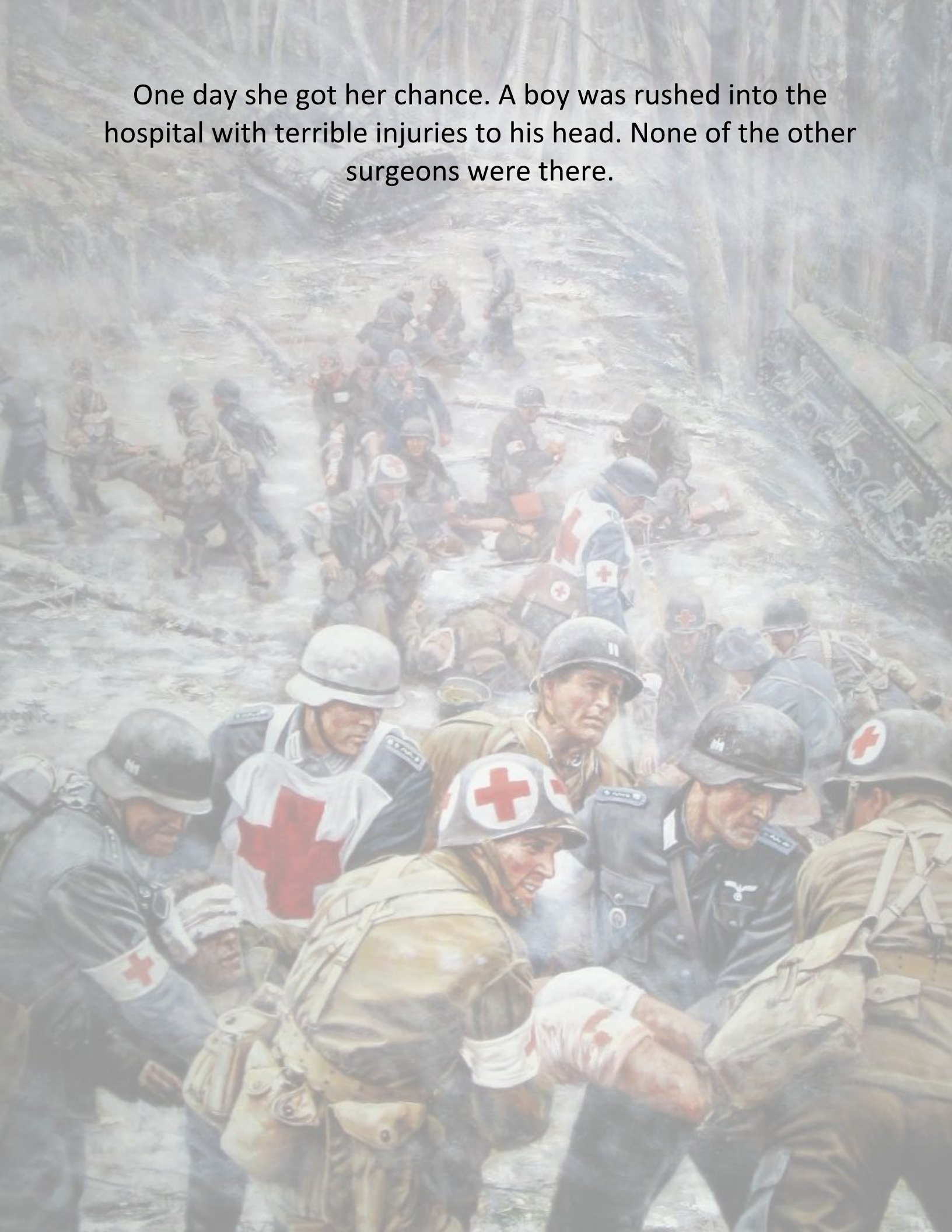
During the Second World War, Sofia volunteered to take care of wounded soldiers in the hospital near her home.



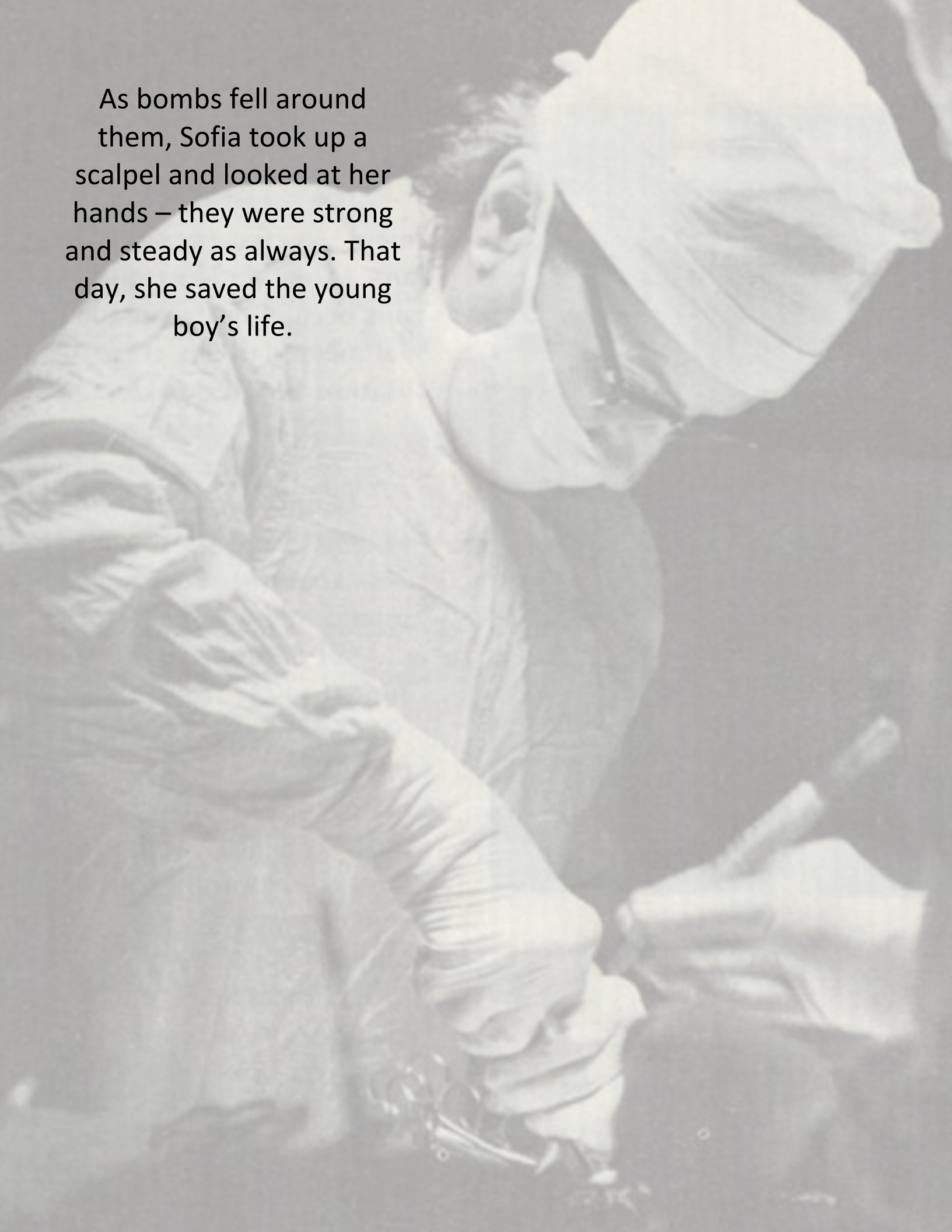
She operated on them – mostly performing amputations when their arms or legs had been so badly damaged that they could not be saved. But she still wanted most of all to be a neurosurgeon, operating on the brain.



One day she got her chance. A boy was rushed into the hospital with terrible injuries to his head. None of the other surgeons were there.



As bombs fell around them, Sofia took up a scalpel and looked at her hands – they were strong and steady as always. That day, she saved the young boy's life.





After the war, Sofia trained as a neurosurgeon, and through her long and distinguished career, she saved many, many more lives.”

