THE NEXT BIG ADVENTURE OF LITTLE SKIVOLO
Hello, Skivolo! Skivolo is 3.

Skivolo is in the hospital because he has a kind of cancer called **NEUROBLASTOMA** (new•row•blas•to•ma). The people there are helping him get better.

Why can't I eat cake for dinner?

Why don't worms have teeth?

How many days are there until my birthday?

Can fish dance?

Is the moon really made of cheese?

Why are trees green?
“Knock, knock,” said Jenu.

“Who’s there?” asked Skivolo.

“Orange.”

“Orange who?” asked Skivolo.

“Orange you glad I’m here?!” said Jenu with a laugh.
Sometimes Skivolo doesn’t feel like playing games, and it’s hard for Jenu to understand why.

“Mommy, how come Skivolo doesn’t want to play with me?” Jenu asked. “Did I do something wrong?”

“No,” answered Patrino. “Of course not, little one. You are a good little red panda. Skivolo wants to play with you, but he’s very, very tired because his body is working hard to get rid of cancer.”

“I’ll draw him a picture to make him feel better!” said Jenu.
“My little Skivolo, you are one brave little boy,” said Skivolo’s daddy, Patro. “And we’re so proud of you.”

“How brave am I?” asked Skivolo.

Patrino answered,

“You are like an explorer who goes on many journeys.”

“Is it time to go home yet?” asked Skivolo.

“Soon, my brave little explorer. There’s a new treatment journey you need to go on,” answered Patrino.
“But I’ve already had treatments,” said Skivolo.

“I know it’s hard, little one,” answered Patro. “But even with all your other treatments, there may be some cancer still hiding inside your body. This next treatment is called **ANTIBODY THERAPY**. It will try to get rid of the last of the cancer cells and help keep them from coming back.”

“How?”
“Well, your body has something called an immune system,” said Patro. “It’s made up of lots of tiny parts that work together like a team to keep you healthy. Antibodies and white blood cells are part of that team. They look for things like viruses and germs, and try to get rid of them.”

“It’s like your body has little detectives in it!” exclaimed Jenu.

“But cancer cells are tricky, and they try to hide from your immune system,” said Patro. “Antibody therapy helps your immune system find the cancer cells and try to get rid of them.”

“They’re good at finding things.”
“Hello again, Skivolo. You’re looking strong,” said Dr Kono.

“My Daddy said I have an immune system inside me. It’s like a team of little detectives that keep me healthy!” said Skivolo.

Dr Kono nodded. “That’s right! Antibody therapy is like giving your immune system special tools to help get rid of the cancer.”

“Dr Kono, how do the tools get in there?” asked Skivolo.
“Antibody therapy is made up of 4 main medicines,” said Dr Kono.

“We use the port, or line, that we place just under your skin to give you some of the medicine. Other medicines you take by mouth, and others are given through a needle poke.”

“Does antibody therapy hurt?” asked Skivolo.

“Yes it can, Skivolo. It can also make you feel itchy, or give you a fever, or even make your tummy hurt,” said Dr Kono. “But we will give you medicine to help with the pain. You, your mommy, or your daddy may be given a button called a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) to push if you are feeling uncomfortable or in pain. But remember, the button is not a toy.”

“The medicine might make you sleepy,” said Nurse Felicia. “It’s okay to sleep a lot, Skivolo. And it is also very important to always tell us if you feel uncomfortable or have any pain, so we can help make it better.”

“And we’ll be right here with you, little one,” added Patrino.
“We will be with you all through the treatment, Skivolo,” said Nurse Felicia.

“That’s right,” said Dr Kono. “We will check your blood pressure (which feels like an arm hug!), your blood, and your urine.”

“Ewww…that means pee!” said Skivolo.

“And we’ll also listen to your heart and take your temperature,” added Dr Kono.

“The tests will help us see just how strong your body is,” said Nurse Felicia. “But remember to tell us if you feel uncomfortable at any time, so we can help.”
Dr Kono explains the 4 main medicines used in antibody therapy.

“One medicine we use is an **ANTIBODY**. It helps to find the cancer cells that are hiding in your body.”

“It’s a little detective!” said Skivolo.

“That’s right!” said Dr Kono. “It’s a special kind of detective, and its job is to look for cancer cells. It looks all around your entire body. Then, when it finds the cancer cells, it holds up a big flag to let its friends, the white blood cells, know where the cancer is hiding. But this detective isn’t perfect, and it can mistake non-cancer cells for cancer cells. This is why you can feel itchy or get a tummy ache and other things that don’t feel good during antibody therapy.”
“GM-CSF and INTERLEUKIN-2 (in·ter·loo·kin), also known as IL-2, are medicines that help your body produce special kinds of white blood cells that help your immune system fight the cancer,” said Dr Kono.

“Are they like the white blood cells I already have?” asked Skivolo.

“Yes, they are, Skivolo. And like the white blood cells that are already in your body, they’ll help find the cancer cells that were flagged by their antibody friends, and fight them.”
There’s another medicine we use called ISOTRETINOIN (iso•tret•i•noin), but people usually call it Accutane®. This one is like a coach that trains your cells how to develop into non-cancer cells. It usually comes in a pill,” said Dr Kono.

“Will I have to take all of the medicines at the same time?” asked Skivolo.

“No,” said Dr Kono, “we give each medicine at different times, in what we call cycles, over the course of antibody therapy.”

“Do I have to stay in the hospital the whole time?” asked Skivolo.

“You will need to stay in the hospital while you get antibody therapy,” said Dr Kono. “But there are things to do while you are here. Whenever you’re feeling up to it, you can color, and watch your favorite cartoons. You can even have friends come visit.”

“I want to play a game where I pretend I’m a detective!” exclaimed Skivolo.
“Do you think you are ready for antibody therapy, Skivolo?” asked Dr Kono.

“Yes, but I have one question,” said Skivolo.

“What’s that?” asked Dr Kono and Nurse Felicia.

“When I’m all done with my treatment, then can I go home?” asked Skivolo.

“Yes, little one,” said Patrino. “And you can have a great big bamboo treat!”
WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

ANTIBODY THERAPY
Medicines that help your body find and kill cancer cells.

CANCER
Cancer is a disease that happens when the body makes cells that are sick. These cells grow very quickly. Cancer can spread to different parts of the body.

CELL
The smallest building block of every living thing on our planet, including you.

CYCLE
Antibody therapy is separated into different parts (or cycles). Different medicines will be administered depending on what cycle you are on.

GM-CSF (granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor)
A medicine that is given as part of antibody therapy. It gives the body more white blood cells to fight cancer.

INTERLEUKIN-2
A medicine that is given as part of antibody therapy. It helps the immune system work better and tells white blood cells to fight cancer.

ISOTRETINOIN
A medicine that is given as part of antibody therapy. It teaches cancer cells how to become non-cancer cells.

NEUROBLASTOMA
A kind of cancer that mostly happens to young children.

REMISSION
When cancer symptoms go away completely.

SIDE EFFECT
The body sometimes reacts to medicine or other treatments. In cancer treatment, some of these side effects may include feeling very tired, losing your hair, feeling itchy, or getting a tummy ache and other things that don’t feel good.
Every child has questions about being sick, and Skivolo is no different.

THE NEXT BIG ADVENTURE OF LITTLE SKIVOLO follows this very curious little red panda as he begins antibody therapy.