



# Captain Hemo's Grand Heart Tour

Angela Hyde



Captain Hemo, a cheerful red blood cell wearing a tiny navigator's hat, arrives at the dark and crowded Superior Vena Cava terminal. He looks a bit tired and blue, carrying empty oxygen canisters after a long trip around the body.



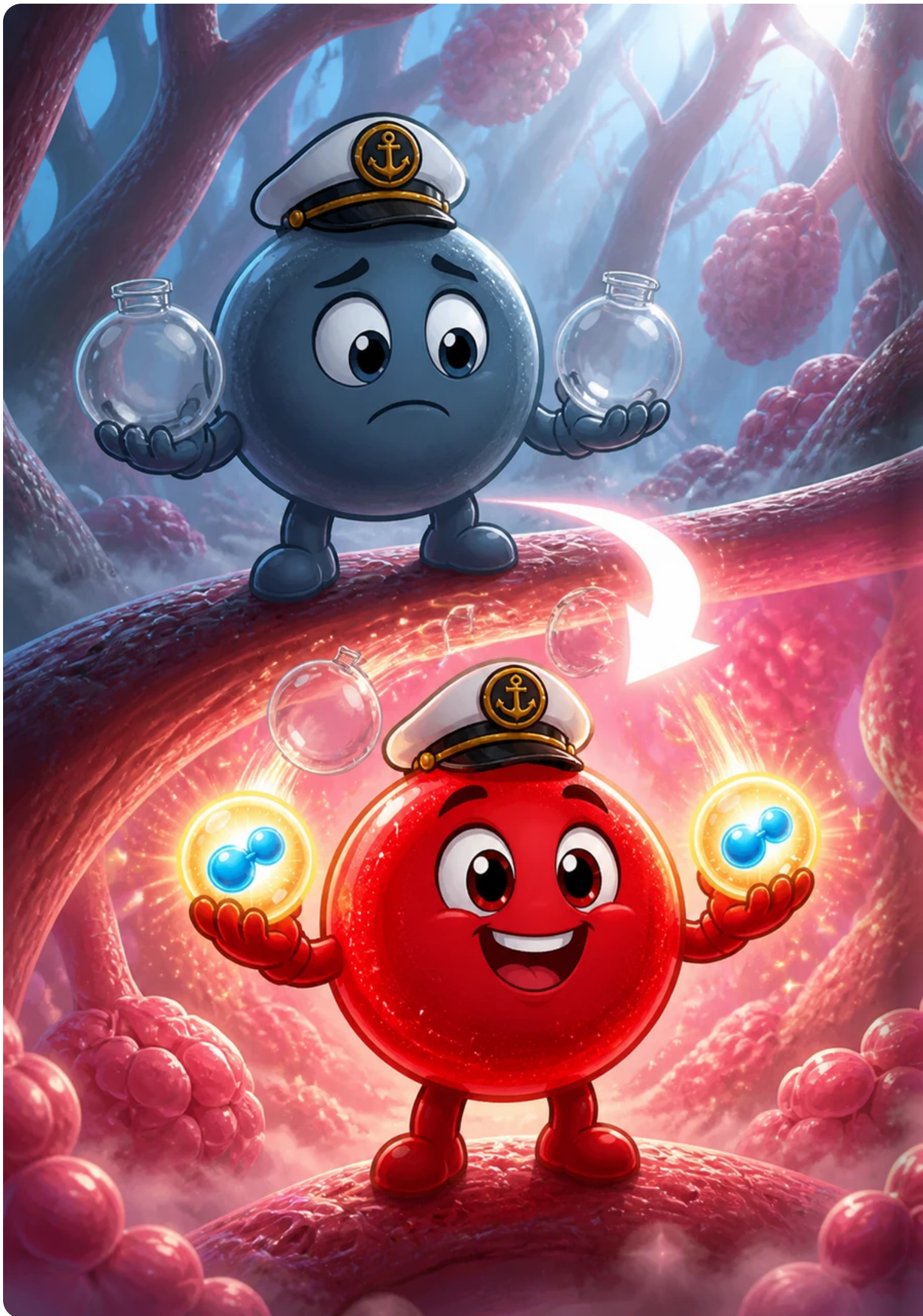
He steps into the Right Atrium, a cavernous blue-tinted chamber where many other cells are gathering. The walls pulse gently as everyone waits for the floor to open up into the next stage of their journey.



Suddenly, the Tricuspid Valve opens like a set of three heavy trapdoors, and Hemo slides down into the Right Ventricle. The muscular walls around him are thick and ready to give him a powerful push upward.



With a sudden squeeze, the Right Ventricle launches Hemo through the semi-lunar Pulmonary Valve. He shoots upward through the pulmonary artery, heading toward the distant, glowing Lung Forests.



In the Lung Forests, Hemo swaps his empty canisters for bright, glowing spheres of oxygen. He transforms from a dull blue to a vibrant, sparkling crimson as he breathes in the fresh, misty air.



Recharged and energized, Hemo sails through the Pulmonary Veins and enters the Left Atrium. This chamber is bright and welcoming, filled with other high-energy cells ready for their big mission.



He passes through the Mitral Valve, which looks like a sophisticated two-part velvet curtain. He enters the Left Ventricle, the most muscular and impressive gym in the entire heart.



The walls of the Left Ventricle contract with immense strength, preparing to send Hemo on his longest trip yet. He grips his oxygen canisters tight, feeling the massive pressure build behind him.



The Aortic Valve snaps open, and Hemo is propelled into the Aorta, the body's grandest highway. The golden light of the Aorta stretches out before him, branching into countless paths leading to the brain, toes, and everywhere in between.



Now cruising through the systemic circulation, Hemo waves to the organs as he delivers his precious oxygen cargo. He knows that soon he will return to the heart to start the grand cycle all over again.