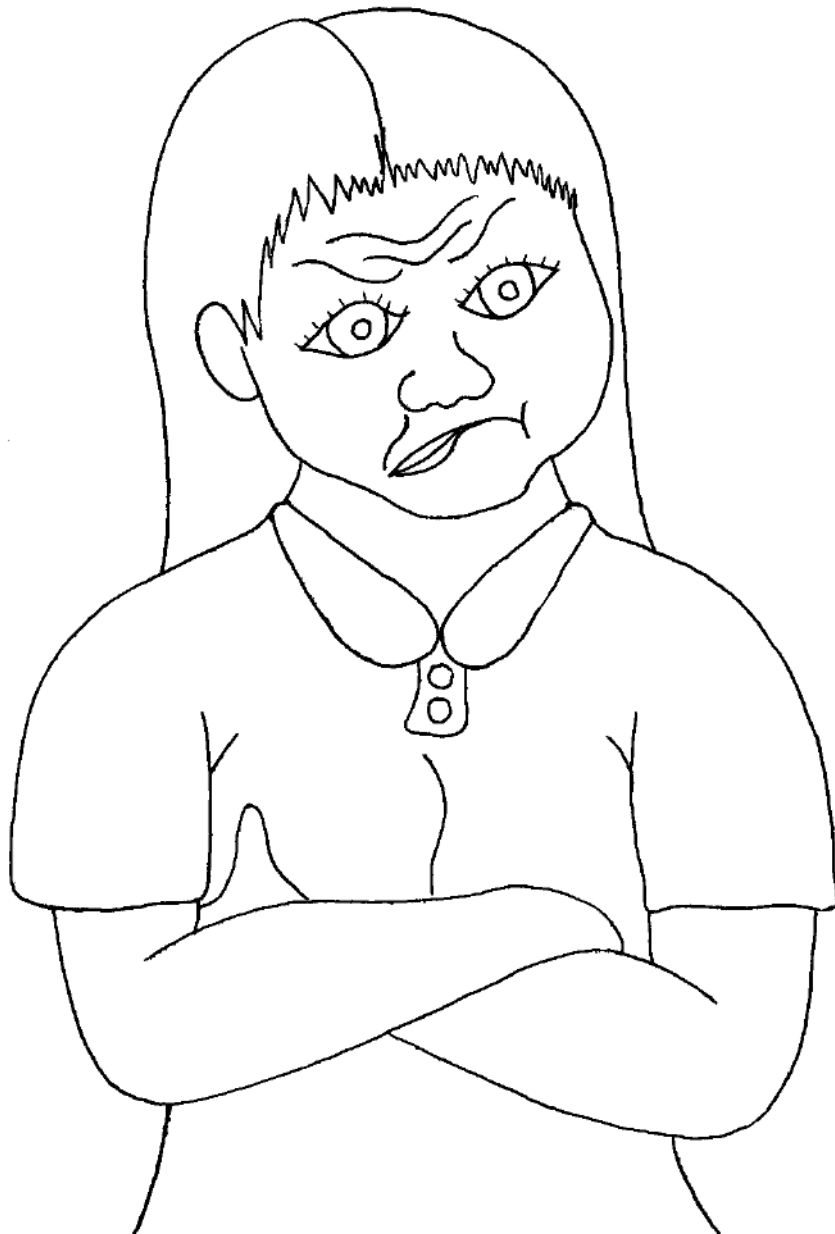
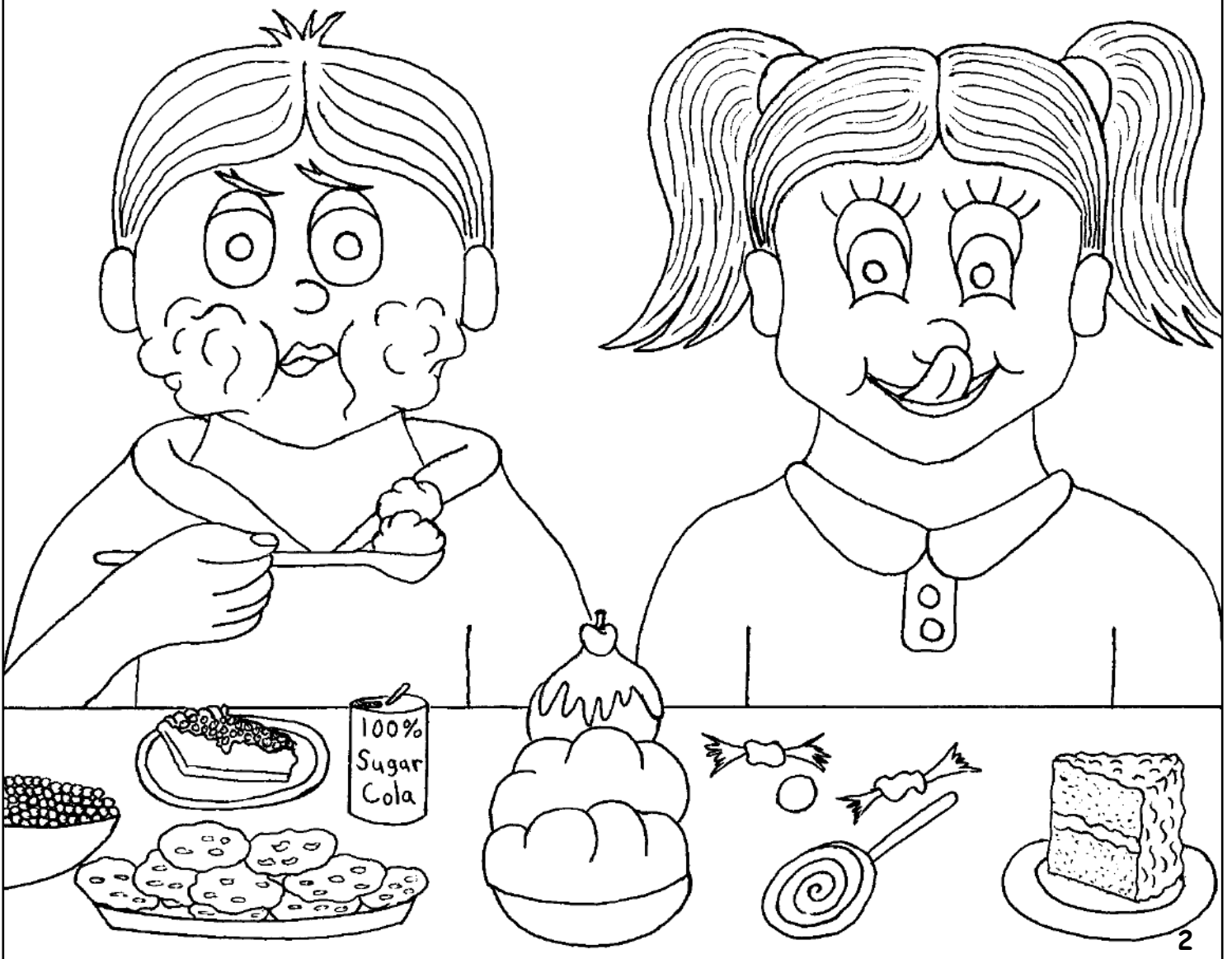


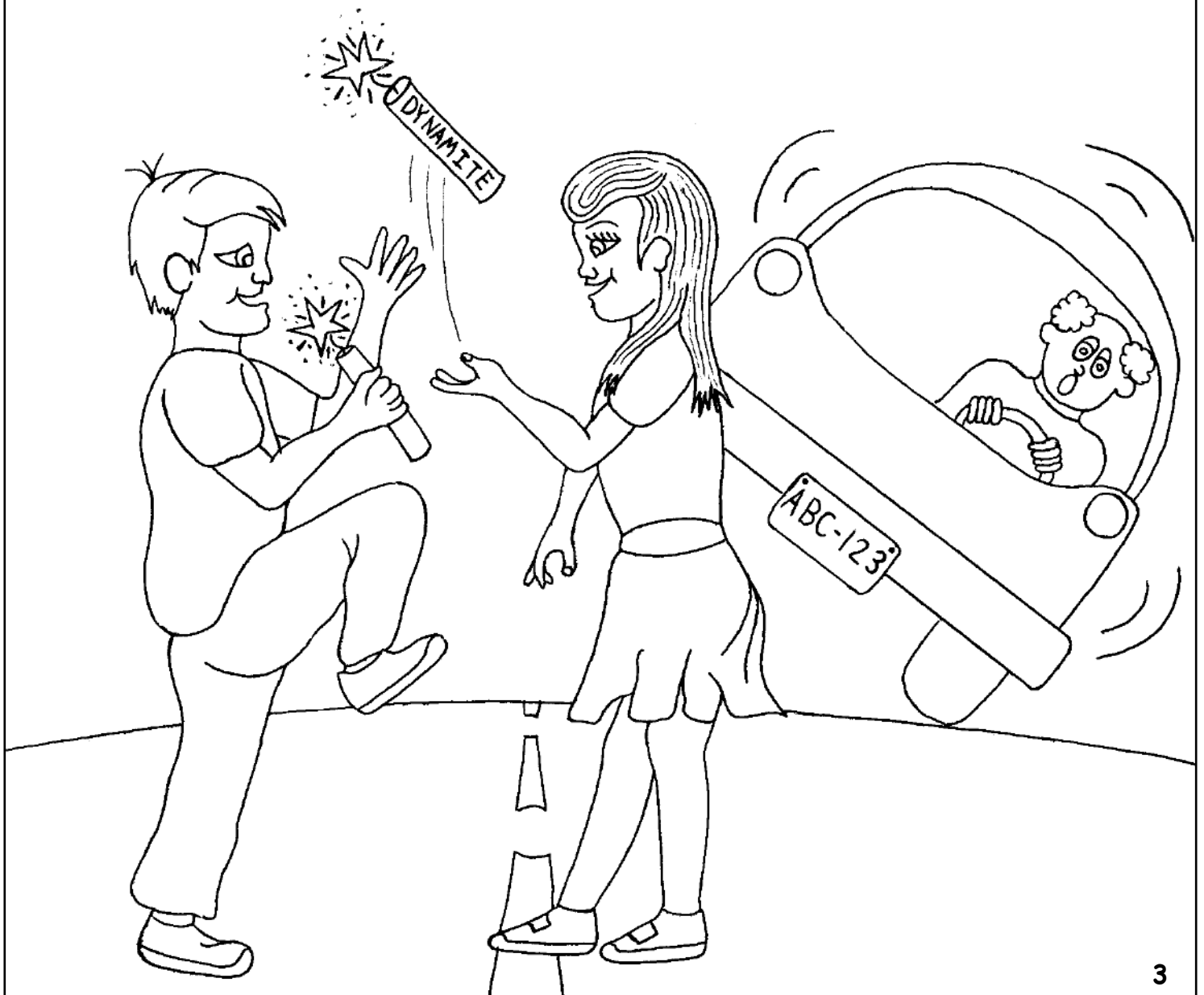
If Parents Didn't Care



If parents didn't care, they'd let you do whatever you wanted to do, whenever you wanted to do it. They'd let you eat cake and ice cream and candy for breakfast every morning. You could fill your face with sweets until you grew so plump and fat that you'd look like a human marshmallow. Your bones could turn to jelly and your muscles go to fluff from all that poor nutrition, and your parents would just let you keep on filling your body with nothing but junk food.



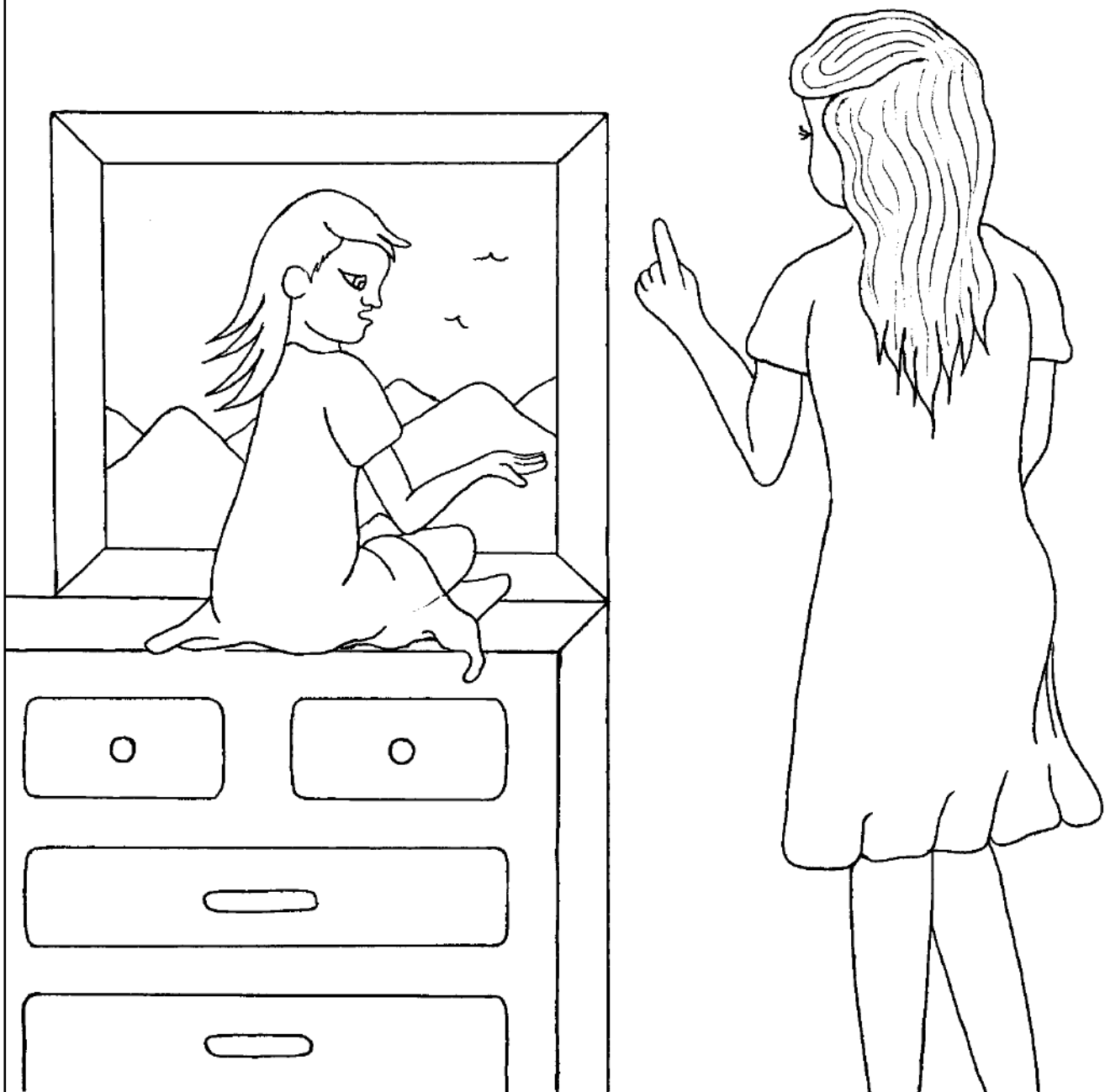
If parents didn't care, they would let you play in the middle of the street with sticks of dynamite. They'd let you run in the house until you fell and cracked your head open. They'd let you climb on whatever you wanted until something fell over and squished you flat as a pancake. They'd let you do all sorts of things that might seem like fun in the moment, but which could get you into a lot of trouble.



If parents didn't care, they would let brothers and sisters fight all day long until they knocked each other into a coma. Then they'd just drag away the bodies and clean up the mess, which might be a lot easier for them to do than trying to settle all your disputes.

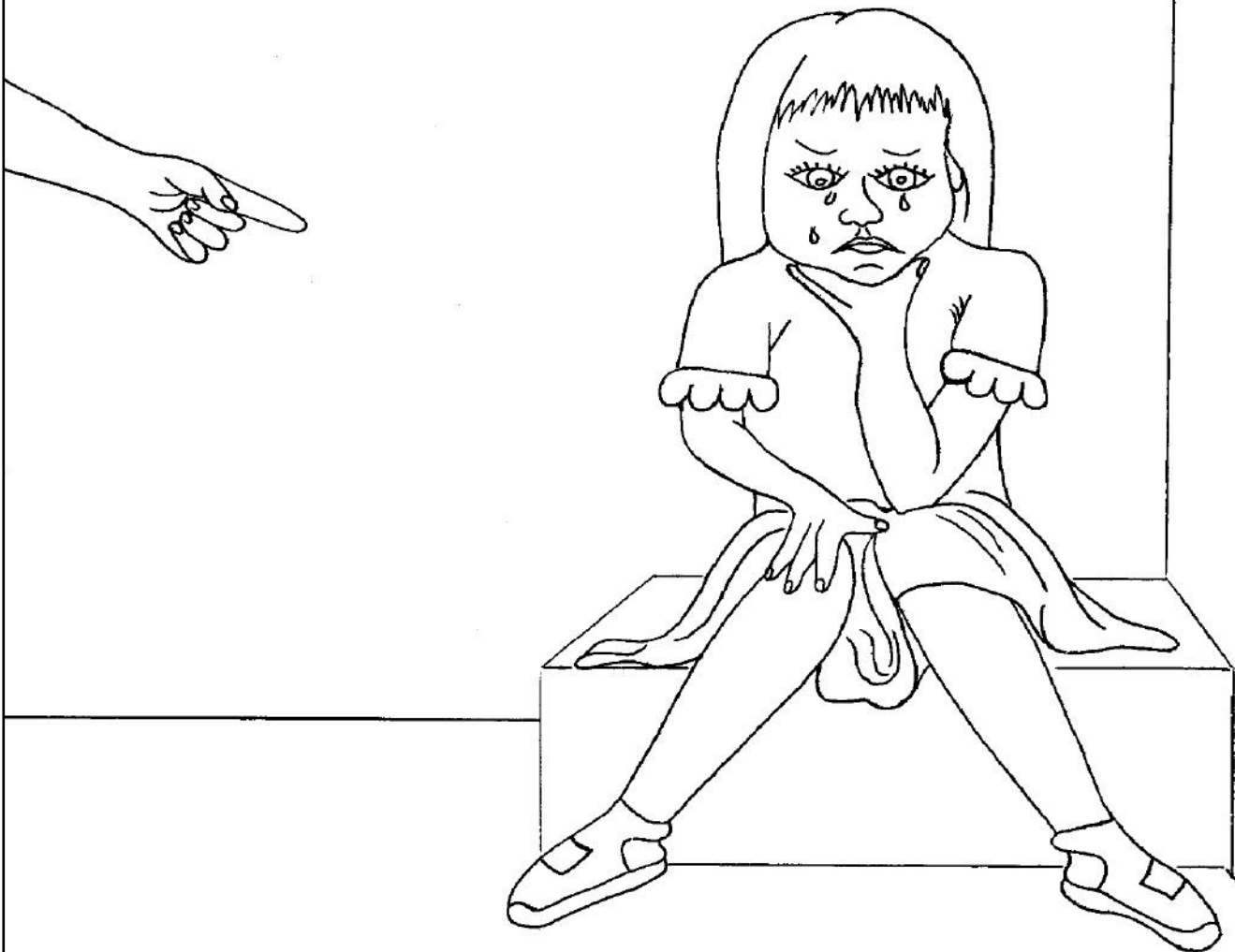


But of course, our parents do care about us, which is why they don't let us play with dynamite, or murder our sister, or eat cake and ice cream for breakfast, or do whatever it is we might want to do any time we please. Your parents care about you very much, which is why they want to see you grow into a kind and caring person. And this means they have to guide you in what's right versus wrong, and correct you when you do things you shouldn't do.



This is called discipline. Discipline means to "correct" or to "train in self-control," and sometimes it involves punishment. Being punished isn't fun. It isn't supposed to be fun. It's meant to help you learn that certain actions have negative consequences.

When you do stuff that is dangerous or things that make someone else sad or upset, punishment is meant to make you feel bad about this hurtful or dangerous behavior, and become more aware of the consequences of your actions so that you learn not to do such things again in the future. It's meant to guide your behavior towards things that are good. Just as adults praise you when you do a good job, sometimes they must punish you when you don't, so that you have motivation to do better in the future.



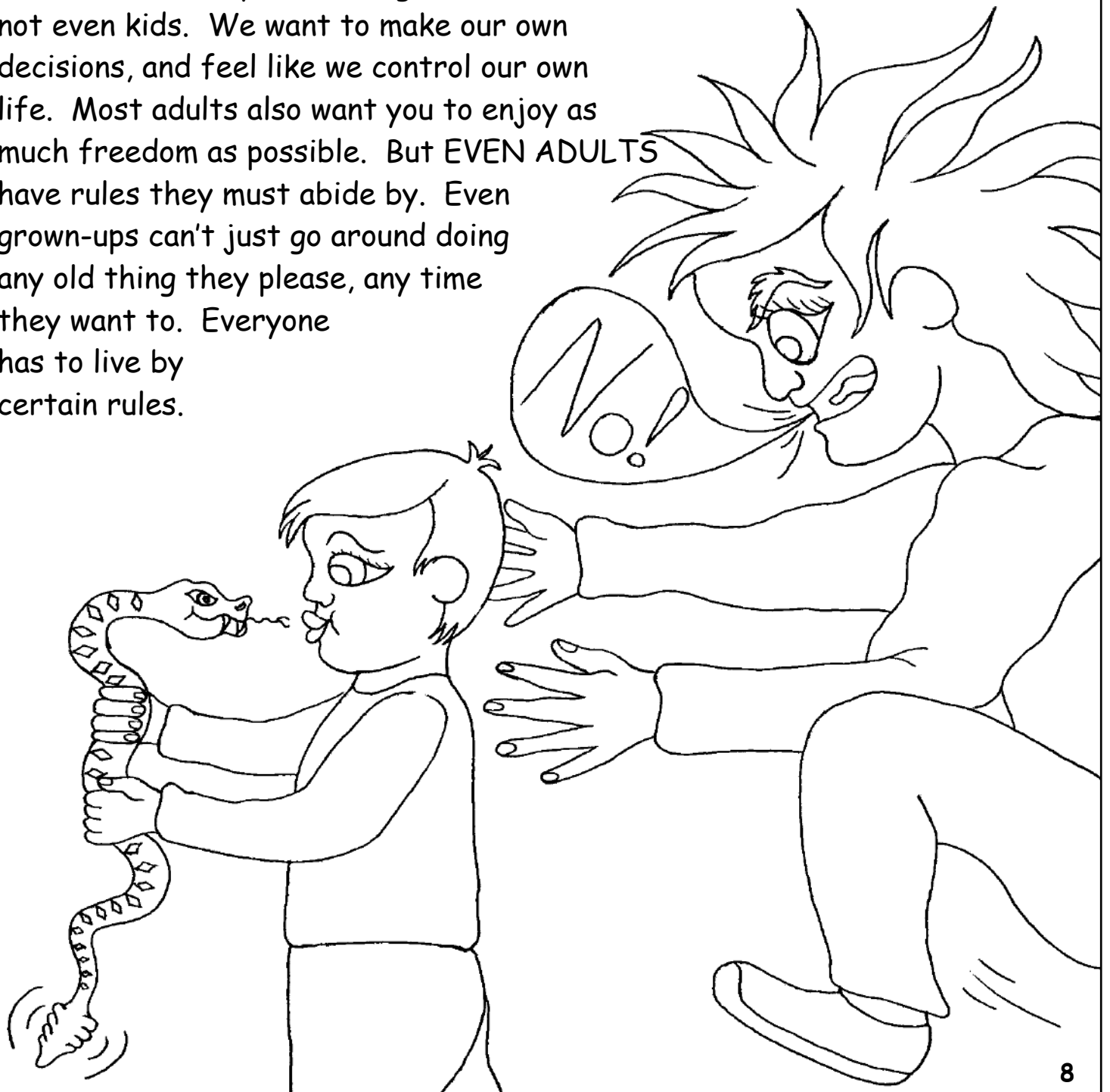
Adults don't punish children because they want to see them suffer. Quite the opposite: they do so because they love you and want you to learn how to be safe and kind and caring towards others. They want you to develop self-control so that you can manage your behavior and learn how to make good decisions, even when adults aren't around. Part of becoming a complete person is learning how to control ourselves and thinking about how our actions affect others. It's about choosing to do the right thing, even when we may feel like doing something else.

After all, you wouldn't like it if others were allowed to hurt your feelings or do things that made you sad whenever they felt like it. We all make mistakes from time to time, even when we don't mean to. Discipline is meant to help us make less of them.



Sometimes parents ask us to do things we don't want to do, or to stop doing something that we really, really like. Sometimes grown-ups have rules that kids don't understand. But kids should remember that adults have been around a lot longer, and so they know a lot more about why it's good to do some things and not others. It's not that they want to spoil your fun, they just want you to behave in a way that's safe and considerate towards others.

Of course, nobody likes being told what to do, not even kids. We want to make our own decisions, and feel like we control our own life. Most adults also want you to enjoy as much freedom as possible. But **EVEN ADULTS** have rules they must abide by. Even grown-ups can't just go around doing any old thing they please, any time they want to. Everyone has to live by certain rules.



One part of discipline is to help kids understand *why* these rules exist. So if you're ever confused about something you should ask an adult to explain. If you think something is unfair, it's OK to respectfully tell them *why* you feel this way. Sometimes adults overreact or get things wrong. So if you calmly explain your point of view, they might reconsider. But if they still don't agree, it's your job to listen without getting mad. Ultimately, what they say goes, and kids have to respect that decision, even if they don't like it or don't agree.

It's a good thing parents do care enough to discipline and guide us. It may not always be fun, but it sure beats what would happen if they just let us do whatever we pleased!

