



# Sydney Gets Sarcastic

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# About this book

Sarcasm is a type of everyday language that is used to joke or tease. It is important for making friends and getting along with others. Children can find it hard to understand what someone means when they are sarcastic. Research has helped us understand why it is challenging. We created this book based on that research, to help children learn to detect sarcasm. The book is intended for children aged 4-7 years. This is the age when most children start to understand sarcastic speech. We used black and white illustrations on the story pages so that children can colour them if they like. We suggest parents and caregivers who are reading the book to children use a sarcastic voice when it fits with the story. Also feel free to go off script to talk about other examples of sarcasm you have heard or used. Have fun!

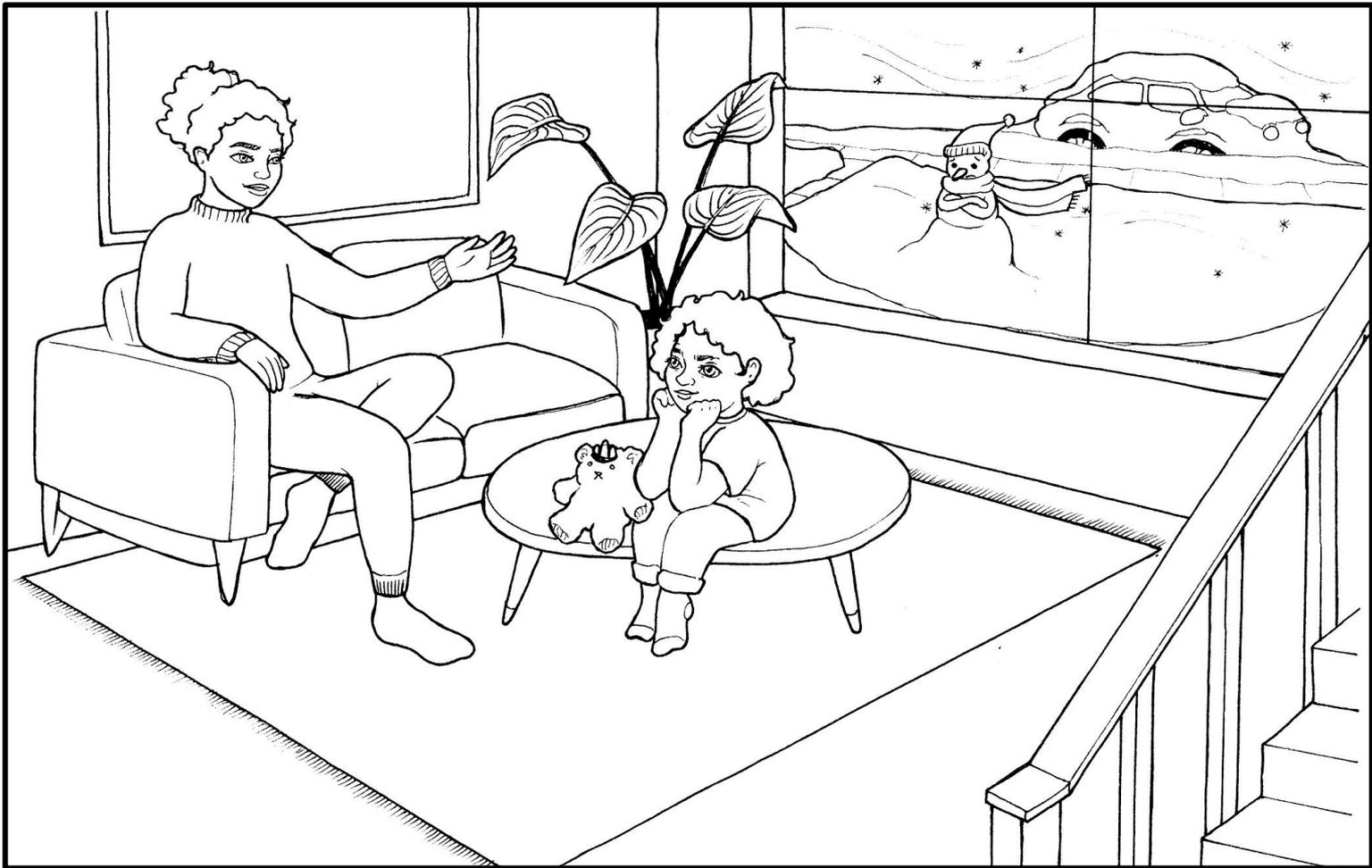


On Monday, Sydney's bedroom was a really, really big mess. Sydney's big brother walked by her bedroom door, and said "Wow. What a tidy room." "Huh?" said Sydney, confused. "I'm being sarcastic!" said her brother.

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Sydney stepped over the mess in her room and went downstairs to find her mother.



"Mom", said Sydney, "what is *sarcastic*?"

"Sarcastic is when someone says the opposite of what they mean." said Sydney's mom.

"They say something but they don't actually mean it or think it."

Sydney's mom said, "Like if it was stormy and raining and I said 'Great weather we're having!'"

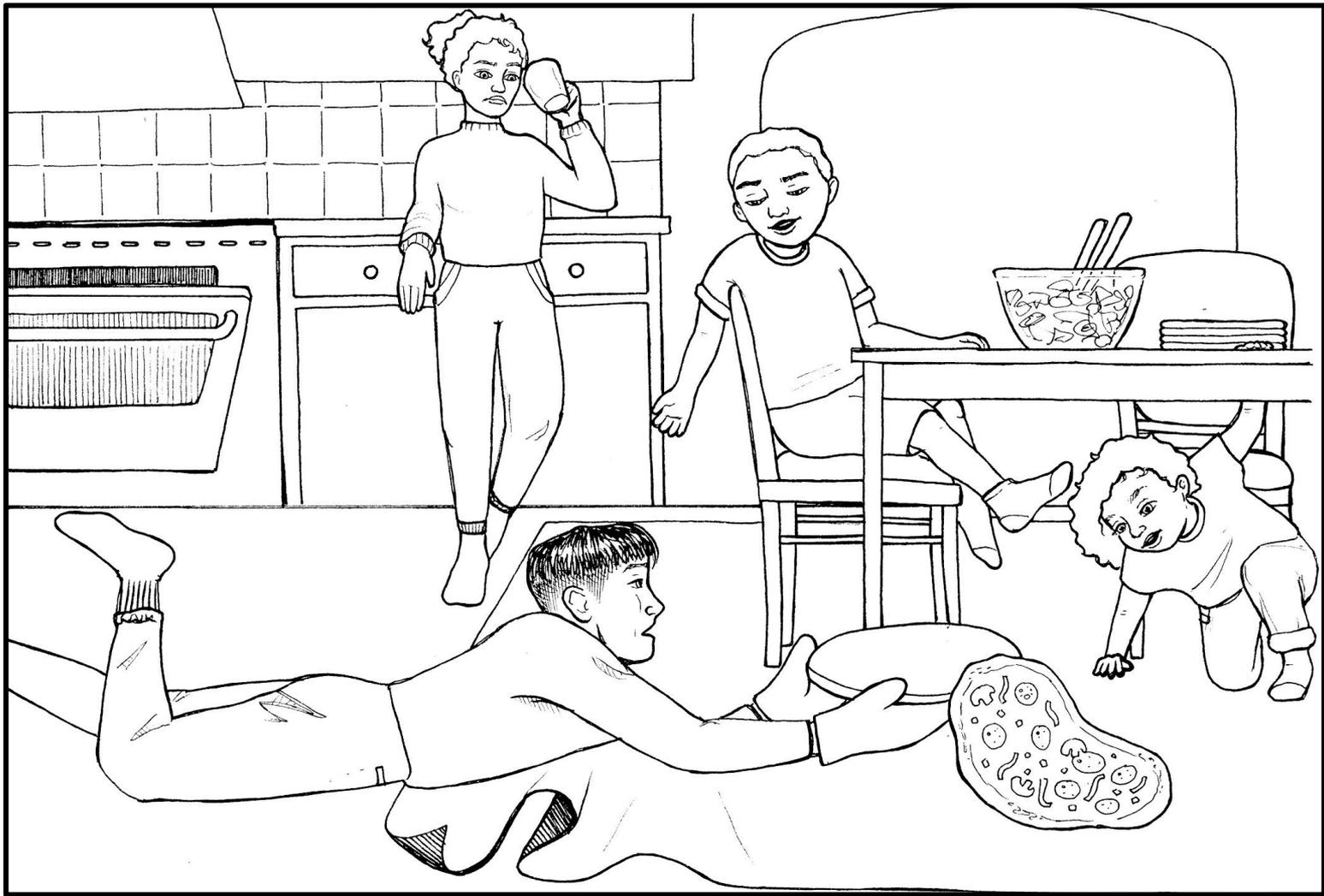
"Why would you say that?" asked Sydney.

"Oh, to be funny, and make a bit of a joke about something." her mom responded.

"Hmm, interesting" said Sydney.



On Tuesday, at dinnertime, Sydney's dad made pizza. Sydney loved her dad's pizza. It was always delicious.



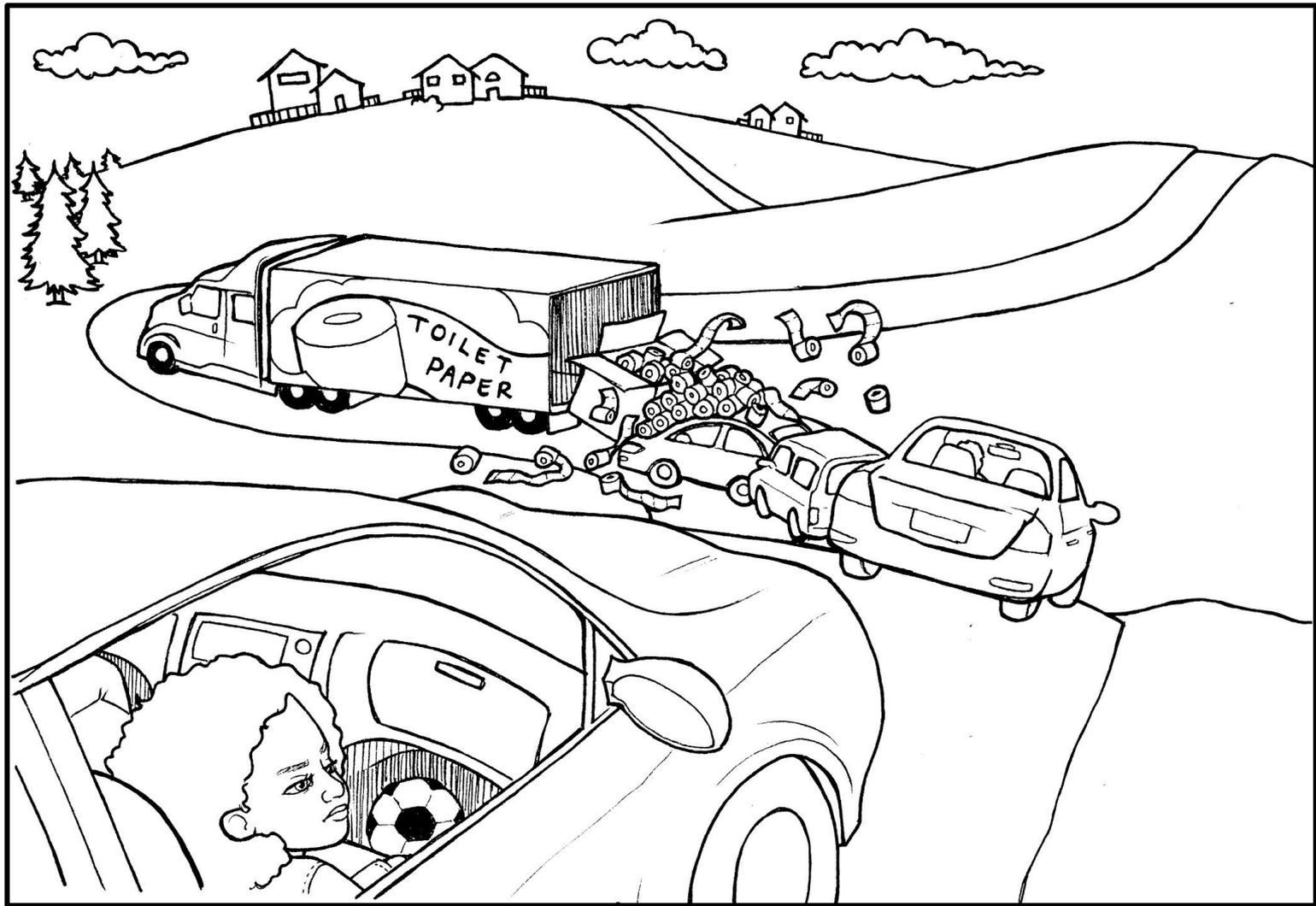
As Sydney's dad was taking the first pizza out of the oven, he tripped on a rug and the pizza went SPLAT on the floor.

Sydney's brother laughed and said "Smooth move, Dad."

"Huh?" said Sydney, confused.

"I'm being sarcastic!" said her brother.

"Hmm, interesting" said Sydney.



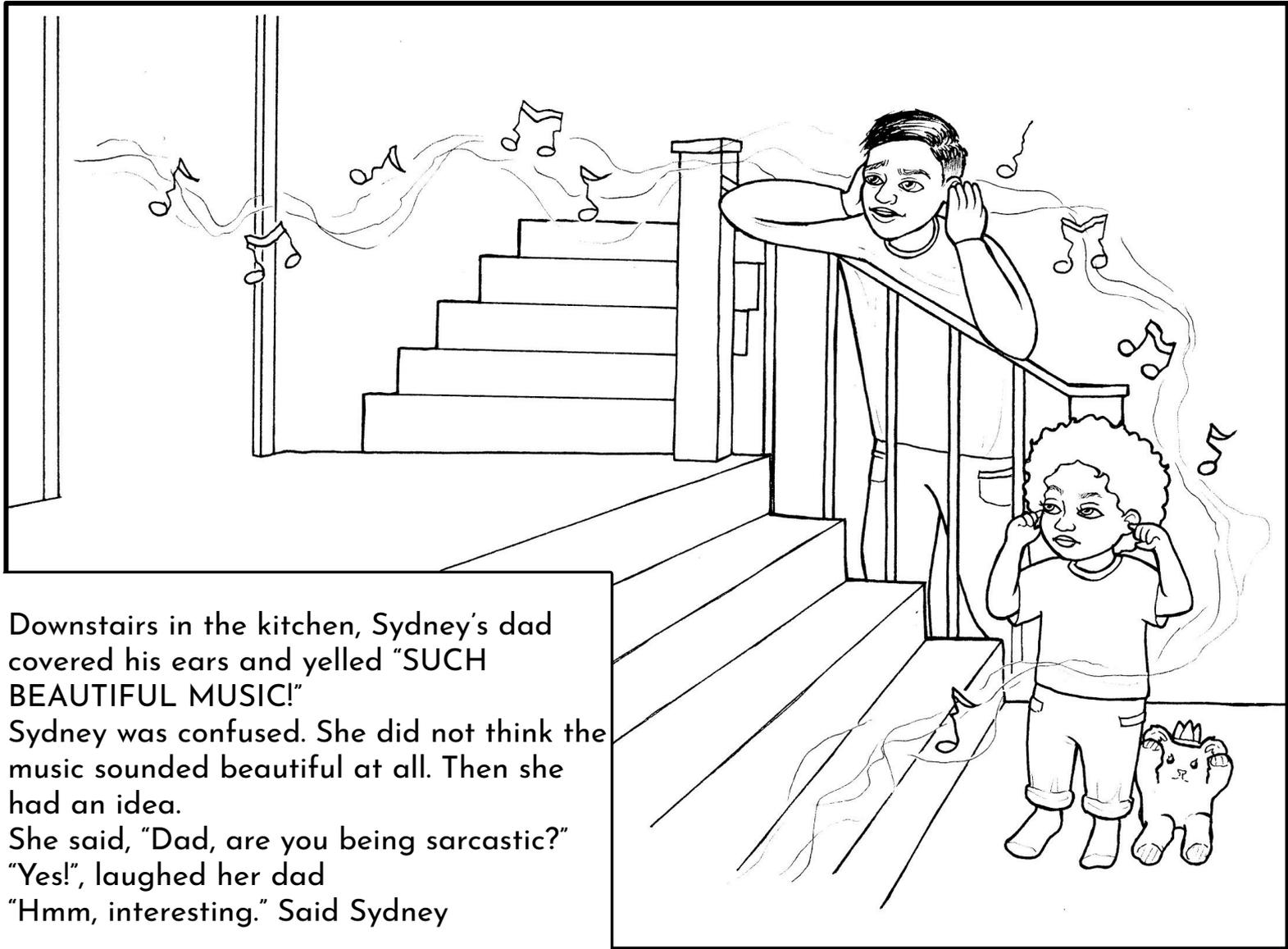
On Wednesday, Sydney's mom was driving her to soccer. A load of toilet paper fell off a truck ahead of them and rolled all over the road. It caused a big traffic jam. Sydney's mom shook her head and said "Well, this is just great".



"Huh?" said Sydney. "This is not great, Mom"  
"Oh Sydney, I'm being sarcastic", said her mom.  
"Hmm, interesting" said Sydney.



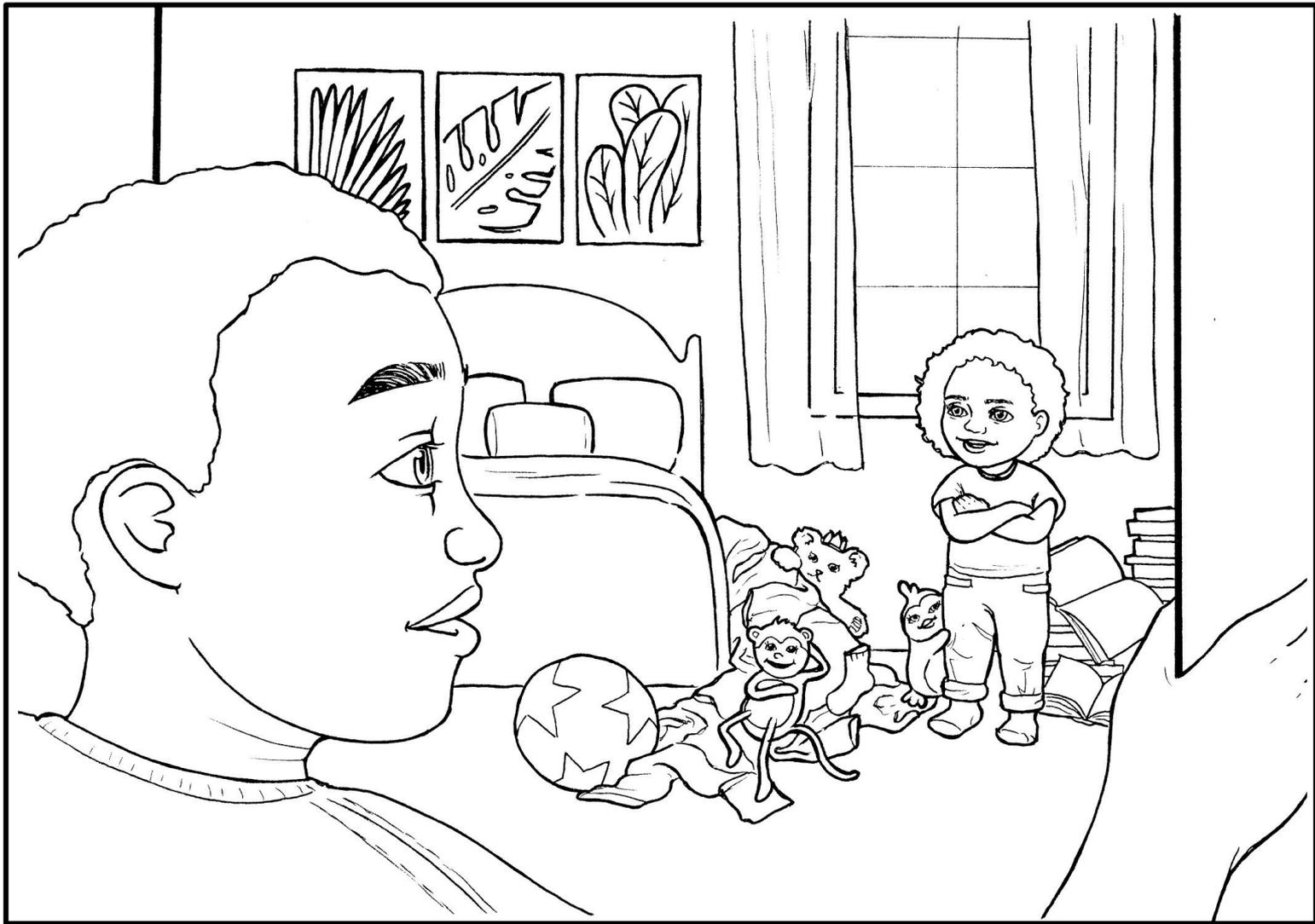
On Thursday, Sydney's big brother was upstairs in his room practicing his tuba, making notes that sounded like elephant noises.



Downstairs in the kitchen, Sydney's dad covered his ears and yelled "SUCH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC!" Sydney was confused. She did not think the music sounded beautiful at all. Then she had an idea. She said, "Dad, are you being sarcastic?" "Yes!", laughed her dad "Hmm, interesting." Said Sydney



On Friday, Sydney made a play zoo in her messy room. She made a big pile of clothes for the monkeys to jump on. She made a big pile of books for the penguins to slide on. She looked around, smiling, at her really, really messy room. She had an idea.



"Hey Brother!" yelled Sydney, "Come see how I tidied my room!"  
Peering into her room, her brother said "Huh?", and looked confused.  
"I'm being sarcastic!" grinned Sydney.  
"Hmm, interesting" said her brother, smiling at Sydney's joke.

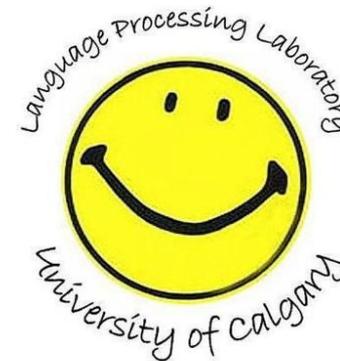
# Acknowledgements

This picture book draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The research was conducted in the Language Processing Lab in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Calgary. We are grateful to the children and families who participated in this research through the ChiLD Research Group.

This story is derived from sarcasm training used in a research study authored by Kate Lee, David Sidhu, and Penny Pexman published in the Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology:

Lee, K., Sidhu, D. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2021). Teaching sarcasm: Evaluating metapragmatic training for typically-developing children. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/cep0000228>



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