

SILVER LINING



This is a story about school going children just like you and your friends. Those of you who have read "Jolt In Jaipur", "Twins in Madurai", "Twins Play Host" and "Magic In Mumbai" the other comic books of this series on children's right will recognise Rohan and Saira, the two children who lost their parents some years ago and now live with their foster parents Mrs. and Mr. Shekar Saran and dearly loved foster sister Seema Didi who is a doctor in Delhi.

Rohan and Saira are older now and they are both 13 as are most of their friends. In this story the children, who have sometimes been called the travelling twins do not travel anywhere except back into the past for a school play.

All the children involved with the play are very excited at first. But later strange things happen. Read on to find out!



Practical Saira does well at school, she enjoys movies of Shah Rukh Khan, reading, dancing and listening to music.



Action movies which star Akshay Kumar, music and reading are a few of Rohan's favourite things.



Rohan and Saira's foster sister Seema is a doctor, so she's full of sensible advice. But she's also full of fun and knows when to give a much needed hug.



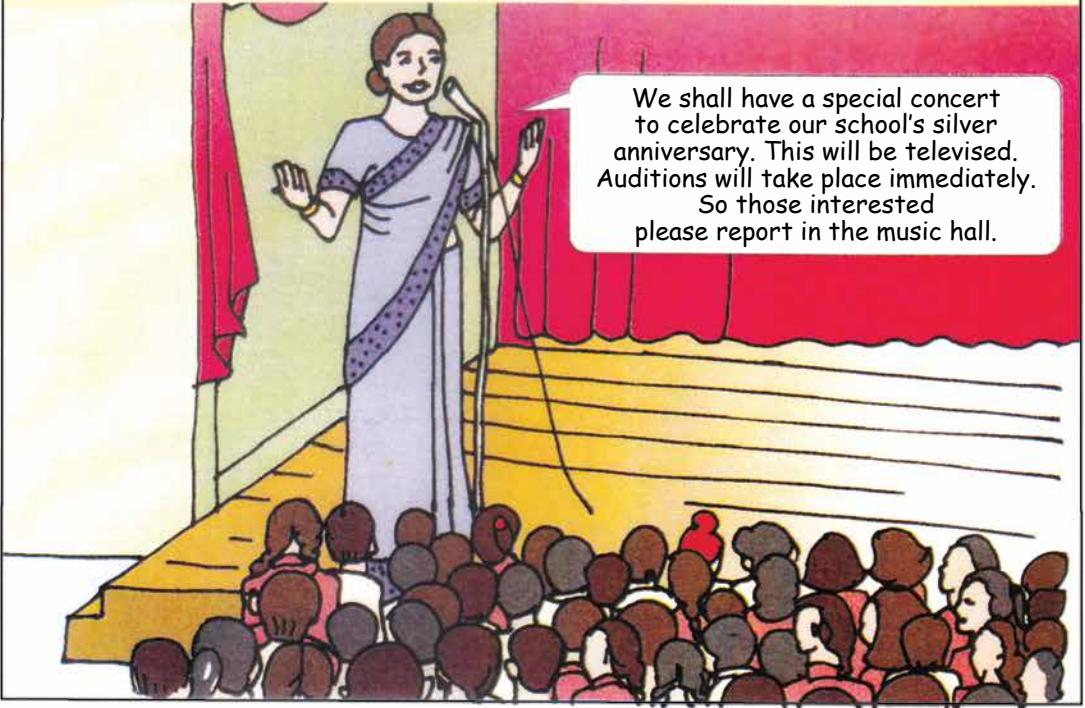
Pizzas, pop music and plays - these are some of "Playful Pia's" Passions. But she manages to do as well as her more studious friends.

Sensitive and Shy, Neha tends to be absent minded about mundane things. However she is strongly committed to every project she is involved with.





On a hot summer day in April, the children are in the midst of a routine assembly when suddenly...Principal Thakker made a very exciting announcement.



A deafening buzz followed the announcement.





HEY NEHA

SINGH UNCLE? He is like a member of the family. And he's had a string of successes lately

Tell us about your neighbour



Auditions are held, Mr. Singh announces

Neha, Pia you are in. Saira and Rohan I'd like you to help in backstage. There's only one boy in the play and that's you Rakesh.

I suppose I'll be in the choir

Wow!

Congrats!!

I want all of you to come every evening for practise

How lucky Neha and Pia are.

The kids walk home and are talking about the play

...But atleast we can dress up and look beautiful

I like the play. It is an impossible love story set in Mughal times

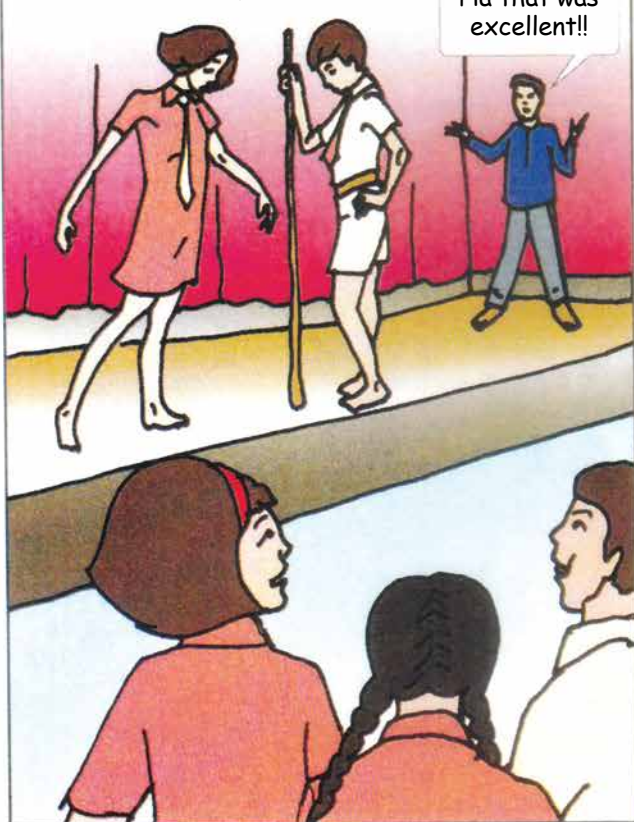
Since I'm going to be helping in the sets it's going to be a totally new experience

Lucky Neha! She gets the prince in the end!

And Rakesh is such a handsome prince!

Stop being silly!

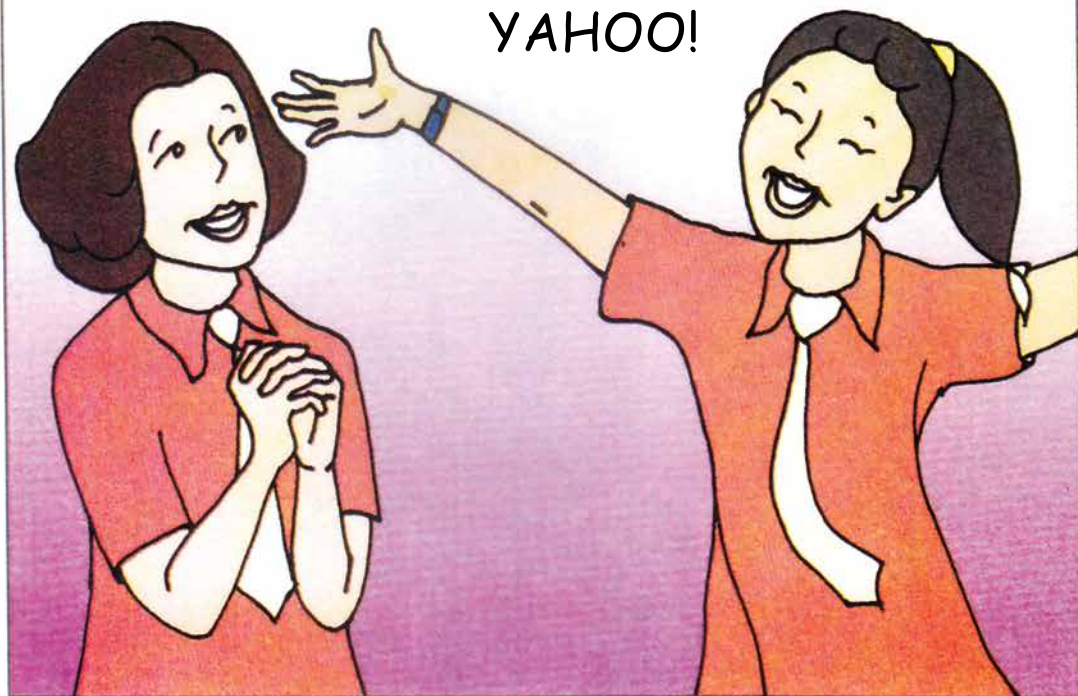
The kids enact the period drama



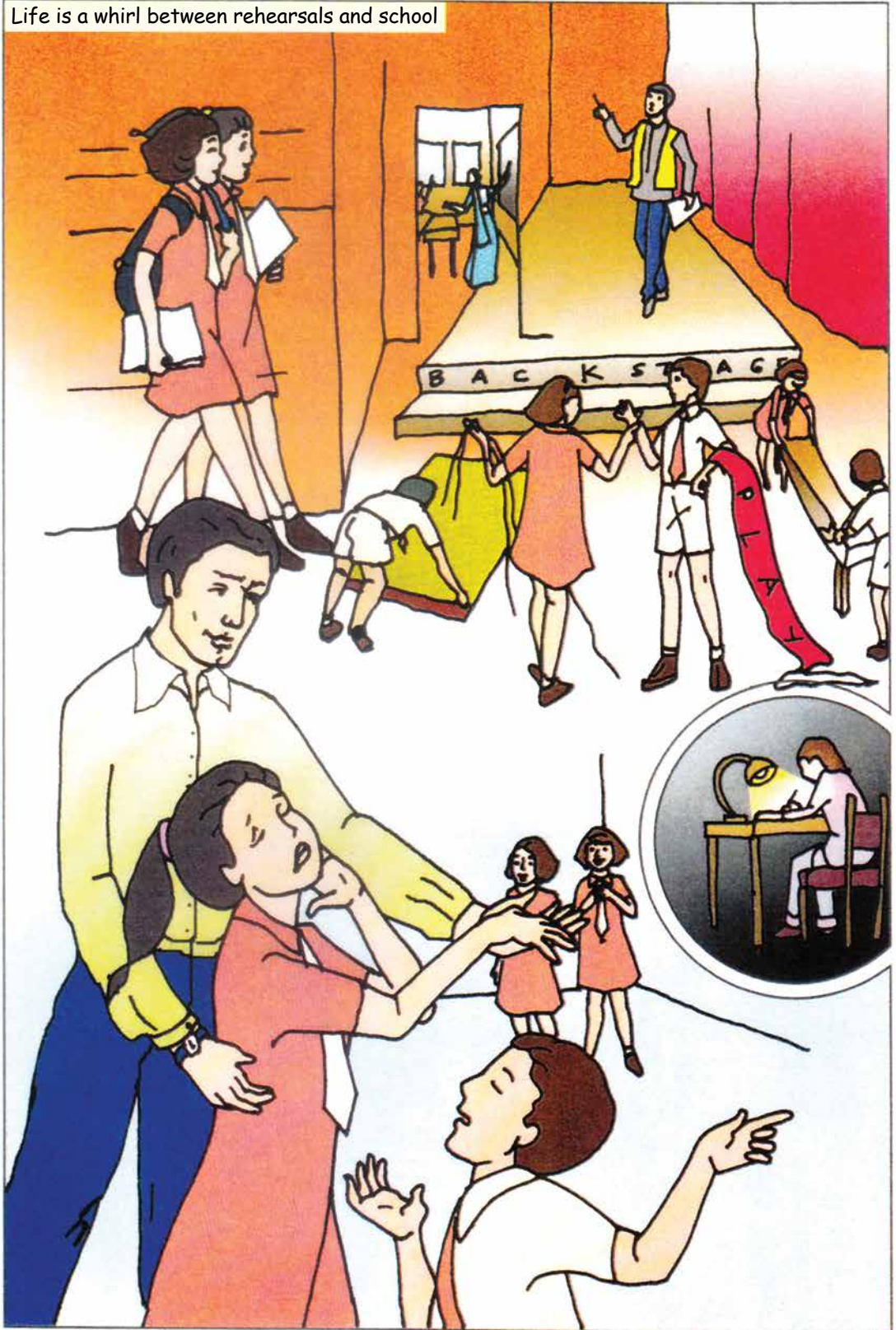
Neha you have real talent



Neha and Pia were thrilled



Life is a whirl between rehearsals and school



Two weeks later, at rehearsal:



The kids start messing things up



Neha and Pia are dejected



After rehearsal





Hot samosas and cool orange squash





She is given a brief review of their recent performance



At school, posters of the play are being put up



As the children walk towards rehearsal



As each day passed, Pia and Neha's behaviour was getting more confusing.

That evening



Pia, you are carrying your sword upside down

Chand Singh walks up to her and puts his hand around and shows her how to hold the sword

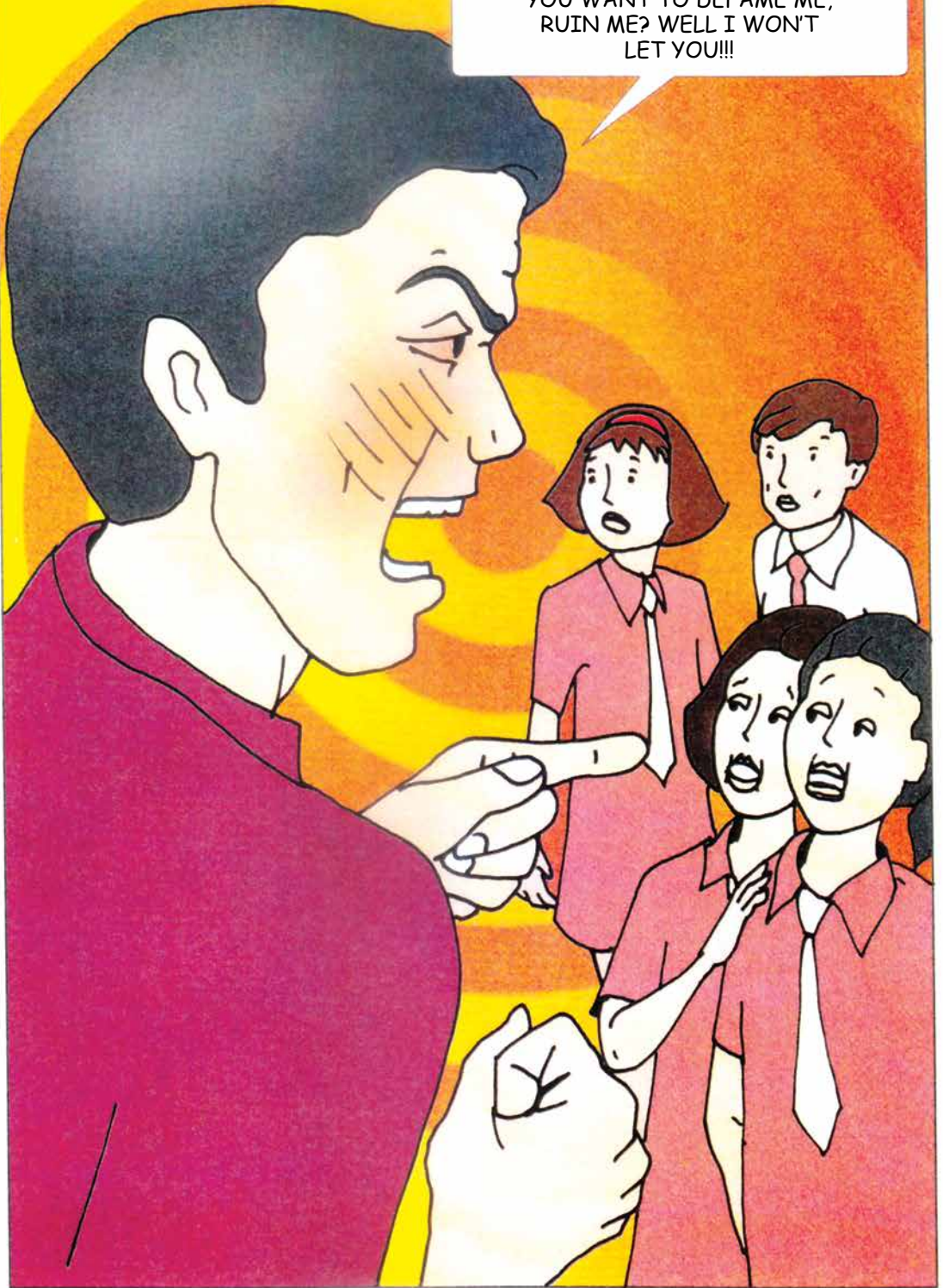


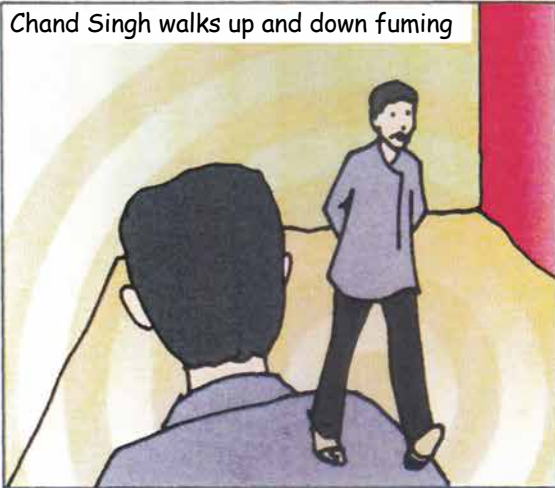
Chand Uncle, I don't think I am good at this, err...can I drop out?



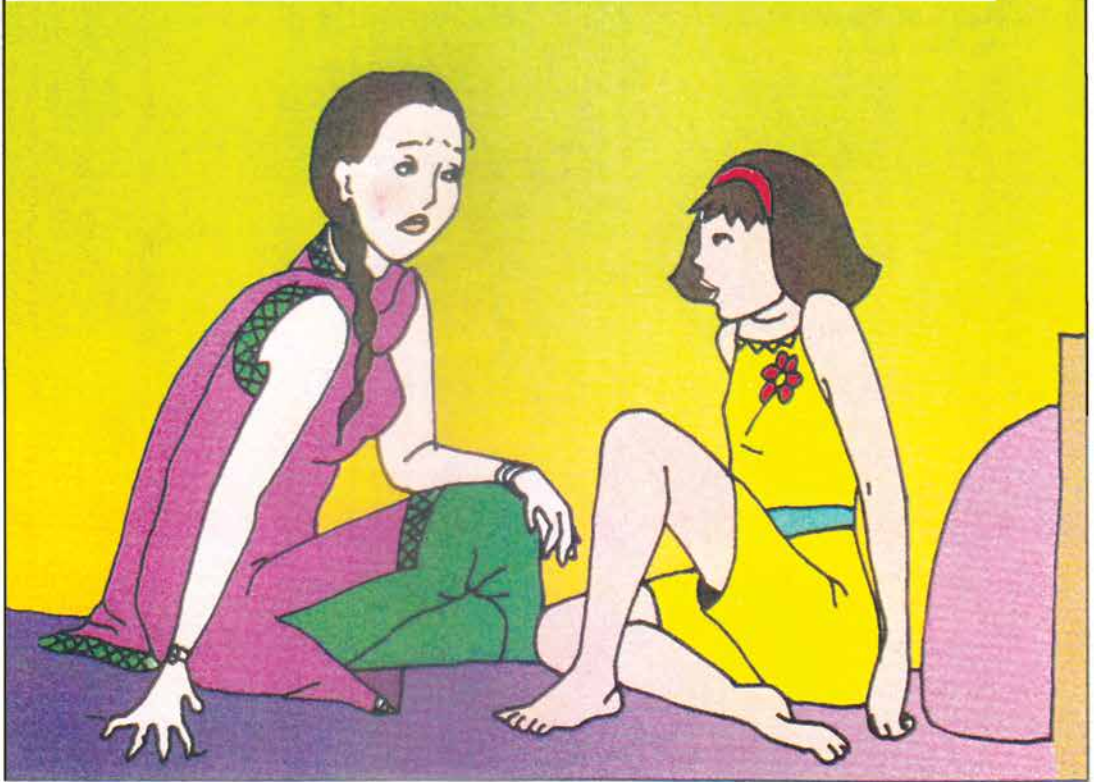
And that sparked off an explosion...

WHAT, WHAT DID YOU SAY?
DROP OUT? NO, YOU CAN'T DROP OUT
YOU WANT TO DEFAME ME,
RUIN ME? WELL I WON'T
LET YOU!!!





At home Saira tells Seema didi that she feels something is bothering Neha and Pia



Pia said she'd talk later. But Neha agreed to come over and spend the night as her parents were going for a late night party

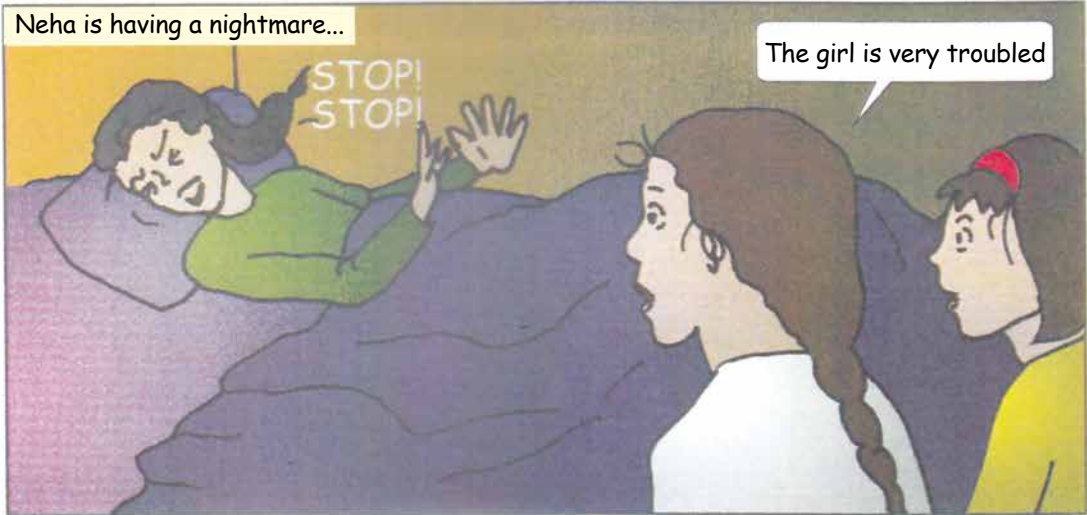
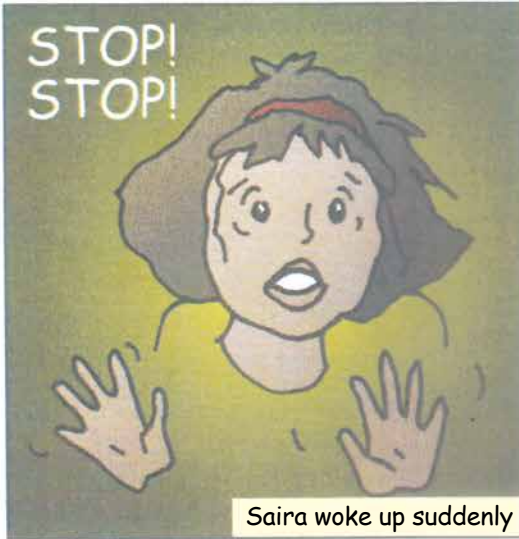


That night:

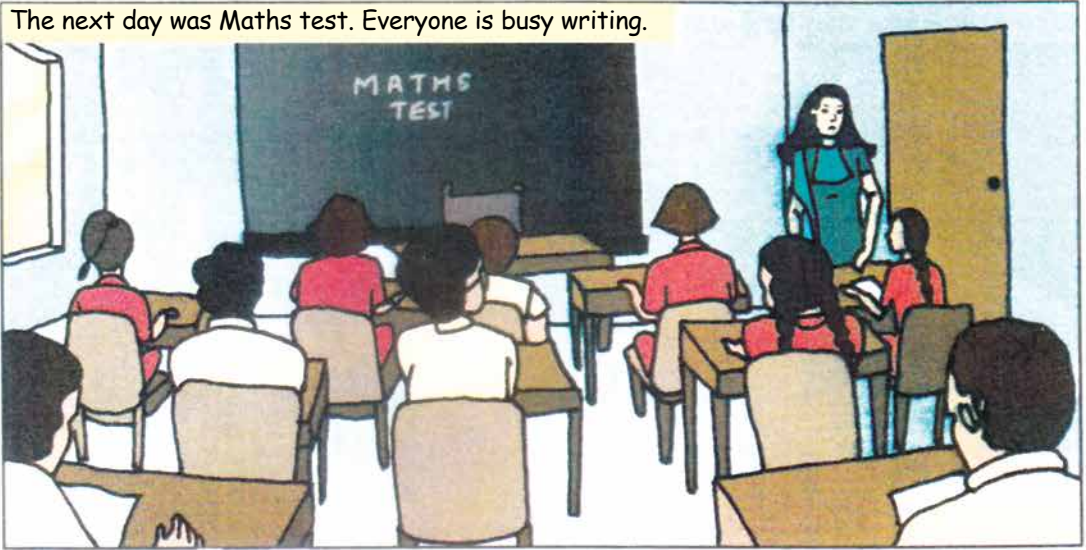


Saira was expecting a heart to heart chat but was disappointed as Neha went off to sleep immediately





The next day was Maths test. Everyone is busy writing.



But Pia and Neha look distressed



Neha, Pia what's the matter?



I can't remember any of this

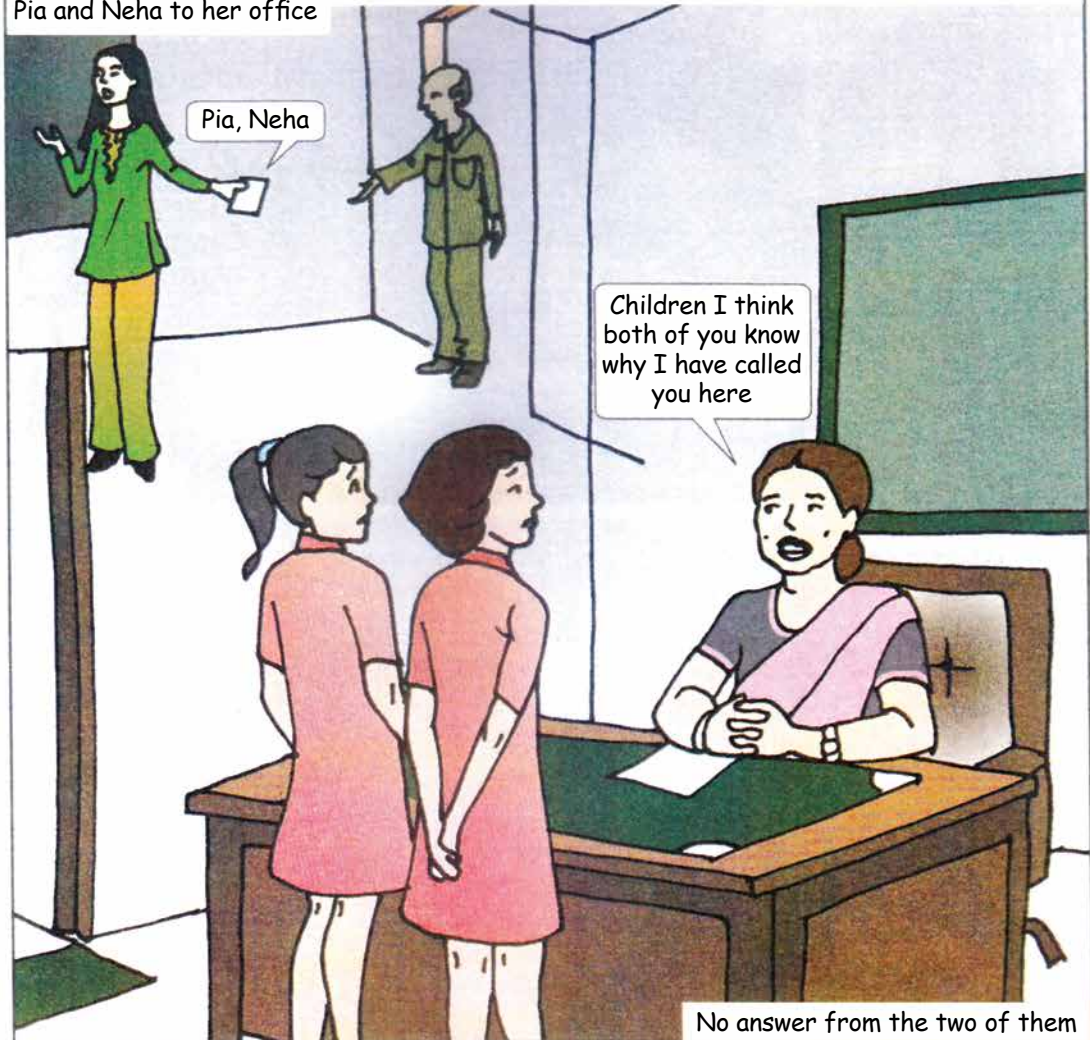
I just can't seem to concentrate



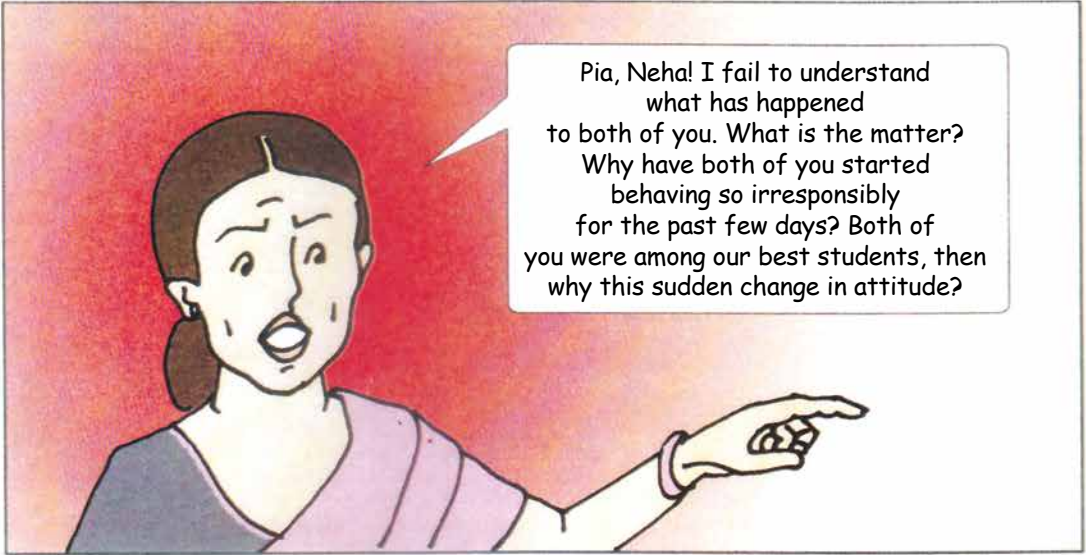
After half an hour they hand in blank sheets



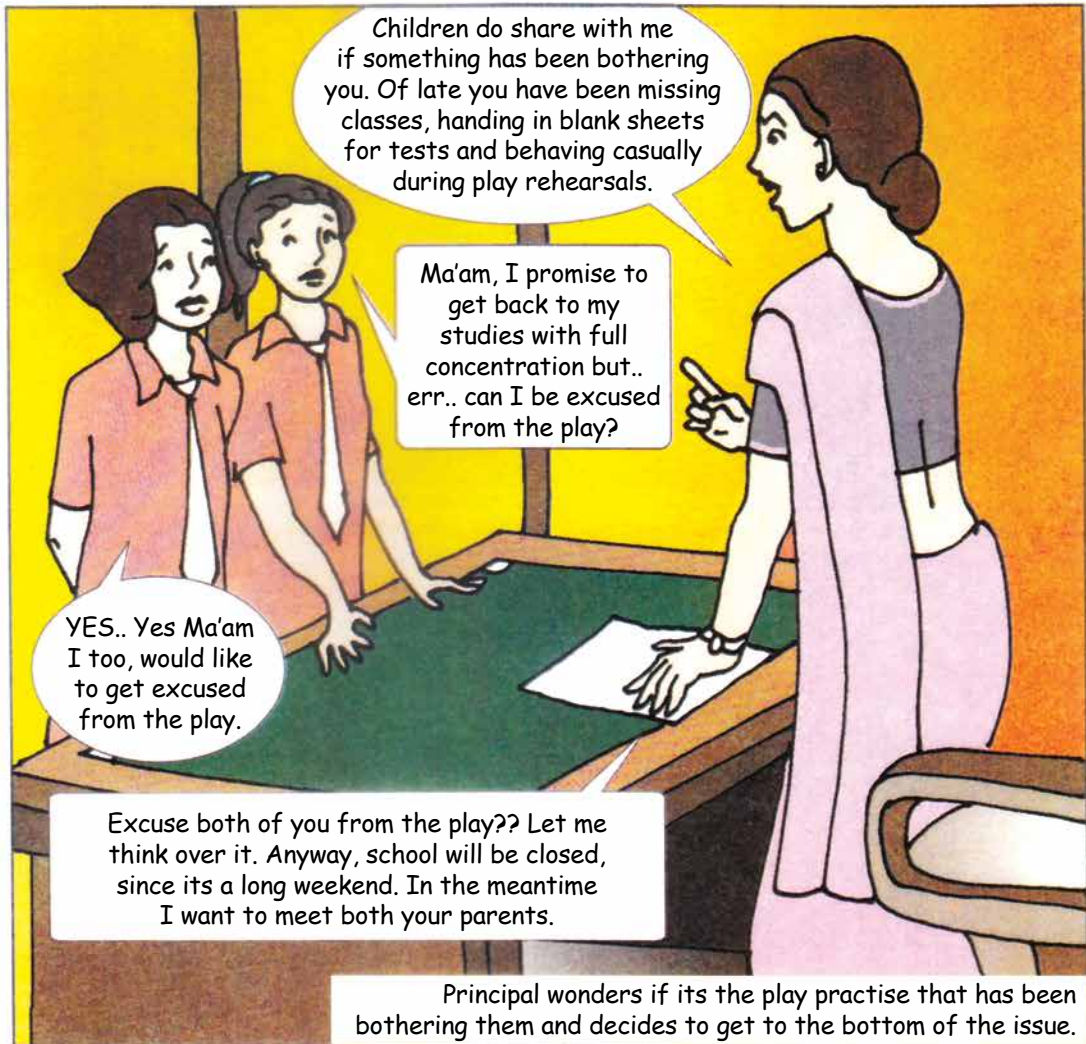
Next day just before that bell rings in class, a note comes from the principal summoning Pia and Neha to her office



No answer from the two of them



Pia, Neha! I fail to understand what has happened to both of you. What is the matter? Why have both of you started behaving so irresponsibly for the past few days? Both of you were among our best students, then why this sudden change in attitude?



Children do share with me if something has been bothering you. Of late you have been missing classes, handing in blank sheets for tests and behaving casually during play rehearsals.

Ma'am, I promise to get back to my studies with full concentration but.. err.. can I be excused from the play?

YES.. Yes Ma'am I too, would like to get excused from the play.

Excuse both of you from the play?? Let me think over it. Anyway, school will be closed, since its a long weekend. In the meantime I want to meet both your parents.

Principal wonders if its the play practise that has been bothering them and decides to get to the bottom of the issue.

School Closes for a Long Weekend

Outside the principal's office, Neha and Pia's friends gathered to find out why they were summoned



As the bell rings there is scramble for bags. As the kids rush out



Neha, Pia sure you don't want to come home with me?

No thanks Saira. We might as well go straight home.

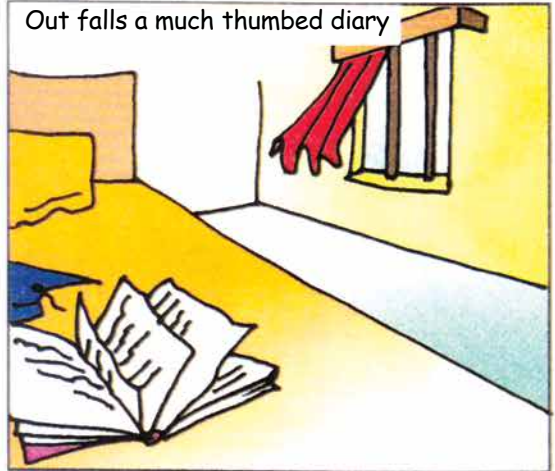
At home Saira tosses her bag on the bed



As the books tumble out she realizes that she has mistakenly taken Neha's bag

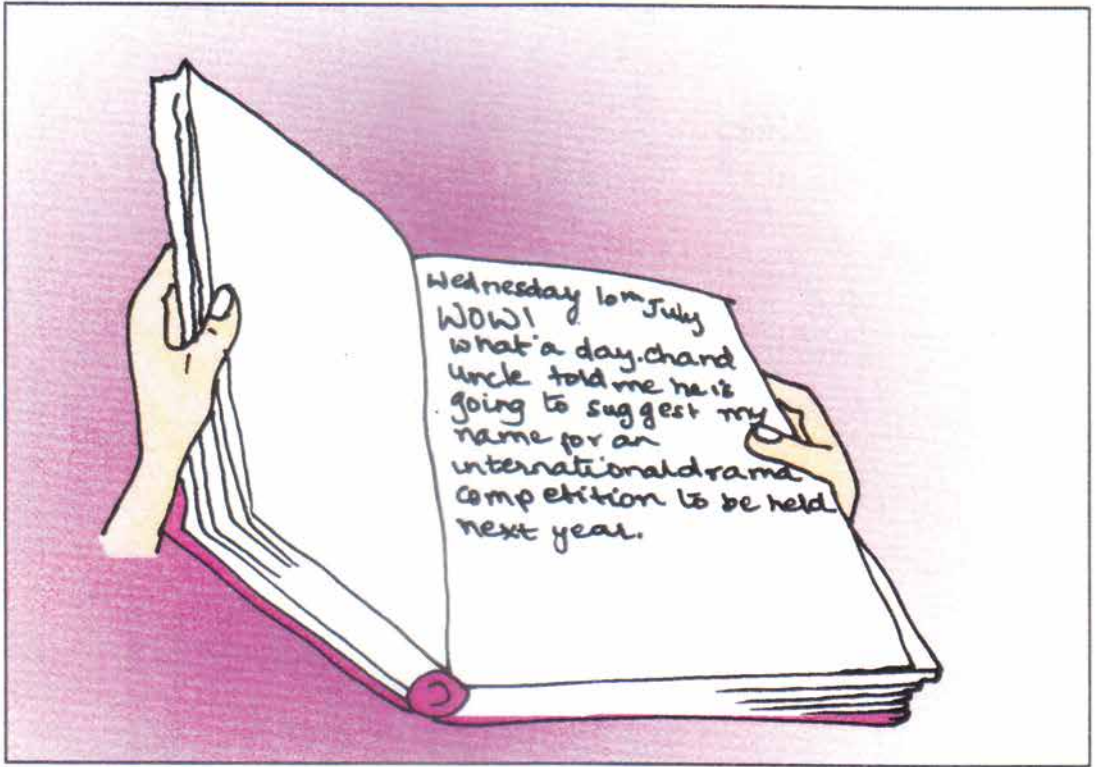


Out falls a much thumbed diary



Saira picks it up and begins to read...





Wednesday 10th July
WOW!
What a day. Chand
Uncle told me he is
going to suggest my
name for an
international drama
competition to be held
next year.



Monday 15th July
Dear Diary I don't know why but
I'm not enjoying play practice
very much. There's something
about the way Chand Uncle
looks at me. It just makes me
uncomfortable.

Thursday 18th July
This play is turning out to be a nightmare. I hate Chand Uncle's constant touching. He always puts his arm around me. And today I'm sure he deliberately touched my breasts. And I also noticed the way Pia cooked up that excuse for not going in his car. I'm sure he is doing the same to her too. But I can't possibly bring it up. I feel GUILTY... ASHAMED... HORRIBLE...



Tuesday 24th July
"Today Mummy insisted that I come with Chand Uncle because she's worried about my coming home alone. In the car he forcibly kissed me. 'This is our SPECIAL SECRET' he said. Then he turned nasty.



If you tell anyone you'll regret it. I'm a dangerous man

"Dear Diary I can't carry on... as much as I love my school, I have to drop out of the play. Hate to disappoint everyone."

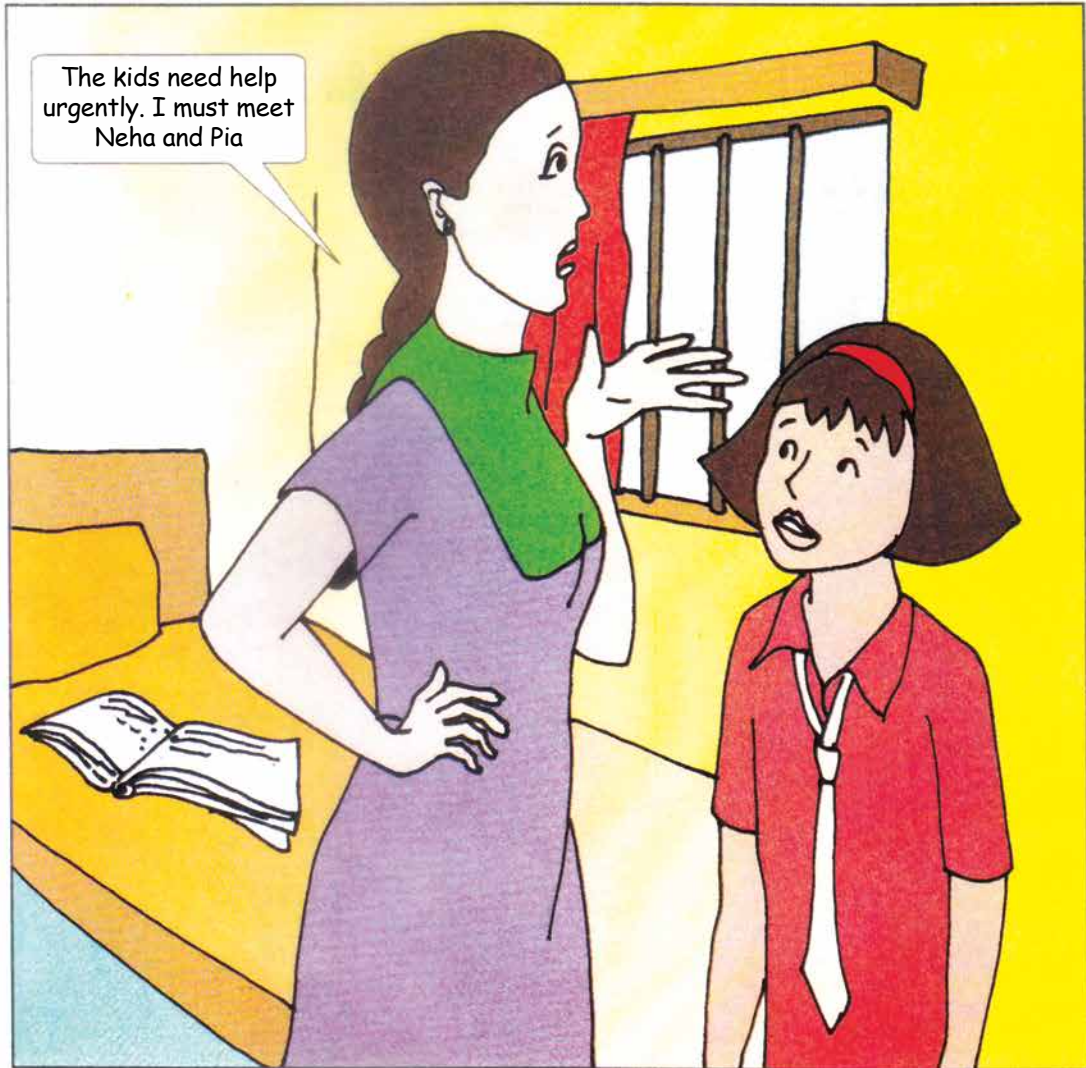
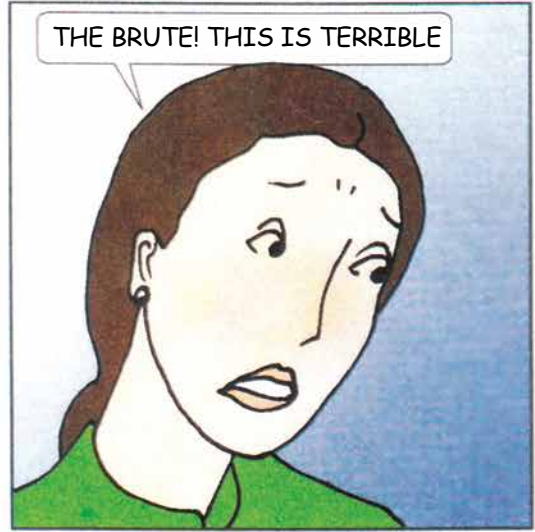


Saira goes through a series of emotions



Should I mention it to Seema didi? A Diary is private. I shouldn't have read it. But it is the only way to save Neha

I must show it to Seema didi. Neha needs a grown up's help.



At Seema didi's place:



You must trust your instincts. Children are almost never mistaken about something like this



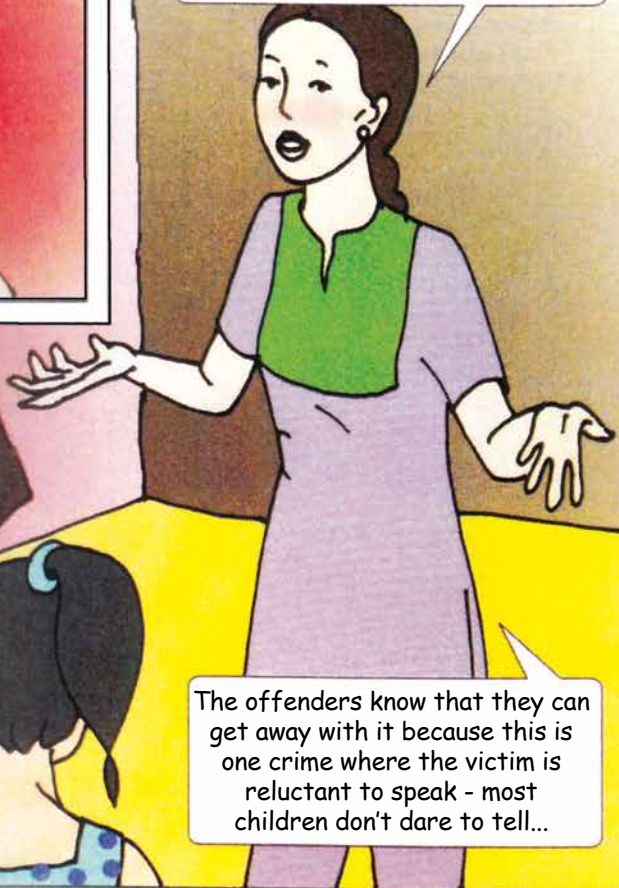
I just can't believe that this is happening to us



Can such things really happen in our society?



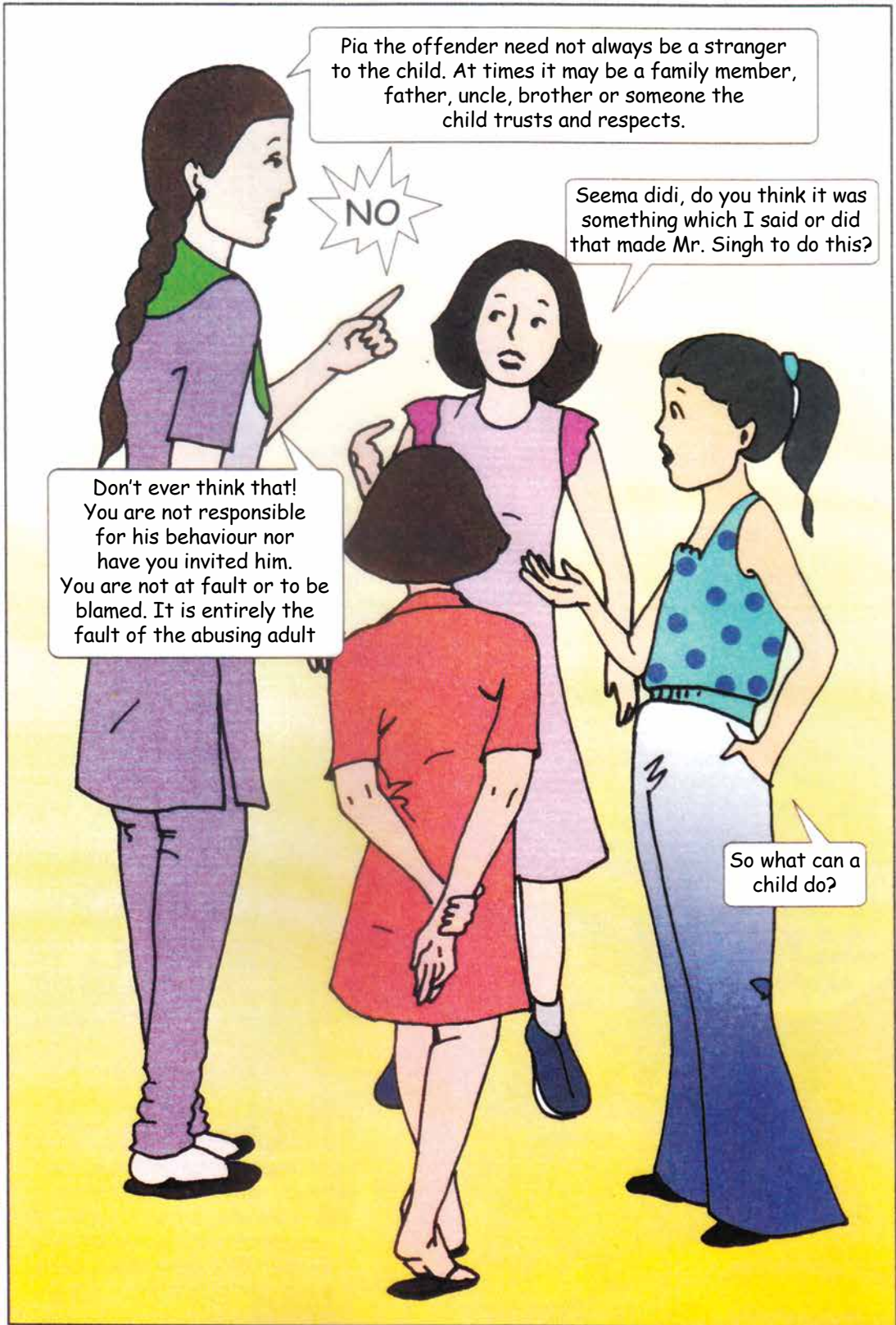
Child abuse is common, about 50% of girls experience it at some time or the other. In fact, boys too may be sexually abused. And quite often the offender is someone known.



What's really hard to understand is why did Mr Singh do this to Neha? She is his NEIGHBOUR!



The offenders know that they can get away with it because this is one crime where the victim is reluctant to speak - most children don't dare to tell...



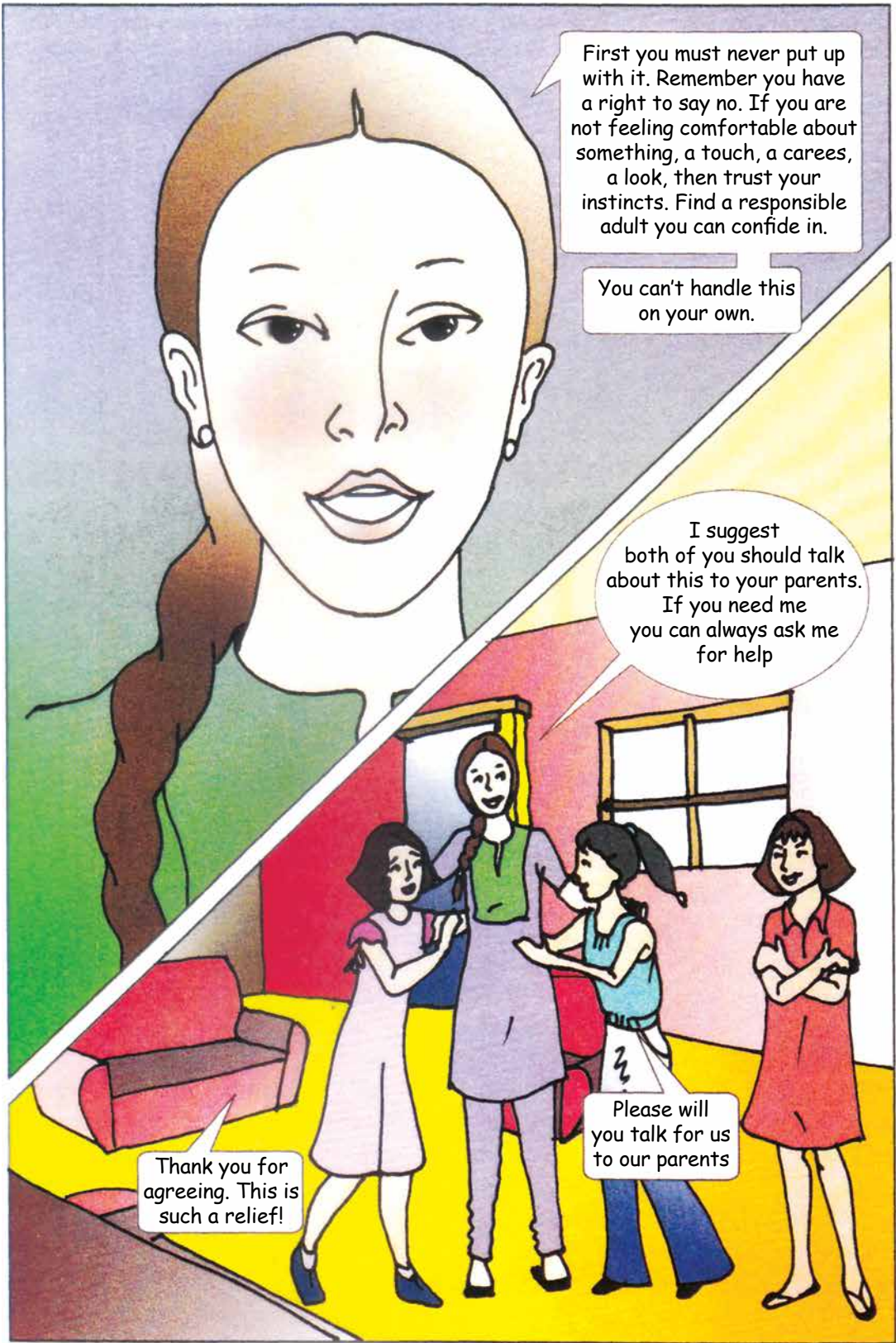
Pia the offender need not always be a stranger to the child. At times it may be a family member, father, uncle, brother or someone the child trusts and respects.

NO

Seema didi, do you think it was something which I said or did that made Mr. Singh to do this?

Don't ever think that! You are not responsible for his behaviour nor have you invited him. You are not at fault or to be blamed. It is entirely the fault of the abusing adult

So what can a child do?



First you must never put up with it. Remember you have a right to say no. If you are not feeling comfortable about something, a touch, a caress, a look, then trust your instincts. Find a responsible adult you can confide in.

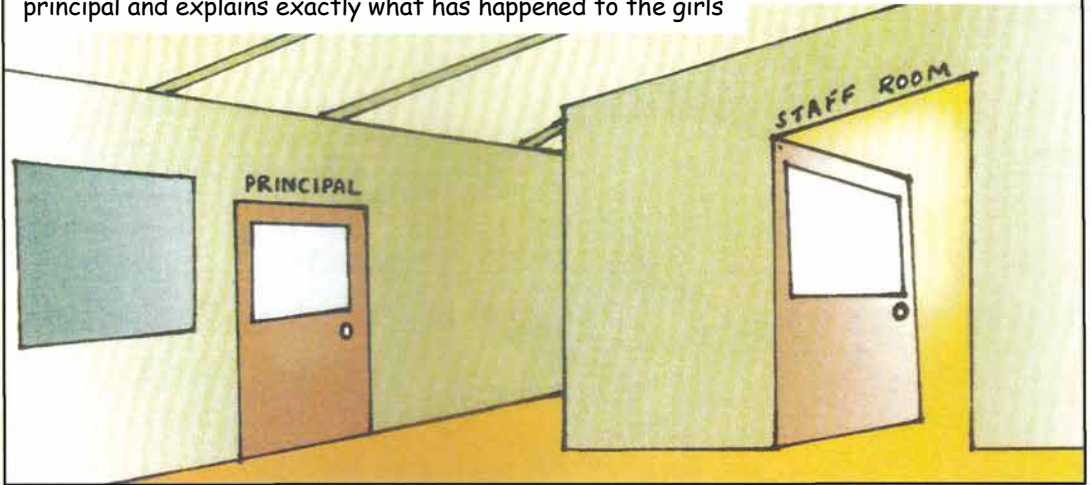
You can't handle this on your own.

I suggest both of you should talk about this to your parents. If you need me you can always ask me for help

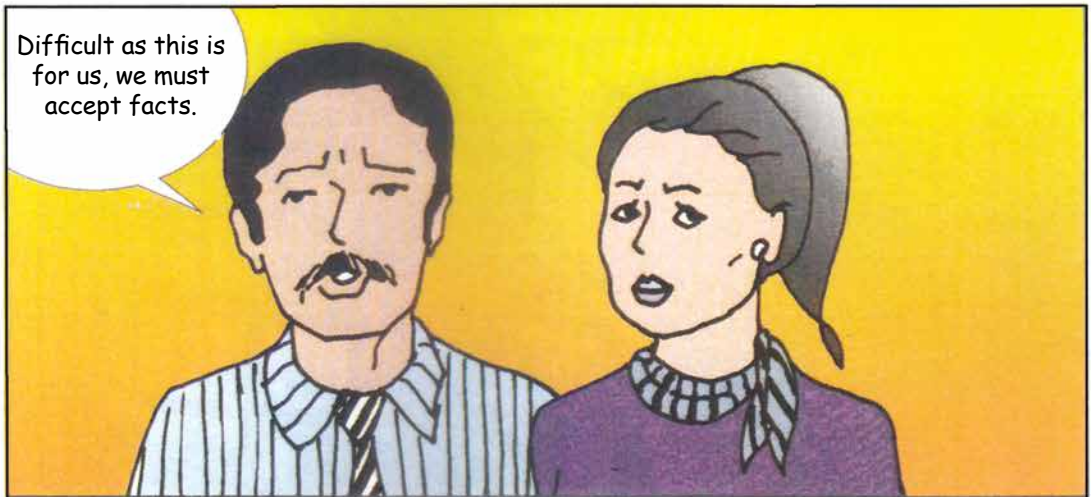
Thank you for agreeing. This is such a relief!

Please will you talk for us to our parents

In the Principal's office Seema along with Neha and Pia talks to the parents and the principal and explains exactly what has happened to the girls

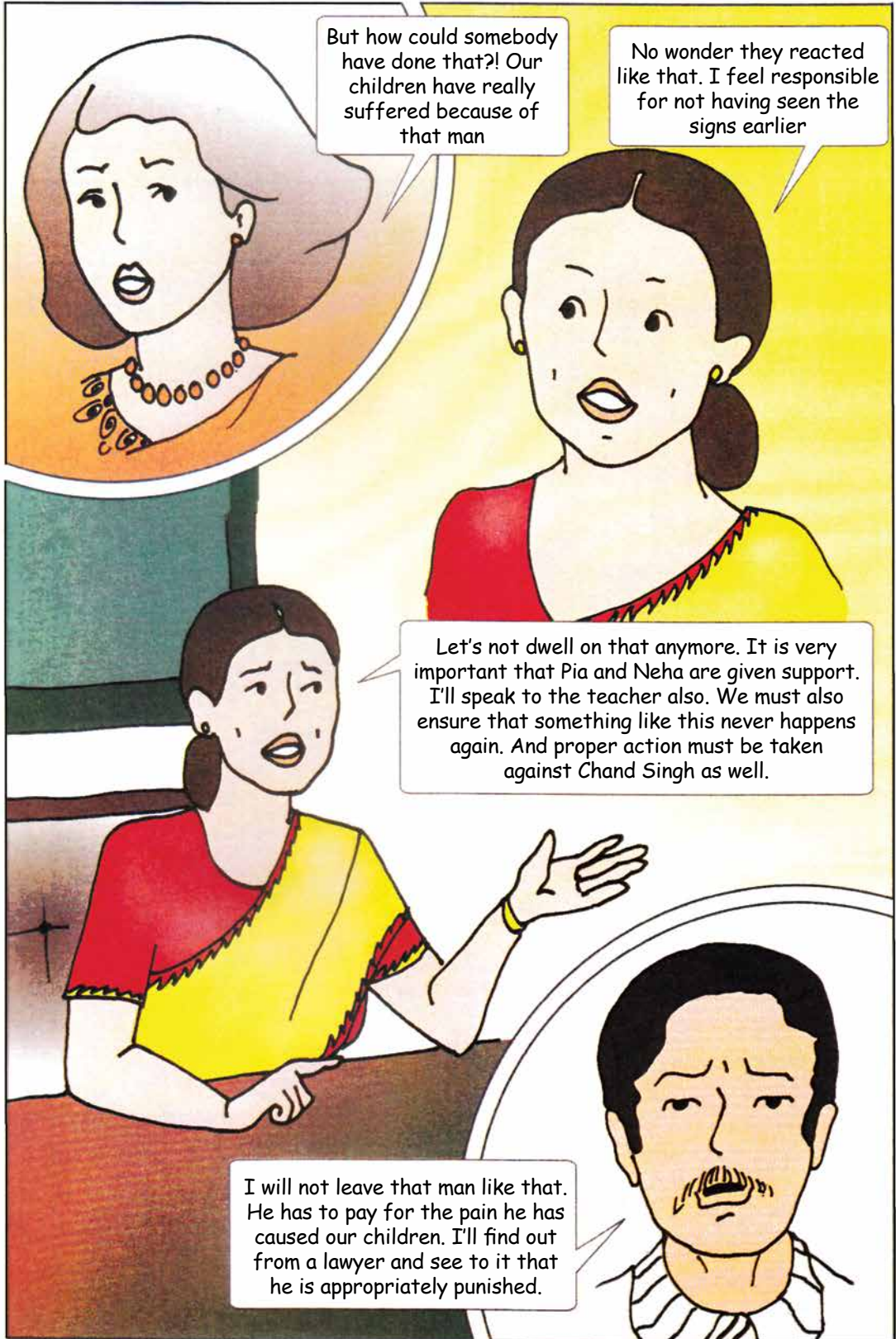


Difficult as this is for us, we must accept facts.



Yes we must handle this correctly. We mustn't do anything to further upset the girls





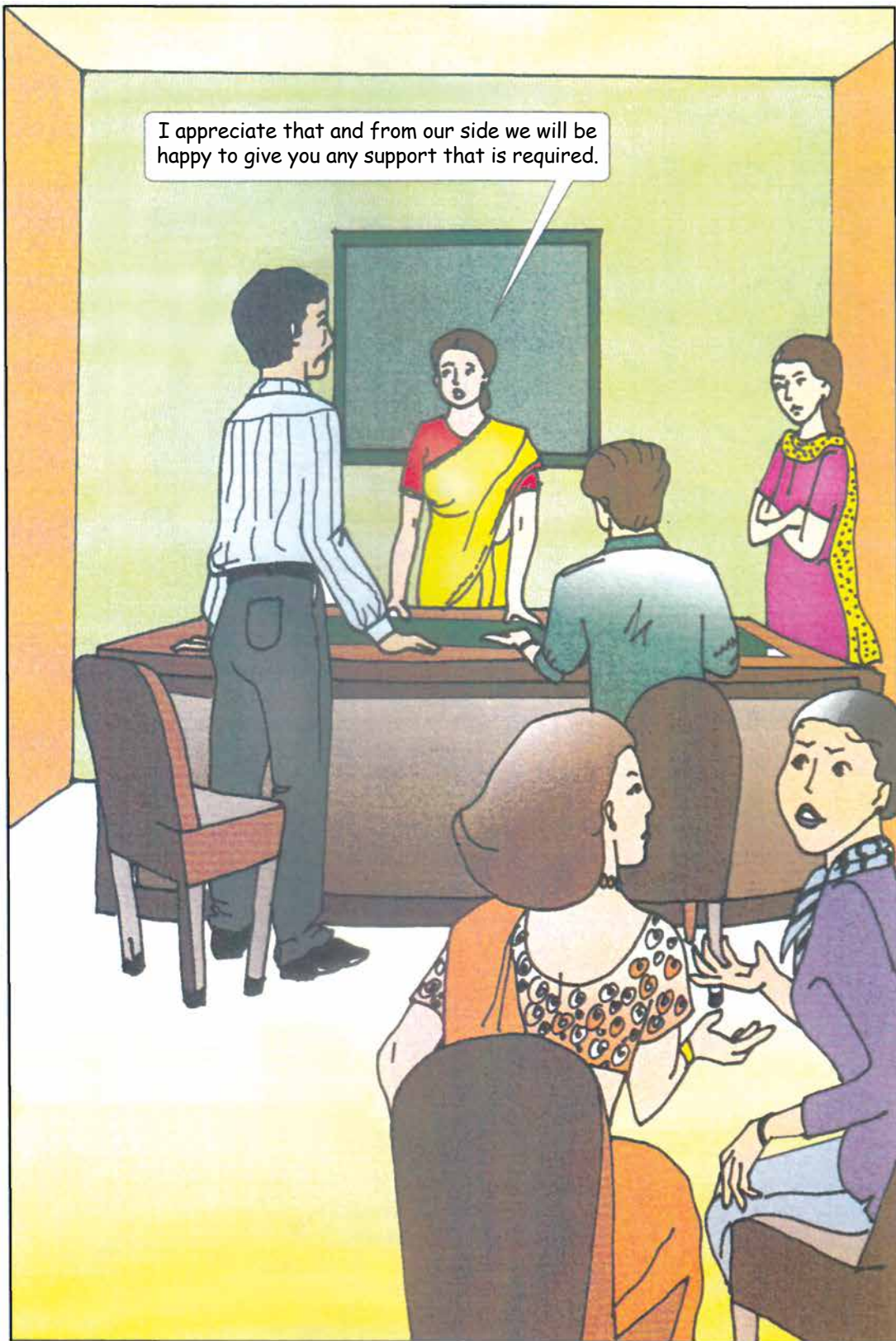
But how could somebody have done that?! Our children have really suffered because of that man

No wonder they reacted like that. I feel responsible for not having seen the signs earlier

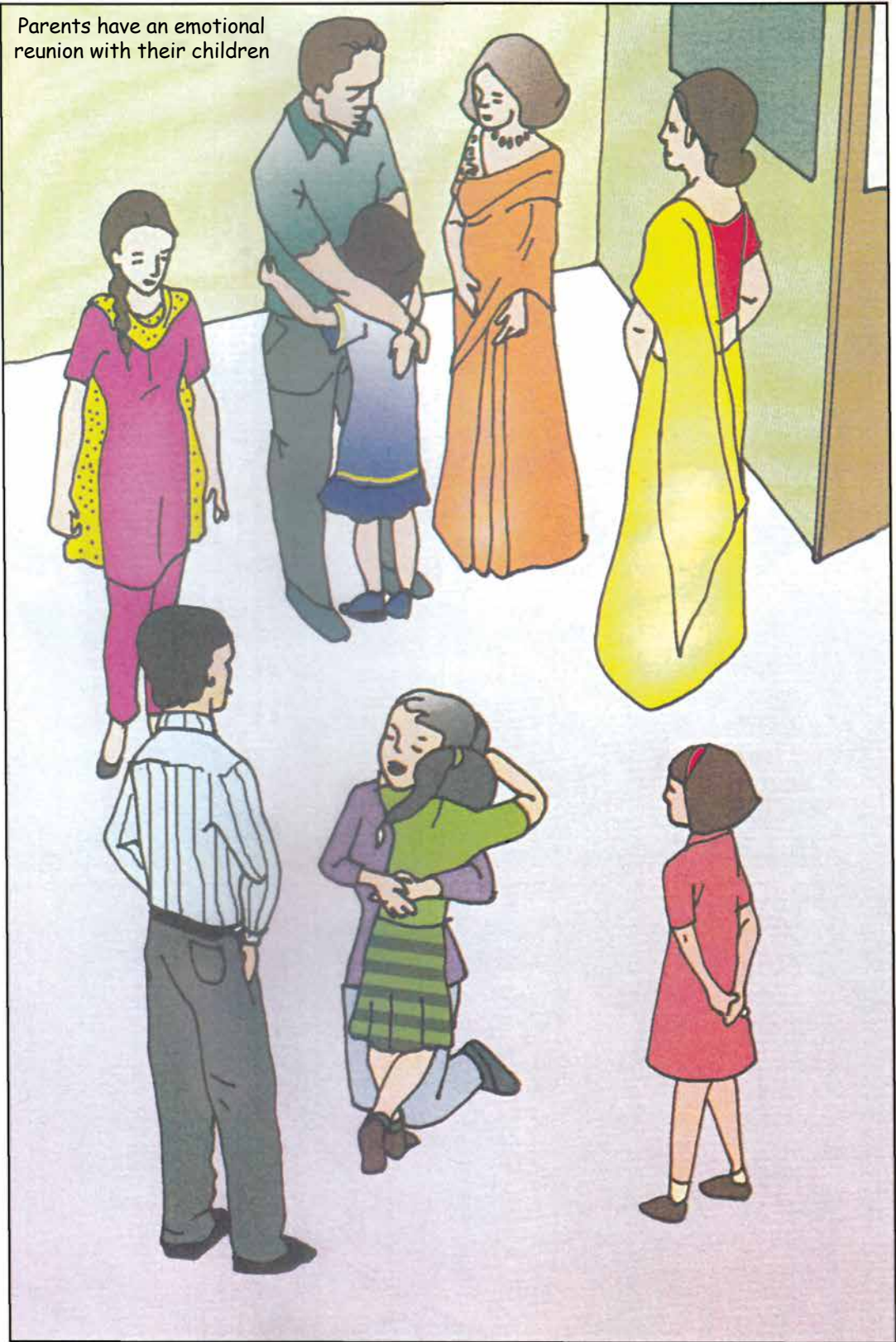
Let's not dwell on that anymore. It is very important that Pia and Neha are given support. I'll speak to the teacher also. We must also ensure that something like this never happens again. And proper action must be taken against Chand Singh as well.

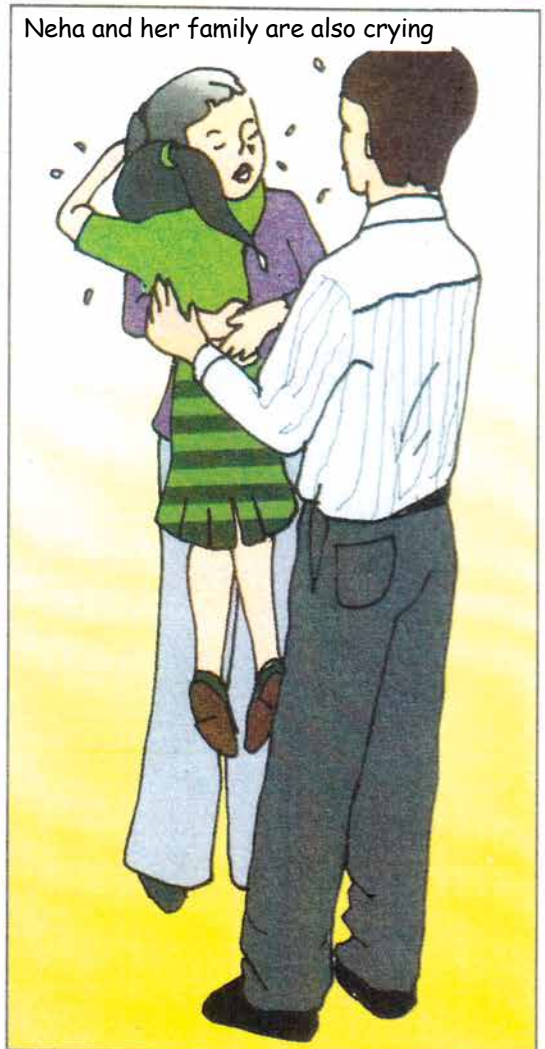
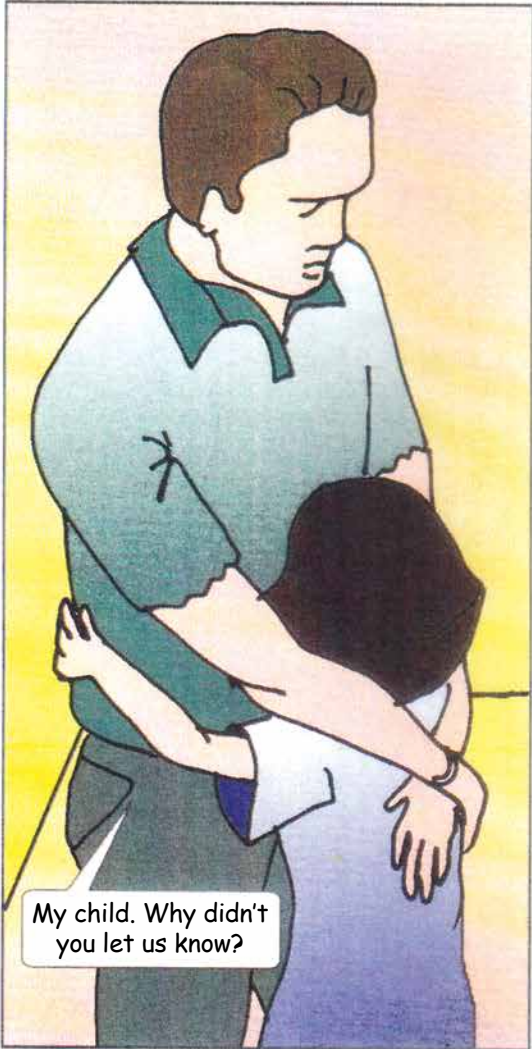
I will not leave that man like that. He has to pay for the pain he has caused our children. I'll find out from a lawyer and see to it that he is appropriately punished.

I appreciate that and from our side we will be happy to give you any support that is required.



Parents have an emotional reunion with their children



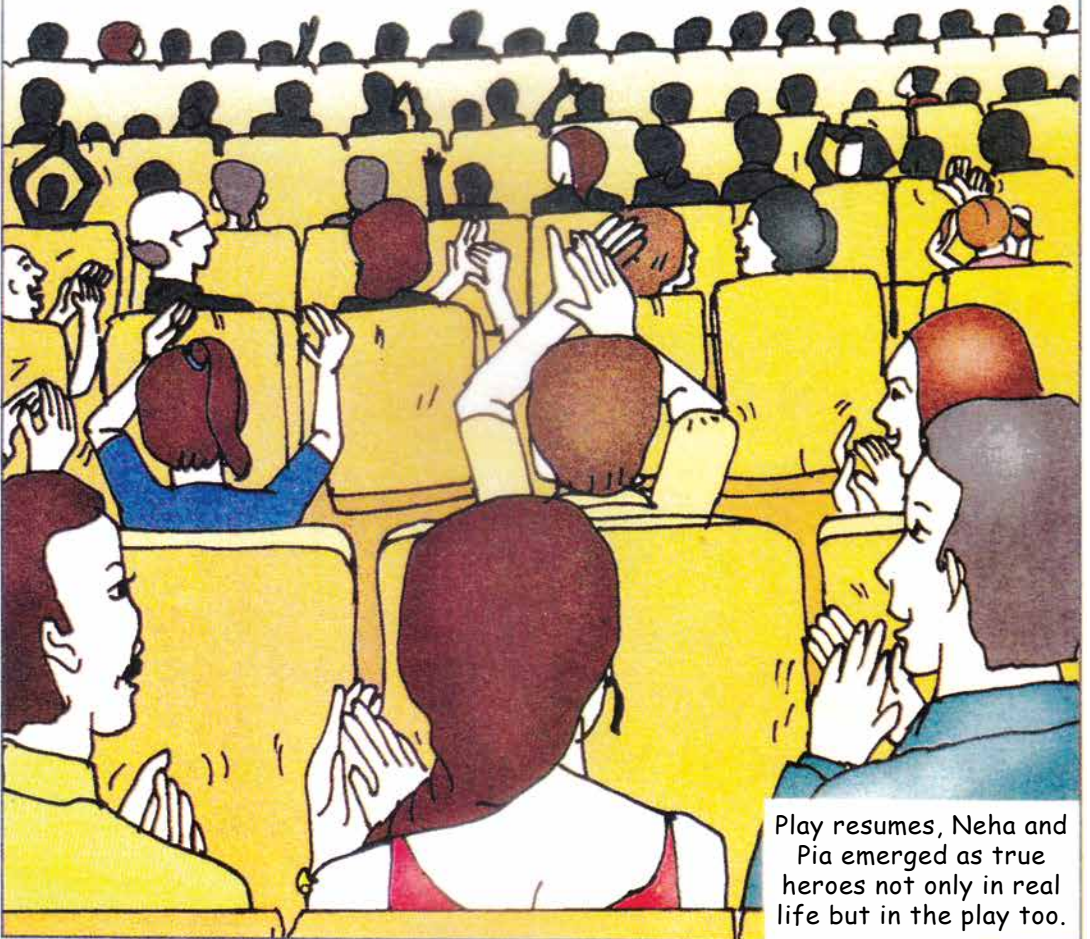
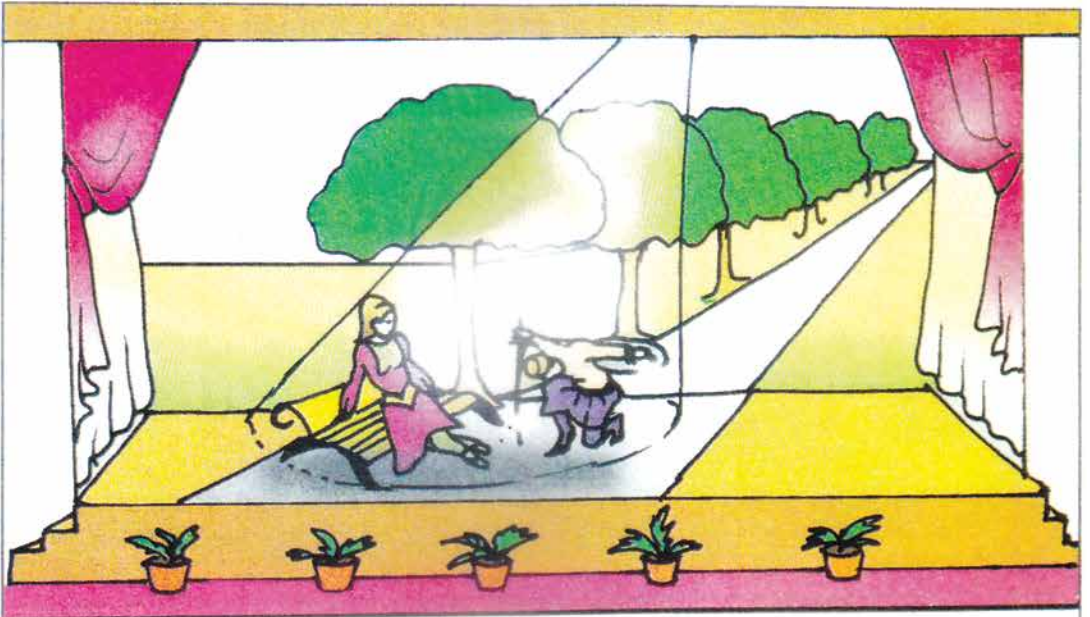


My children! I'm thankful that we found out the real cause of your problem. And I'm very sorry that I did not realise this earlier. I promise you that the school will take strict action against that man



Their efforts were successful and six months later Chand Singh is prosecuted on the evidence of this and earlier cases.





Play resumes, Neha and Pia emerged as true heroes not only in real life but in the play too.

For Kids



- ❑ Remember- you have a right to say 'No', 'Don't' or Stop it'.
- ❑ You must not tolerate any unwanted look or touch or violation.
- ❑ Run away from the scene if you can. If you know self-defence methods, use them to escape.
- ❑ SCREAM! So that others hear and the adult gets frightened.
- ❑ If you are confused about somebody's behaviour and touch, talk about it to some adult you trust. Clear the doubt in your mind.
- ❑ You must tell an older person whom you trust about what happened. The person could be your sister, brother, parent, teacher or friend.
- ❑ You are not responsible for the other persons behavior, neither have you invited them.
- ❑ It is never your fault. You are not to be blamed. It is entirely the fault of the abusing adult.
- ❑ You are precious. And you have the right to protect yourself.



For Parents

❑ Try to establish a comfortable and free atmosphere at home. Encourage your child to talk to you on all issues. Tell her/him that it is wrong for an older person to ask her/him to keep a secret about sexual touching or exposure, even if that person is neighbour, teacher, domestic worker, family, friend of the family, as well as friends of older siblings.

- ❑ Make the child comfortable with her/his body and do not attach any feelings of shame to it.
- ❑ Give your child emergency numbers where they can call if they see danger.
- ❑ Know where your child is at all times. Be familiar with your child's friends and their daily activities.
- ❑ Beware of adults who pay an unusual amount of attention to your child giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts.
- ❑ Teach your child how to say 'No' to an older person, if he touches her/him in a way that makes her/him feel uncomfortable, or if an adult wants to have his private parts touched.
- ❑ Tell the child that no adult should.
 - ◆ Put their hands up your skirt or down your pants.
 - ◆ Touch your private parts, even through your clothes.
 - ◆ Ask you to touch the older person's private parts or ask you to remove their clothes.
 - ◆ Ask you to remove your clothes.
 - ◆ Take off your clothes.
 - ◆ Take picture of you with your clothes off.
 - ◆ Take off their clothes in front of you.
- ❑ Believe what your child tells you and be alert to small changes in her/his behaviour.
- ❑ Answer the child's questions in a way that she or he can understand.
- ❑ Don't disbelieve your child or deny the problem.
- ❑ Respond to her/his feelings.
- ❑ Don't blame, punish or shame your child.
- ❑ Listen to the child and support them, reassure them, no matter who is the abuser.
- ❑ Take the child out of the abusive situation immediately.
- ❑ Validate the child by telling her or him that s/he was right to approach you.
- ❑ Take a break if you are overwhelmed by emotions but explain to your child that you are not angry with her or him but that you are upset with the abuser for hurting the child.
- ❑ Seek the help of professionals to help your child address the trauma.



About Butterflies

Butterflies is a registered voluntary organisation working with the most vulnerable groups of children, especially street and street connected children since 1989. With a rights based, non-institutional approach the organisation endeavours to educate and impart life skills to vulnerable children so that they become self-reliant and exit the generational cycle of illiteracy and poverty. Over the years Butterflies has initiated a number of innovative interventions in the field and partnered with various government and non-government agencies to garner support for children. Butterflies also has a research, advocacy and training wing that works to support mobilization of civil society and influences policies at all levels. It is an active participant in national and international networks for advocating and promoting policies, programmes and actions to protect rights of children.

Butterflies is also working with children in Uttarakhand since 2008 and was also working in the Tsunami affected areas of Andaman and Nicobar Islands till 2018. Till 2015, Butterflies was also running a programme for children in conflict with law in partnership with the government of Delhi.

Through the Children's Cooperative Programmes (CDK & CHSC), we are present in eight countries (Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Madagascar and Ghana) and eight states & Union Territories of India (Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra).



Protecting and empowering children since 1989

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