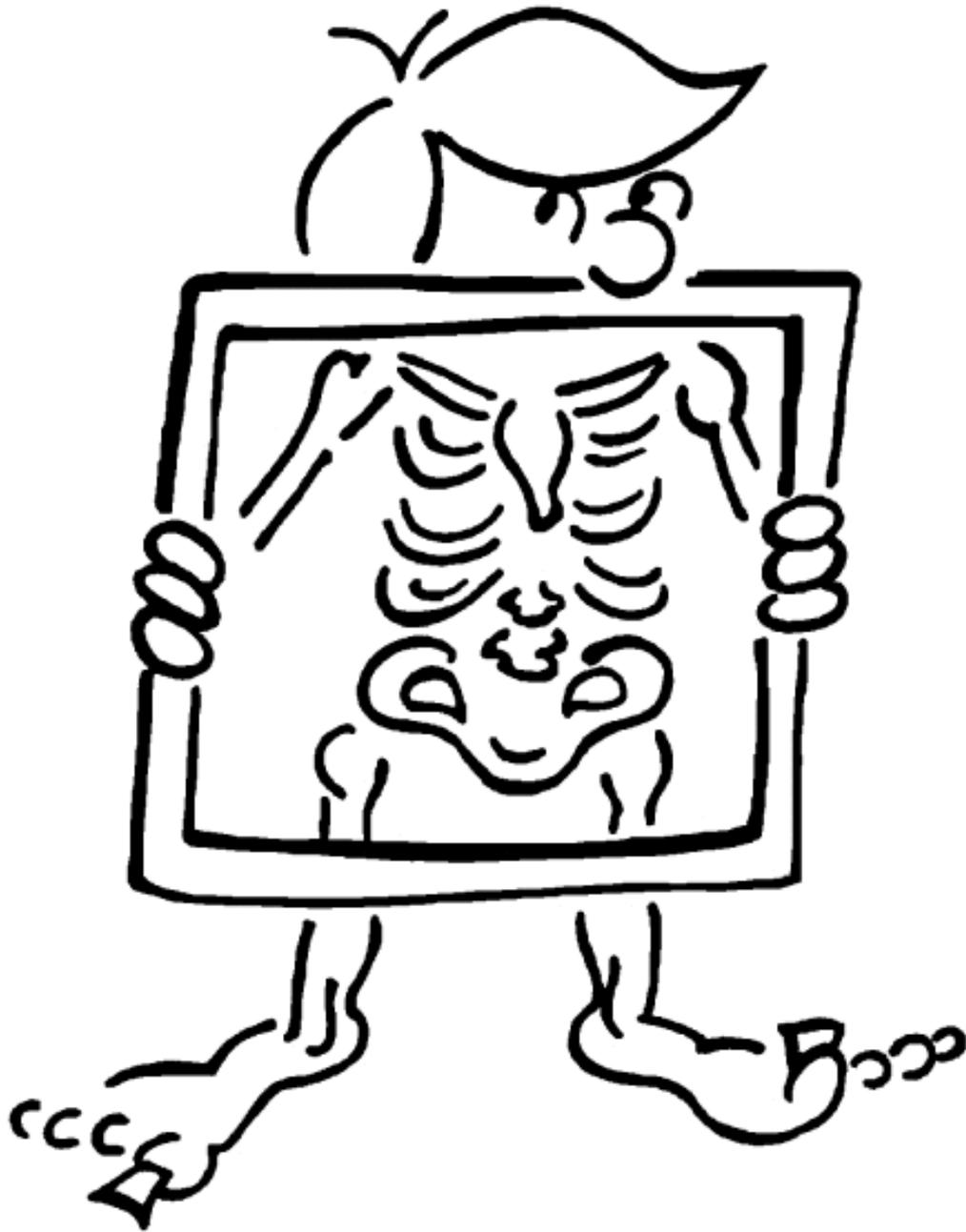




Did you know that in the very same town you live  
in there lives a little boy named Stevie.

In fact he's a lot like you...

Just like you, it seems like Stevie has to go see  
the doctor a whole lot more than the rest of his friends.



At the hospital the doctors take X-Rays of his chest  
and do all sorts of weird tests to him.

They say he has some strange sounding disease  
called Cystic Fibrosis.

Now that's just too much trouble for Stevie to say  
so he calls it C.F. for short.



All he knows is that sometimes he coughs a lot and  
he can't make it stop.

Also he gets some bad stomach aches.

The doctors gave him some little pills and told him  
he had to take them every time he ate.

They also showed his Mom and Dad how to do  
'therapy' on him by pounding on  
his chest and back and making him cough.



Now it was almost too much to ask to expect Stevie to remember his pills every time.

He was so busy playing that he had no time to be bothered by some funny little pills.

And as for the therapy, well Stevie just plain didn't like getting pounded on.



But Stevie knew it was something more serious than just a plain old cold because it wouldn't go away.

Sometimes, it would make Stevie very sad. In fact, sometimes he would cry himself to sleep at night.

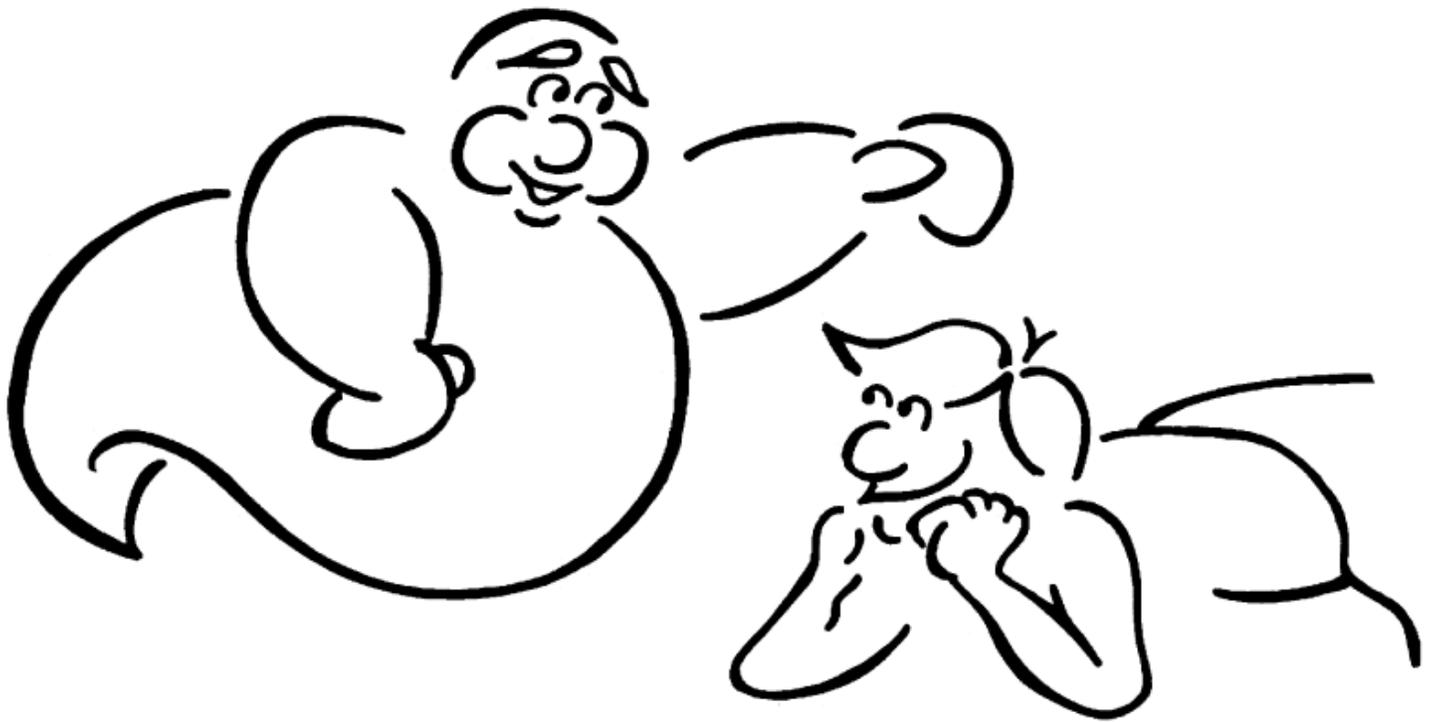
It was on just such a night that Stevie dreamed the dream that would change his life...



Stevie awoke to find himself staring at what looked like a great big blob of bright red jelly.

Stranger still, this funny looking jelly-blob had a big smile on his face and was staring right back at Stevie.

"Who are you?" asked Stevie as the big red blob oozed closer.

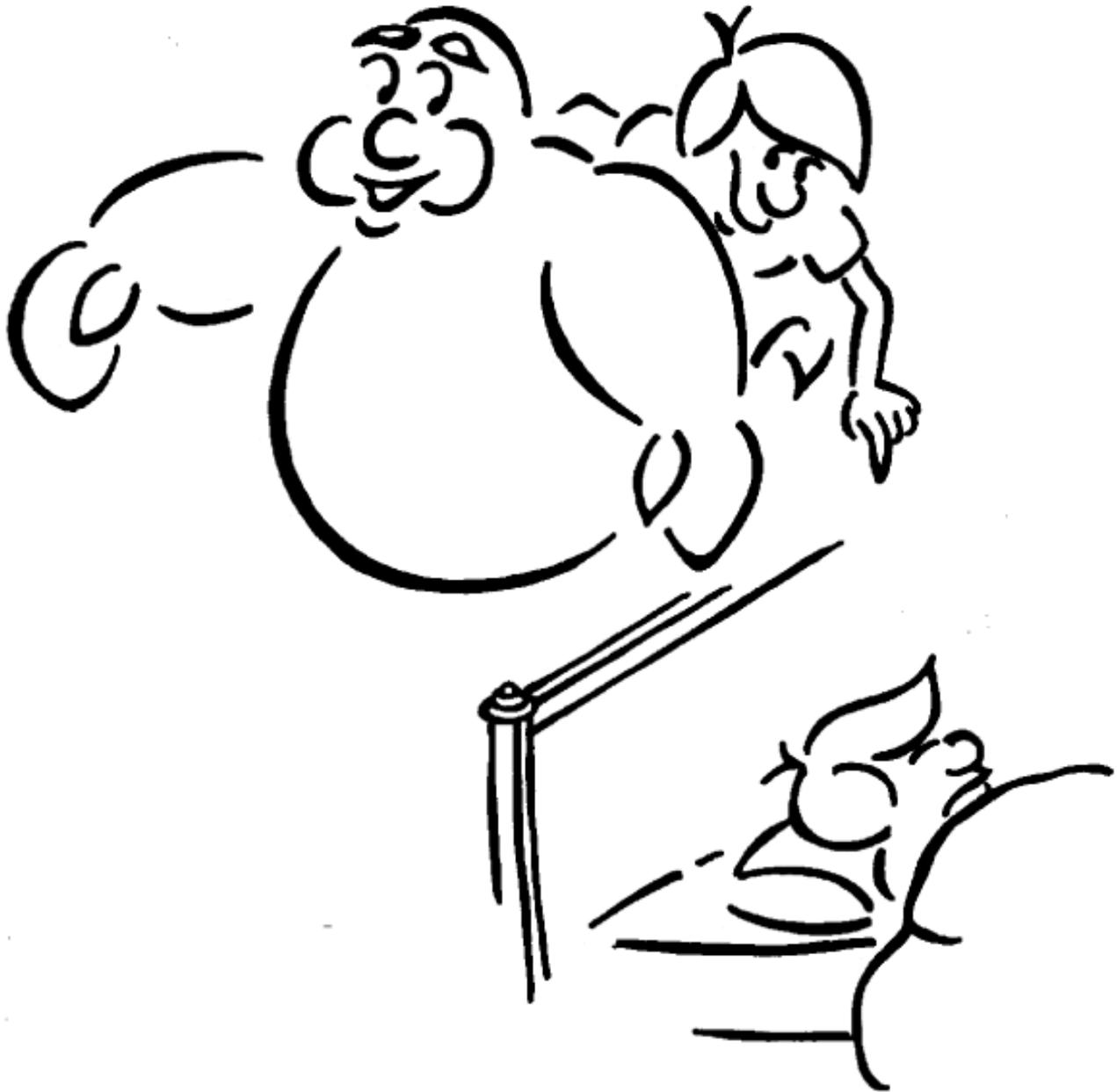


"Well, well, well," said the blob, "actually my full name is Corpus Erythrocyte, but you can call me 'Corpi'.

I'm what you call a red blood corpuscle and I've come to take you for a little ride."

"A ride?" asked Stevie. "Where to?"

"Come on," Corpi beckoned, "hop on and I'll show you."



And with that, Corpi turned his back into a big cushiony chair, scooped up Stevie and took off into the sky like a big blubbery bird.

"I'm not too graceful," apologized Corpi, "but I do get the job done. Look down there!"

Stevie looked down to see himself fast asleep.

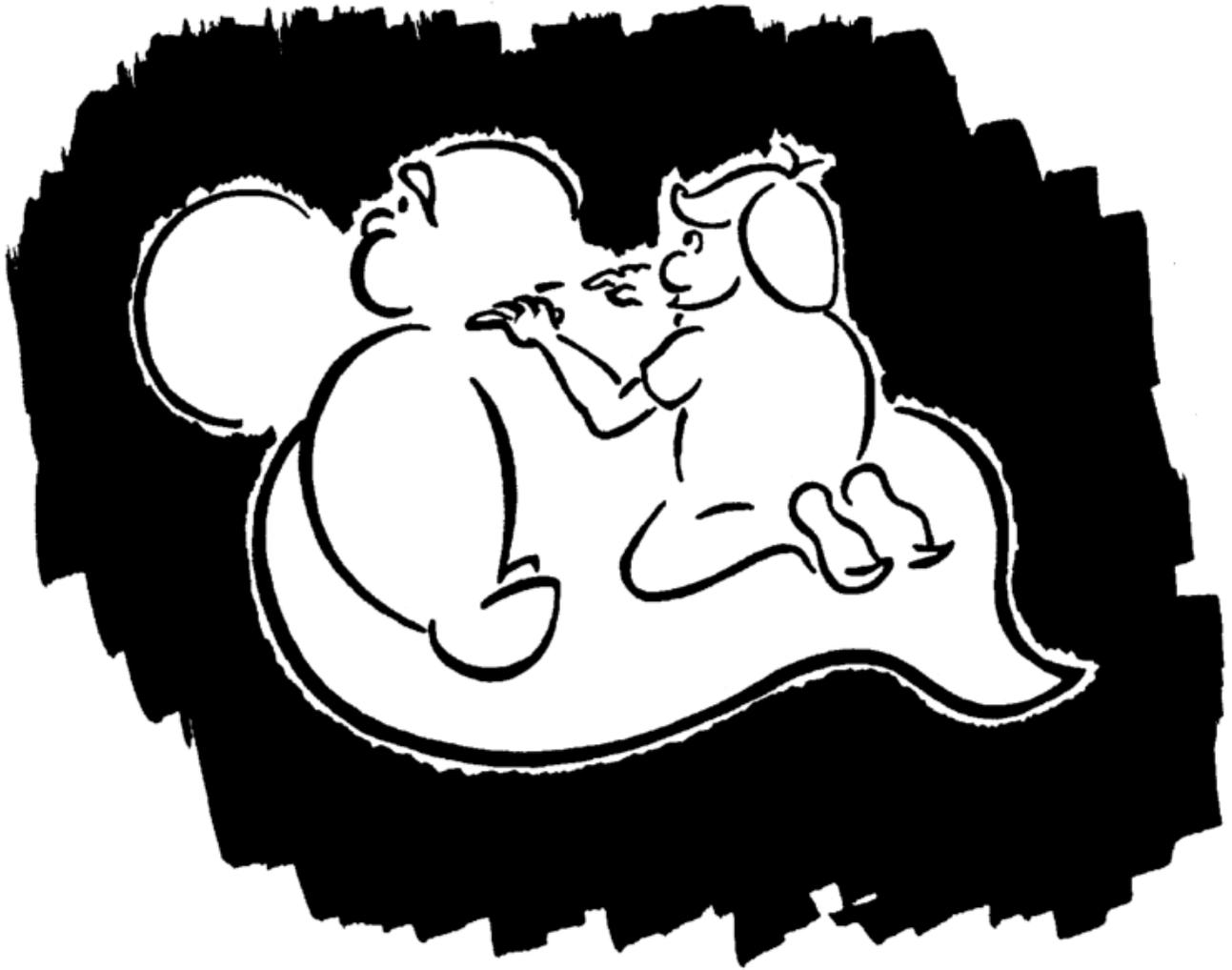


Hey! That's me!" said Stevie. "How can I be up here and down there at the same time?"

"Easy," answered Corpi, "don't you remember? This is a dream, and anything can happen in a dream."

Then, without a word, Corpi rolled over into a steep dive and aimed straight for the sleeping Stevie's mouth.

Boy, was Stevie glad he slept with his mouth open.



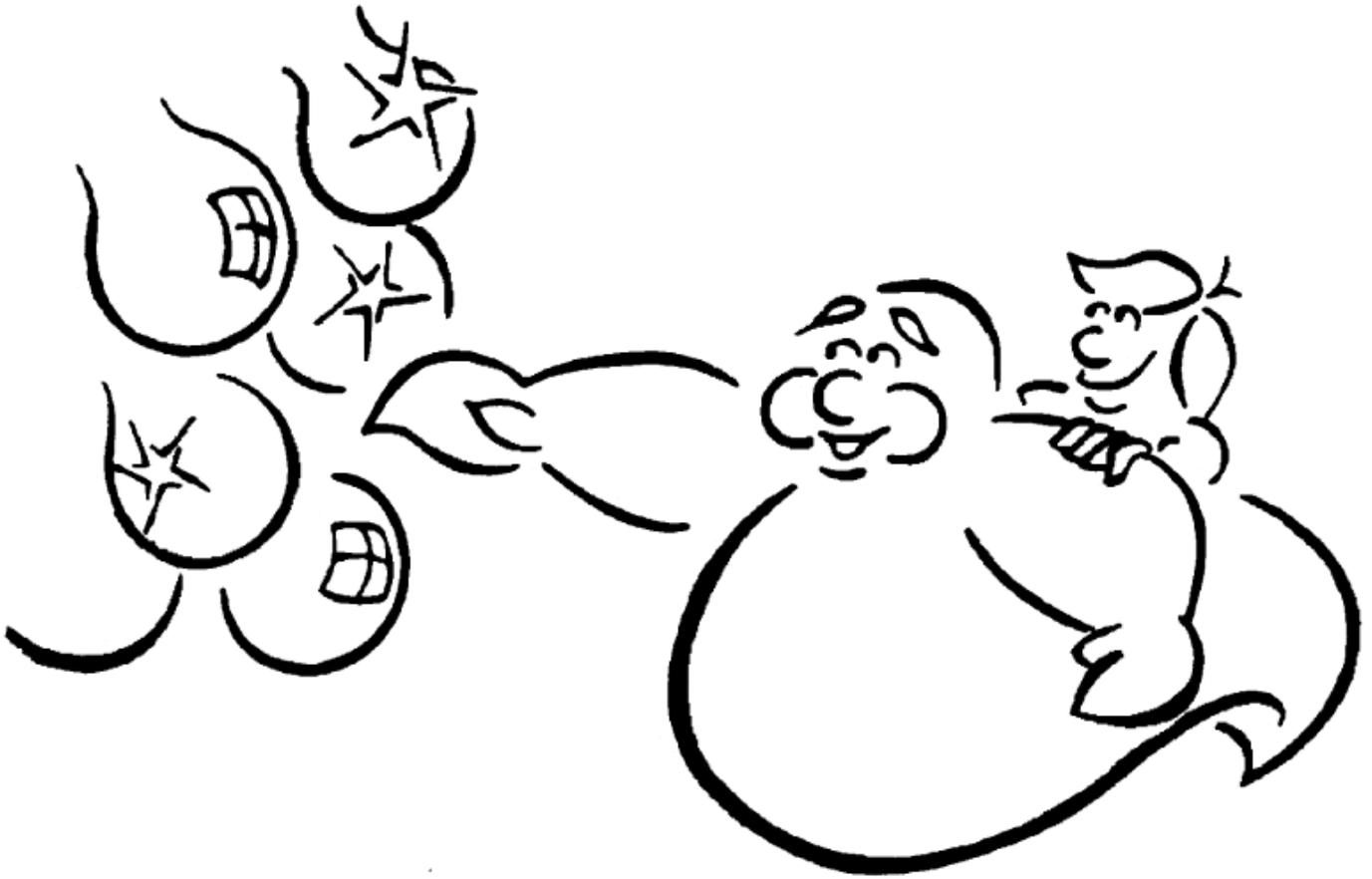
They whizzed right past his lips and teeth and were soon speeding down a long, very dark tunnel.

"I hope you know where you're going," said Stevie.

"I can't see a thing.

"No problem," said Corpi.

Just then Corpi pulled up into a big room with bright red balloons stuck all over the walls.



Where are we now?" asked Stevie. "And suppose you tell me what we're doing here!"

"Well, well, well," said Corpi again. "To answer your first question, we are now in your lungs. This is where the air you breath gets into your blood. It's one of the main things in your body that keeps you alive."

"And as for why we're here, well, I've heard your C.F. has been getting you down lately so I decided to show you a little bit about what it's about, if you know what I mean."

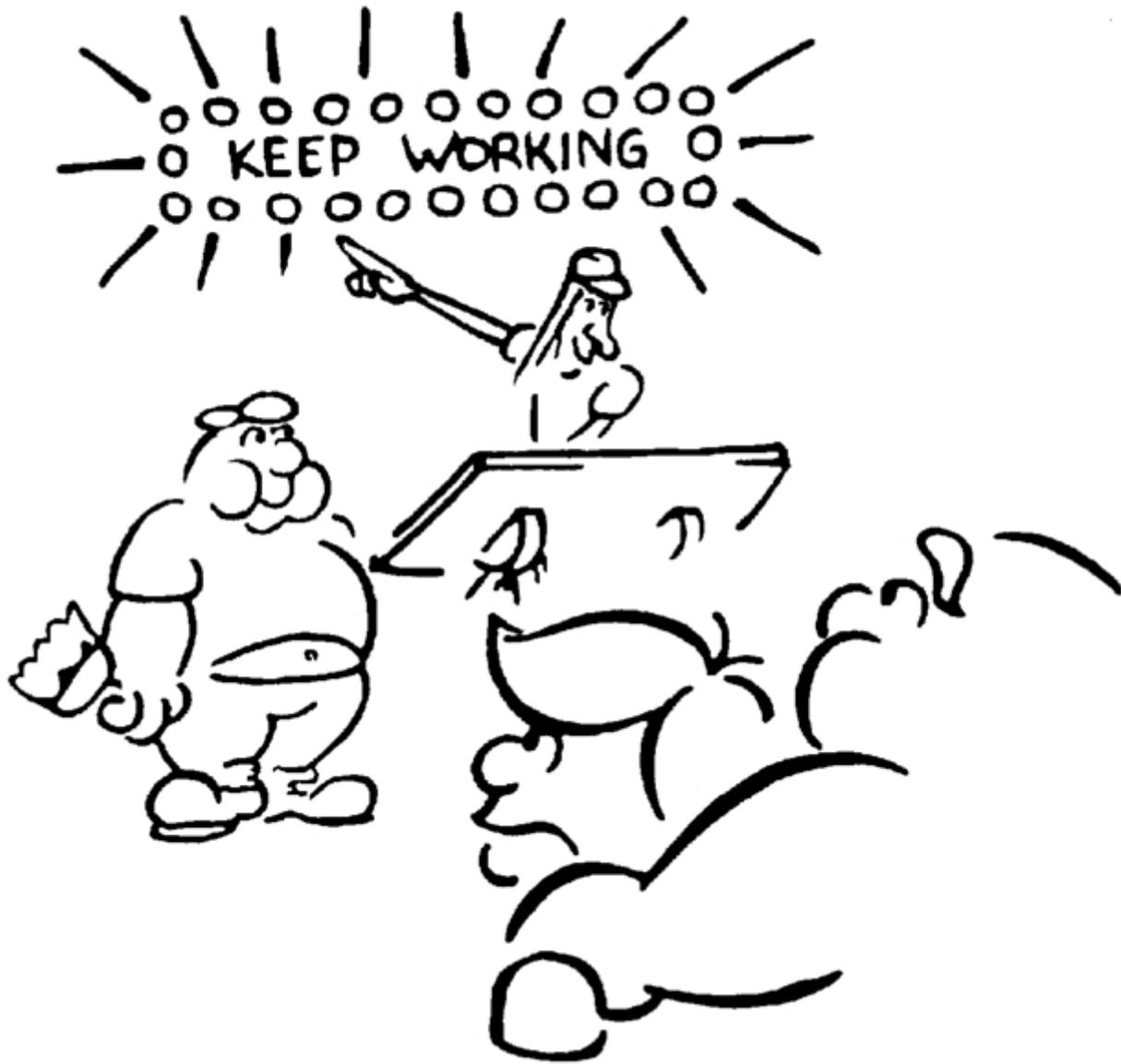


Just then Stevie noticed two odd looking fellows.

They were both shoveling some kind of icky goo off the floor and dumping it into a hole in the wall.

"Who are they?" asked Stevie.

"Well, well, well," said Corpi once again. "Those are the Flem Brothers, and it's their job to keep your lungs clean. That's why they're shoveling all that goop out."



"Is that the mucous I cough up?" asked Stevie.

"Yep," said Corpi, "you're learning pretty fast!"

"So what they're doing is good then? Right?"  
Stevie sounded encouraged.

"That's right," said Corpi. "It's just that in kids with C.F., there's so much mucous that the passageways get clogged up sometimes."



"Is that why sometimes it's hard for me to breathe?"  
Stevie asked.

"Exactly!" said Corpi. He was glad because it seemed  
like Stevie was beginning to understand.

At that very moment Stevie looked up to see that the  
Flem Brothers had completely plugged the passageway.  
They were trapped!

"Corpi, the tunnel is plugged!" cried Stevie.  
"What are we going to do?"



"Hold on now boy," soothed Corpi, "there're lots of ways we can get this job done."

"Like how?" said Stevie. All of a sudden he wanted to know as much as he could.

"Well, one of the ways is your therapy. Coughing helps blow that mucous right out.



"Boy, I sure cough up a lot too," said Stevie.

"And it's a good thing," replied Corpi.

"Just think if you didn't cough it up,  
it would still be down here."

Stevie looked at all the goo that was plugging  
the tunnel and all of a sudden  
his therapy didn't seem so bad.



"There are other ways too," said Corpi. "Things you can do yourself that really help. You've got to remember, as you grow up your parents won't always be able to do your therapy for you. So the more you can do yourself, the better."

"Things like running and swimming and even the things you eat can make a big difference. You can even make up your own ways."

"Well, that sure makes me feel better," said Stevie.



"But we'd better do something pretty quick or we'll never get out of here!"

"Well, basically," said Corpi, sounding like a school teacher, "what you try to do is fill up your lungs with as much air as you can and they push it out again."

"That should clear the tunnel right out!"



Stevie couldn't wait. First he breathed in as much as he could in one big gulp.

Then he blew it all out just like as if he was blowing out candles on his birthday cake.

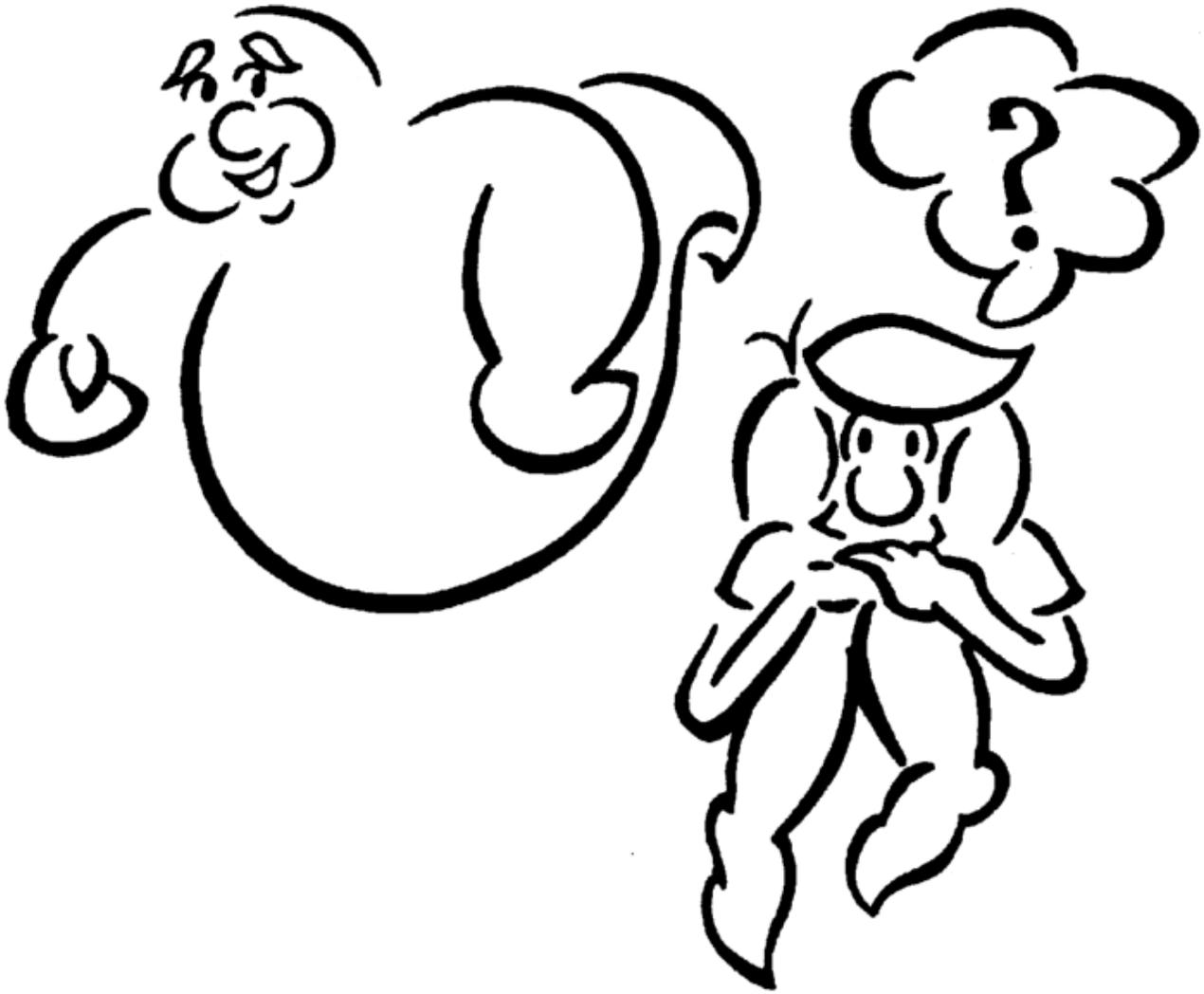
It made him cough.  
In fact, he coughed up a big gob of mucous.



"See," said Corpi, "it works. By breathing in and out and coughing like that, you blow the goo right out of the tunnel."

"Does that mean that's all I have to do and I'll be OK?" asked Stevie.

"I wish it were that easy," said Corpi,

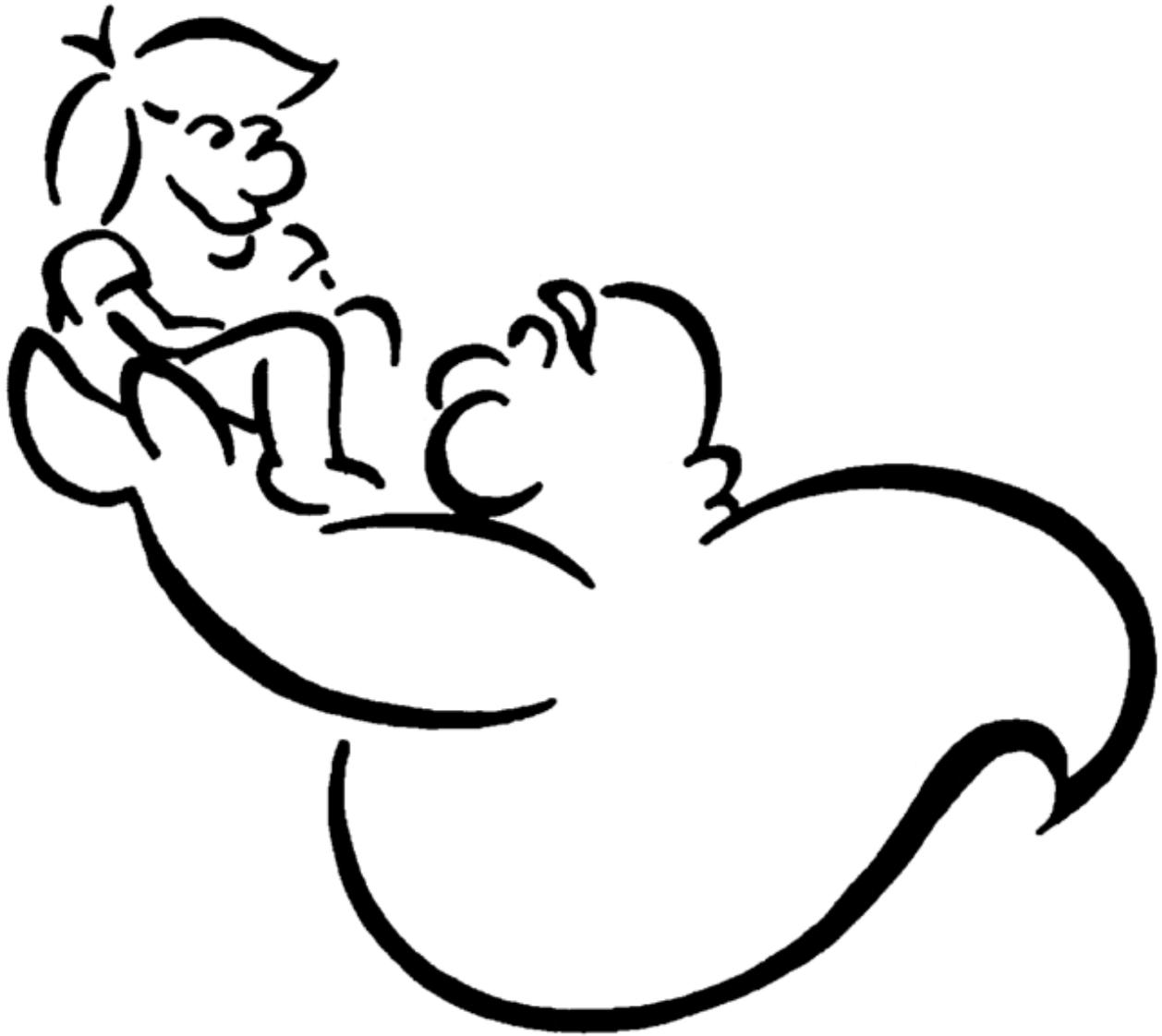


"Boy," said Stevie, "this sure is a lot to handle for a little kid like me. I hope there's not too much more."

"Well, I hate to disappoint you," apologized Corpi,  
"but that's only half of it."

"Half of it!" moaned Stevie. "What else could go wrong?"

"Ha!" Corpi laughed uneasily, "just wait and see."



And without another word, Corpi scooped up Stevie and off they flew up the tunnel.

Stevie was already thinking of ways he could do his own therapy when all of a sudden Corpi made a really sharp turn and dove straight down another tunnel.

It smelled a lot like the pizza Stevie had eaten at school that day.

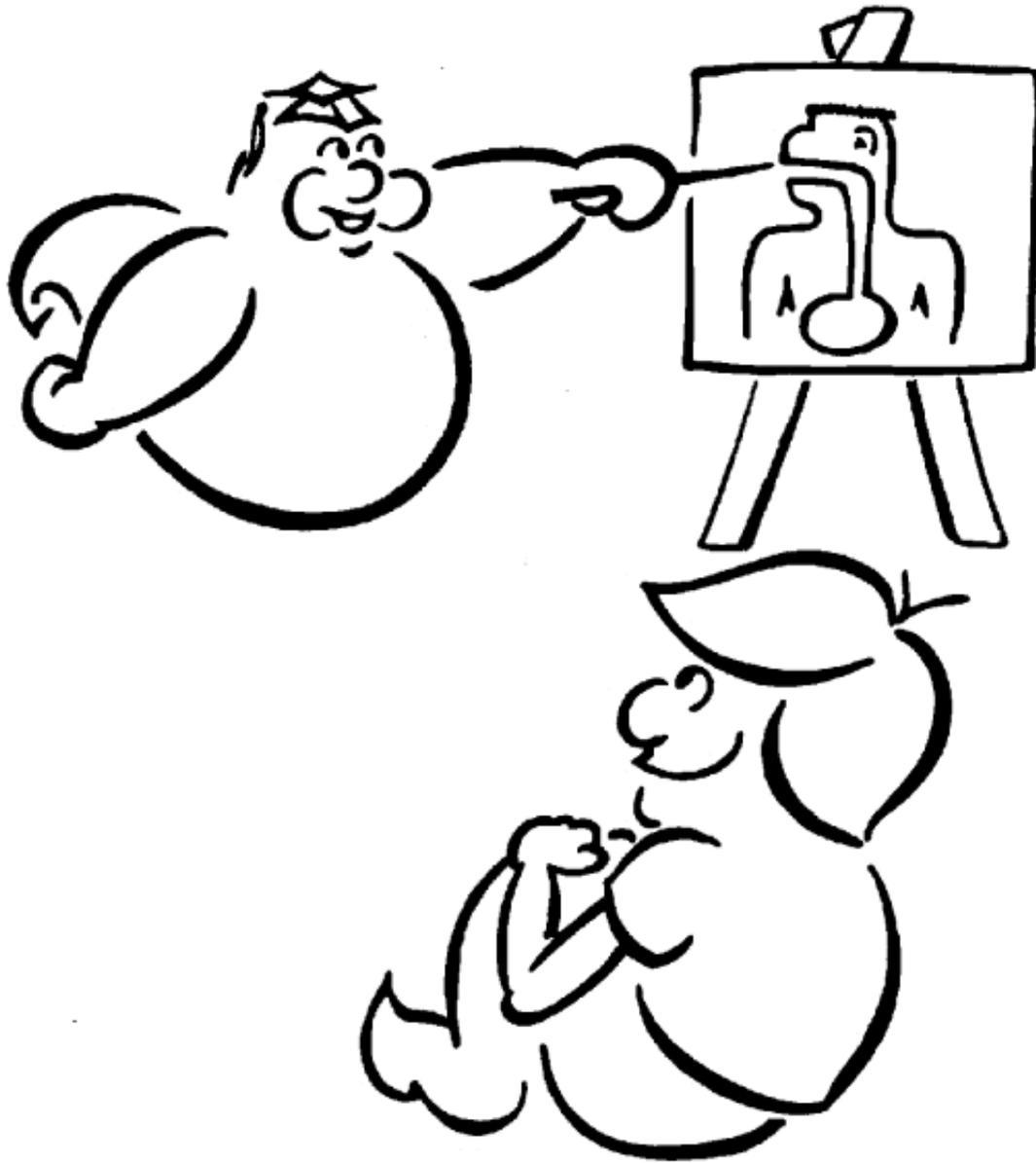


Corpi pulled up into another big room and glided gently towards what looked to be a perfectly soft landing.

Suddenly he began to slide uncontrollably.

They were headed straight for the biggest piece of pepperoni Stevie had ever seen when somehow at the last moment Corpi got a grip and veered away.

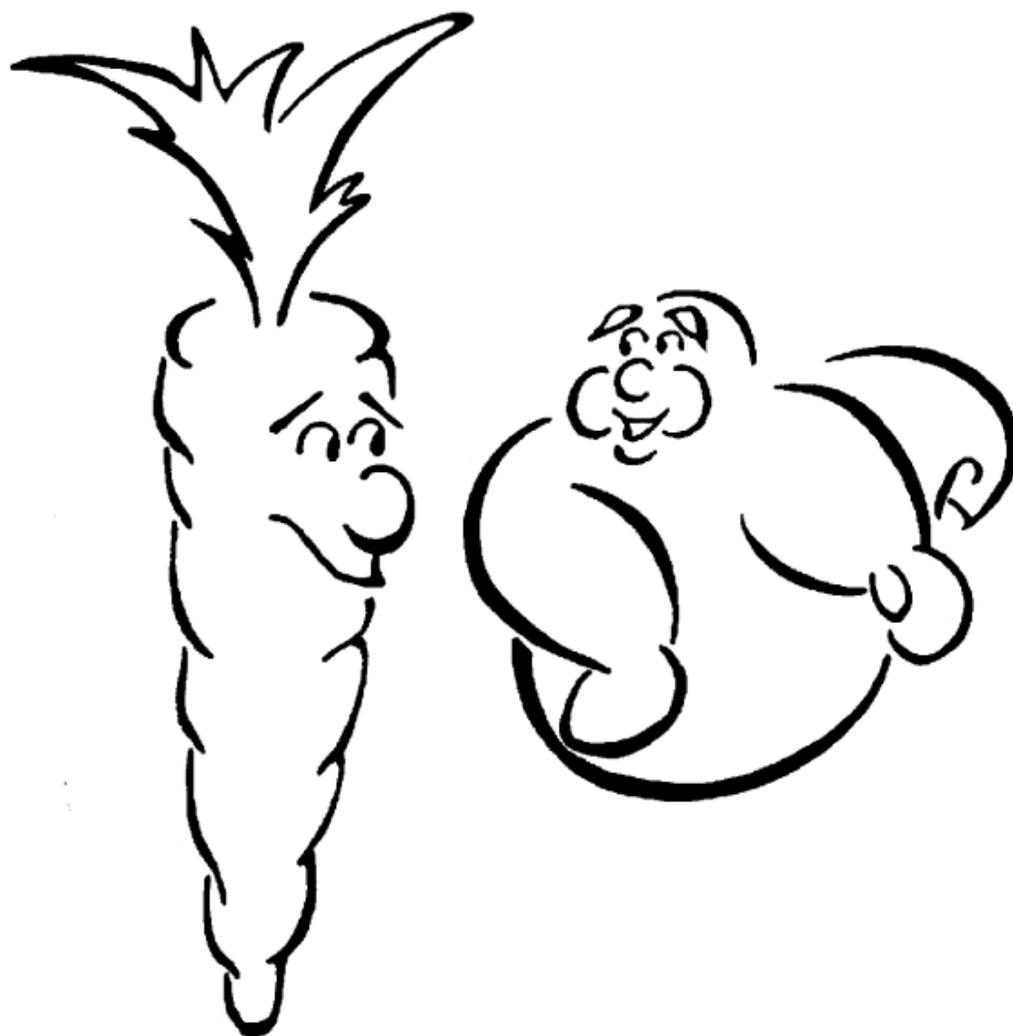
They plopped headlong into a giant wad of cheese.



"Where are we now?" Stevie was really confused.

"Well," Corpi said, "have you ever wondered what happens to your food after you swallow it?"

"Not really," answered Stevie. "I figure once it goes down there's no real reason to worry about it anymore."



"Ah, well that's where you're wrong," said Corpi.  
"You see, that's just the start of a long journey your food  
takes that goes all the way through your body."

"How can food go all the way through my body?" asked Stevie.

"I tried to stick a carrot up my nose once  
but it wouldn't fit."

"Don't be silly, " said Corpi. "It's got to go through a lot of  
changes first, but that carrot really does end up in  
your nose and your eyes and your hands and  
every other part of you."



Just then a long line of be some very tired little workmen trudged past Stevie and Corpi.

"Follow them," said Corpi, "and I'll show you what I mean."

"Who are those guys?" asked Stevie. He was getting more curious by the moment.

"Those are the Enzymes," answered Corpi.

"The who?" asked Stevie. He was baffled.



"The Enzymes," explained Corpi. "They're kind of like little gold miners. It's their job to break up all the food you eat to get the good stuff out.

They have to smash it small enough so it will float in your blood. Then your blood carries all these tiny little pieces of food through your whole body so that all of you gets fed and not just your stomach."



"But how are they going to smash up all this food?" asked Stevie. "There's not enough of them."

"Good question," said Corpi. "See that's the other half of your problem"

"Oh great," sighed Stevie. "First my air can't get to my blood and now my food can't get to my blood."

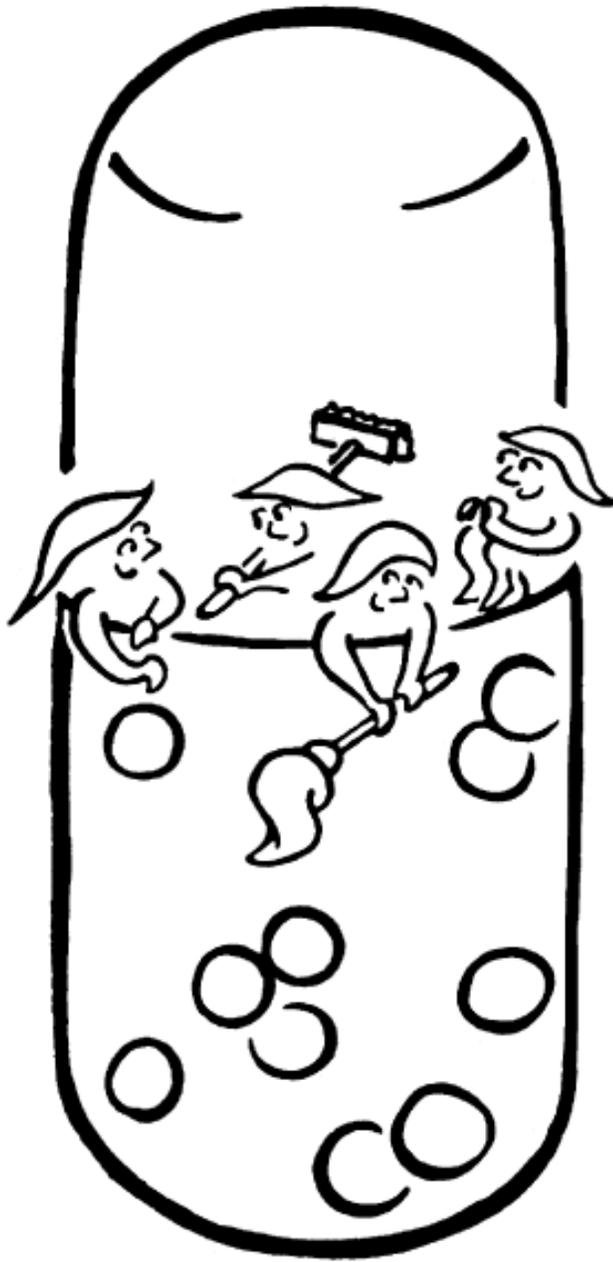


"Well you see," said Corpi, "it's the same old story..."

"You don't mean?" Stevie looked like he already knew the answer.

"That's right," said Corpi, "the Flem Brothers. Sometimes they end up plugging the tunnels that the Enzymes use to get down here."

"What am I supposed to do about this?" Stevie asked. He sounded pretty desperate.



"One of the ways is to be sure you chew your food real good. That makes the enzymes job a lot easier.

Another way is to remember to take your pills every time you eat. See, your pills are like little relief crews who come down and help out the enzymes. The only problem with them is they don't last very long."

"So what else can I do?" Stevie wanted to know more.



"Well, one of the best things is to really be careful about what you eat. You should eat things that are easy to break down but have lots of vitamins and other nourishing stuff.

Things like yogurt, fruits and vegetables, honey, lean meats, rice, whole grain breads and cereal. It's different for everyone so you'll have to experiment and see what works best for you."



"Can I still have bananas?" asked Stevie. He loved bananas.

"For sure!" said Corpi. "Fruits are especially good."

"What you want too stay away from are things with too much sugar, fatty meat and oil, junk food and other stuff like that."

"You sure seem to know an awful lot about this," said Stevie. "Maybe you can help me."

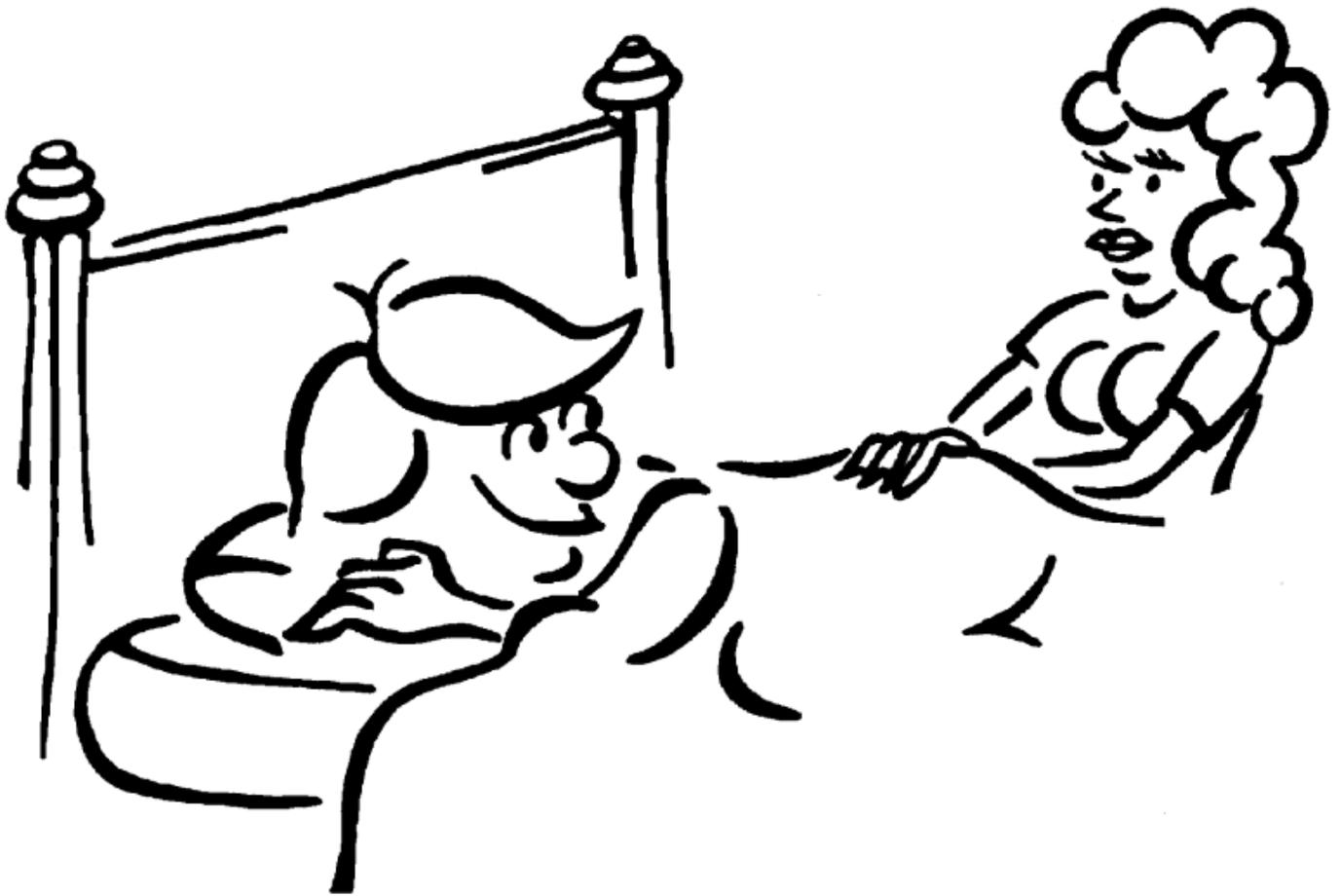
"Sure," said Corpi, "but I think we've already done enough for tonight."



"Besides, I've got a lot of work to do. You see, I work with that part of your blood that carries the air around. I've got to get busy."

Without another word, Corpi dove through a hole marked 'vein'.

"But wait!" Stevie hollered. "I've still got so many questions! Don't leave! Please Corpi, wait!"



"Stevie, wake up! Is everything alright?"

Stevie opened his eyes to see his Mom sitting beside him on his bed.

"You must of been having a nightmare."

"Oh, no Mom, it wasn't a nightmare," Stevie said excitedly.

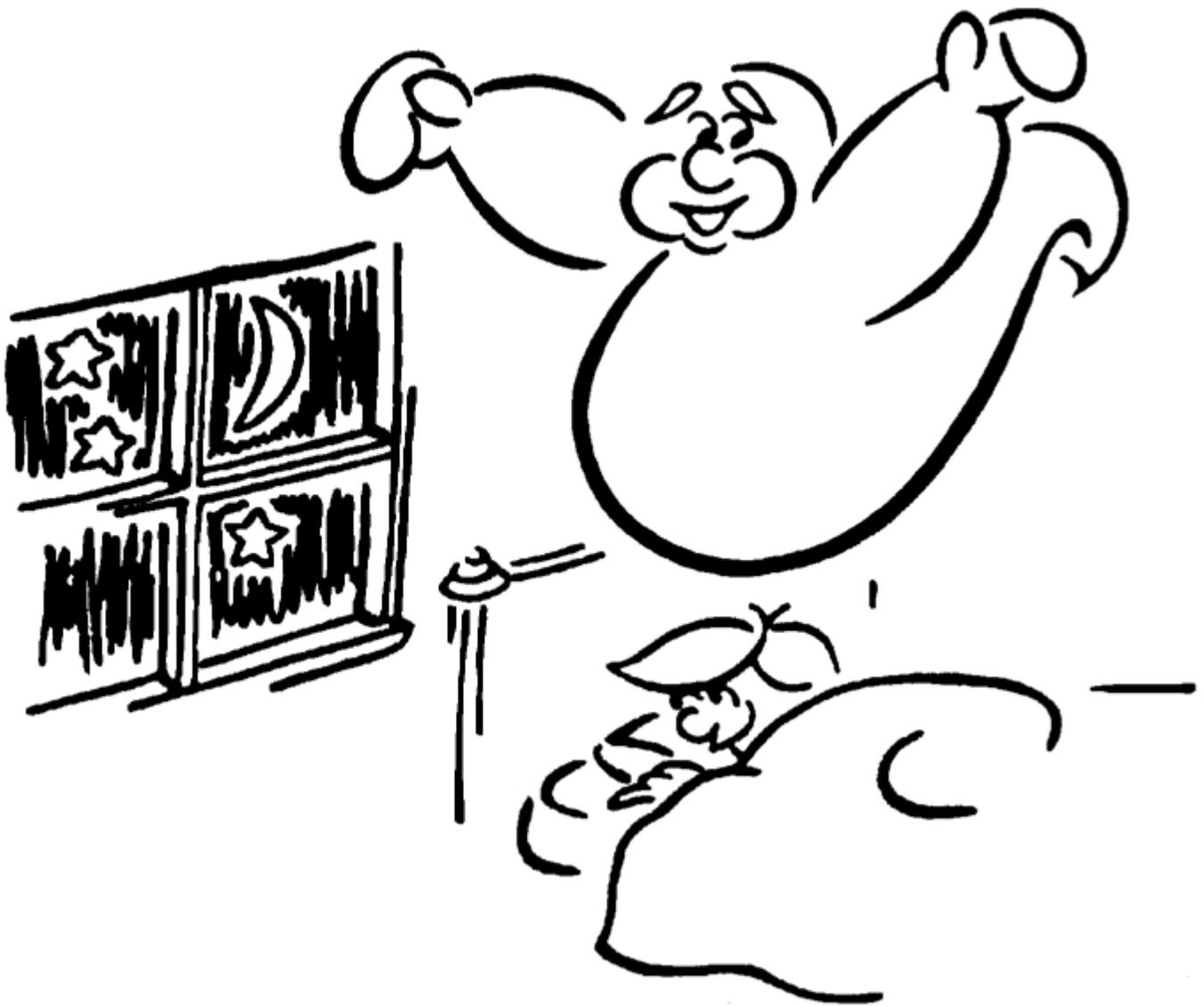
"My friend Corpi showed me all about my C.F. He took me for a ride inside my lungs and my stomach.

We saw the Flem Brothers and the Enzymes and, and..."



"Hey now, slow down," said Stevie's mom, trying to calm him down. She'd never seen him so interested in his C.F. before.

"But Mom," Stevie insisted "we've got to find the right foods for me to eat and I've got to learn the exercises so I can do my own therapy"



"We will, we will," assured his mother. "But can we at least wait until morning. It's still the middle of the night."

And so it was. The sky outside Stevie's window was pitch black.

"Boy," he thought, "dreams sure happen fast."

"Sure they do," he could hear Corpi say.

"We don't mess around!"