

CHOICES

Scenario 11

Scary Story

Your little brother David is being incredibly annoying. David is just four.

Your friend Julia has come over for the weekend, for a sleep over. You're both having a lovely time, but David keeps on interrupting. You close the door, but he comes in anyway.

Finally, you complain to your Mom.

"He won't leave us alone!"

"Now then," she says. "He's only little. He just wants to be with you. Be nice to him. Please."

Night comes. You help your Mom get him ready for bed. She goes off.

He says, "Tell me a story."

You exchange looks with Julia. "There's Cinderella – that's pretty neat. Or Beauty and the Beast. Or ... what about the headless horseman?"

Cinderella has a lovely happy ending. Beauty and the Beast likewise. But the headless horseman is really scary.

Julia winks at you. "How about some excitement?"

What should you do?

A You say, "Once upon a time there was girl called Cinderella."

What next?

You barely get to the end of the story when David begins to fall asleep.

Your Mom appears.

“Girls, that’s really nice. Come and I’ll make you a hot drink.

You sit in the kitchen chatting. Your Mom is very pleased.

“I know he can be difficult. But he just wants a bit of attention.”

Suddenly you feel really good.

You love your little brother and always want to protect him.

Think about it

Studies have shown that even one act of kindness a day can have wonderful benefits – for the one who is treated kindly – *and* for the giver of that kindness. It is said that it doubles your happiness.

After an act of kindness our bodies are flooded with good feelings. We end up less stressed, calmer. Giving is good.

In contrast, being mean can have bad effects. You might feel a sense of triumph for a moment. But then the guilt might kick in. What you thought was a win is in fact a loss.

It is also important to think about how you use your power – as an older, more experienced person. To take advantage of a small child is quite nasty. It’s a form of bullying.

Do you want to look at another scenario involving siblings? (Go to 9)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 11)

B You say, “Once upon a time there was a terrible headless horseman ...”

What next?

After a few minutes, David is clutching at his blanket with horror.

“Stop! Stop!” he cries.

“Don’t you want to hear what happens next?” you growl. “And the headless horseman, all covered with blood, came riding out of the dark forest and ...”

Suddenly David is screaming.

Your Mom comes in.

“What’s going on?”

Minutes later you are in the kitchen. Your mother has a face like thunder.

Now it doesn’t seem like such a clever thing to do.

“He’s only a little boy,” she says. “How could you? And to think that when you were little you had nightmares. Why would you hurt him like that?”

You hang your head in shame.

Think about it

The thing about cruelty is that it is a double-edged sword – it hurts another – *and* it hurts the person bullying.

It can give us a sense of power. But by ignoring our feelings for others we are making ourselves into monsters. We are deliberately ignoring how we would feel if it (the cruelty) was done to us.

Empathy is a fancy word for feeling what others feel. There’s a very old wise saying: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Do you want to look at another scenario involving parents? (Go to 6)

Do you want to try the scenario again? (Go to 11)