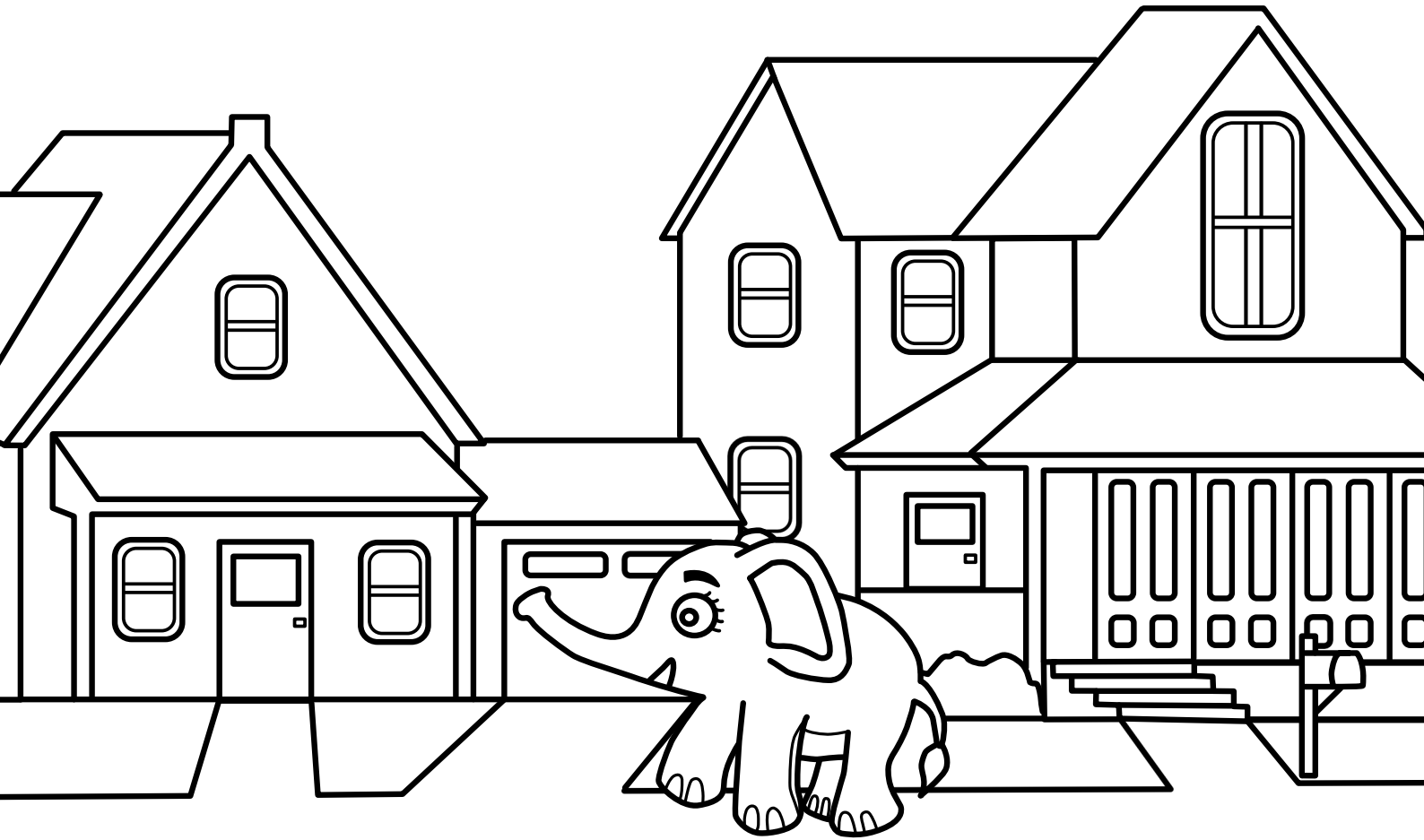
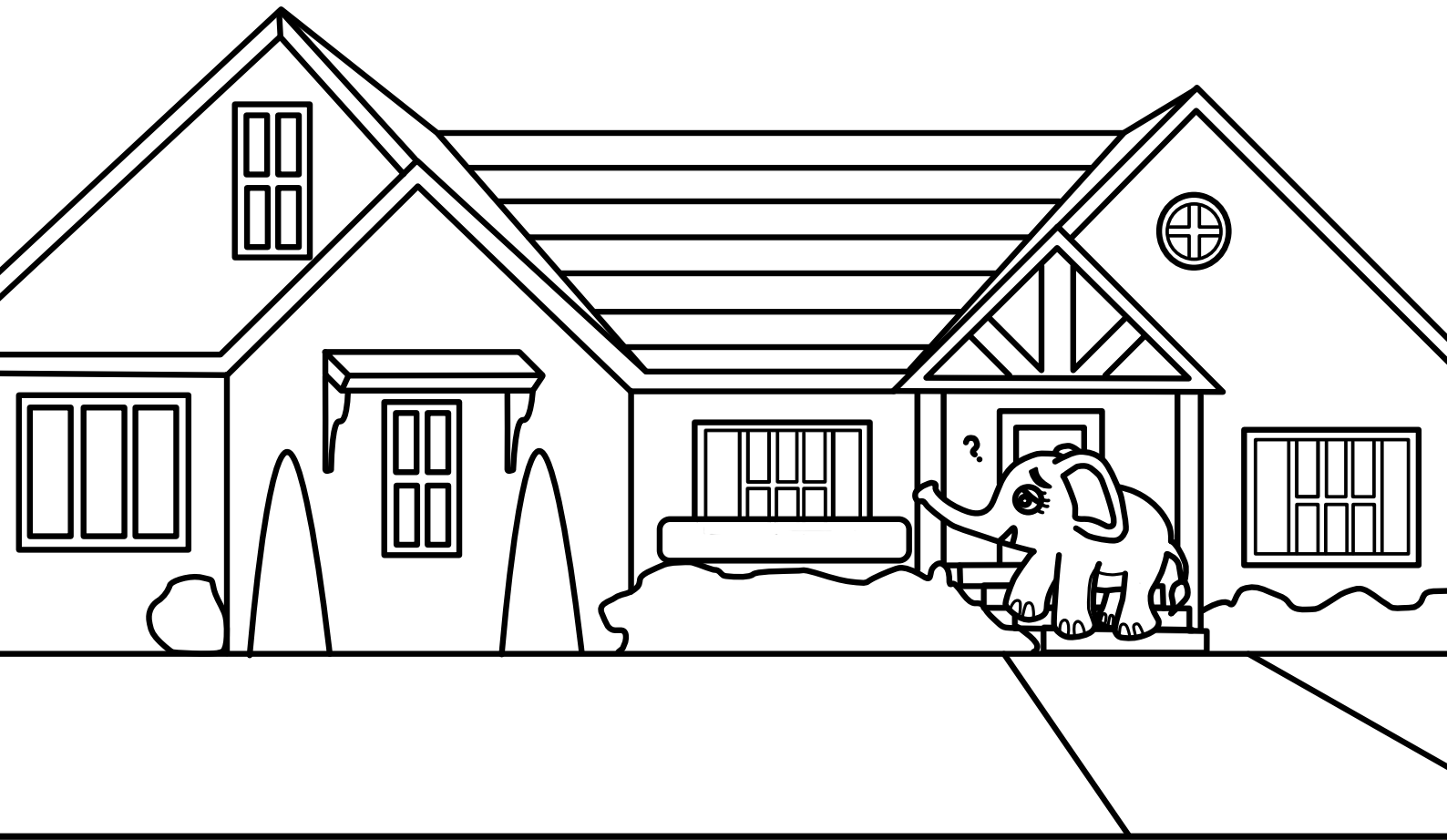


Ellis the Elephant

A CHILDREN'S BOOK ON DEATH &
BEREAVEMENT

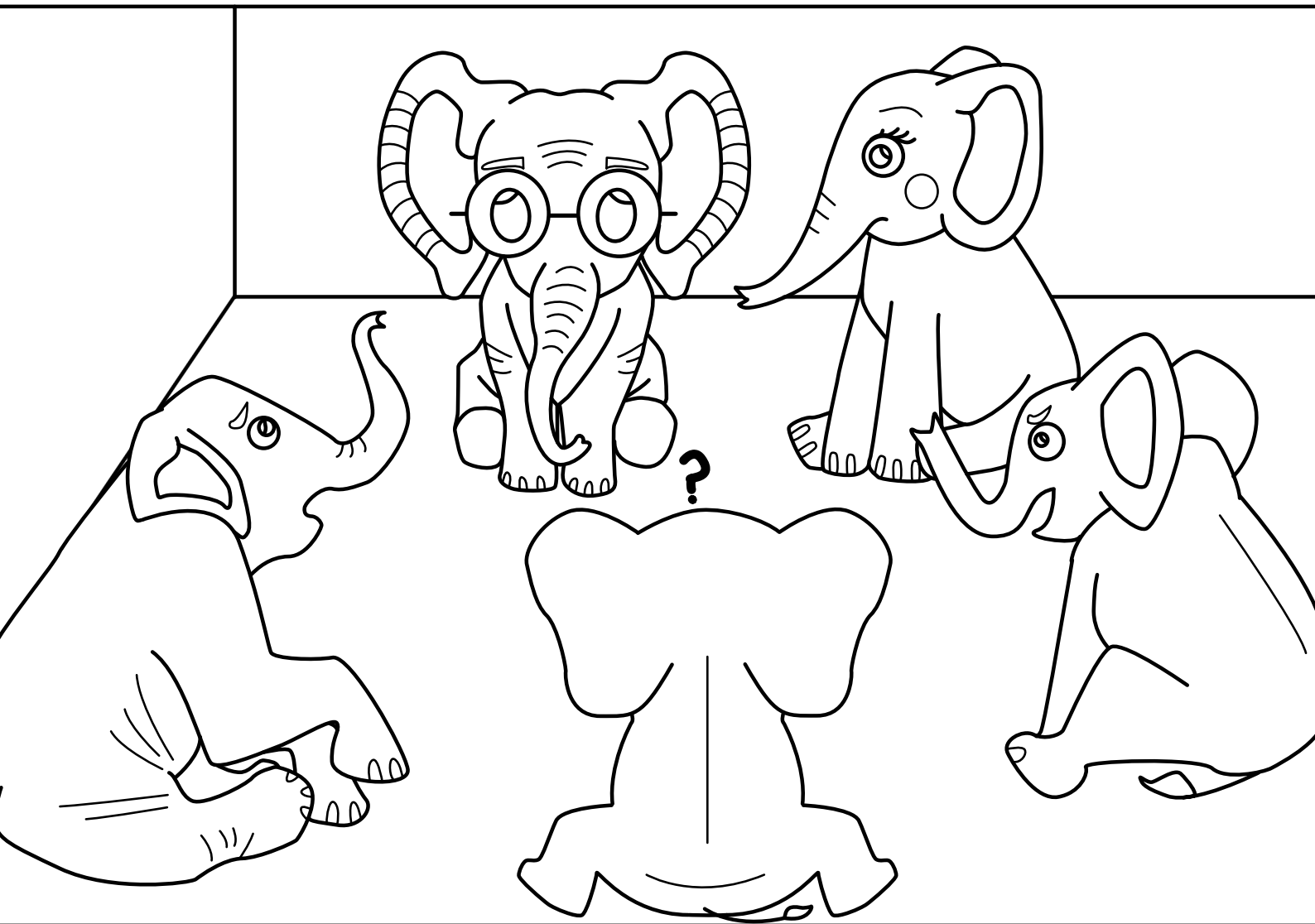


Ellis the Elephant trudged home after a long day of playing with friends. On the way, the joy from the day's activities seemed to dull and a cruel wind began.



**When they finally made it home, Ellis
could hear urgent whispers outside
the door.**

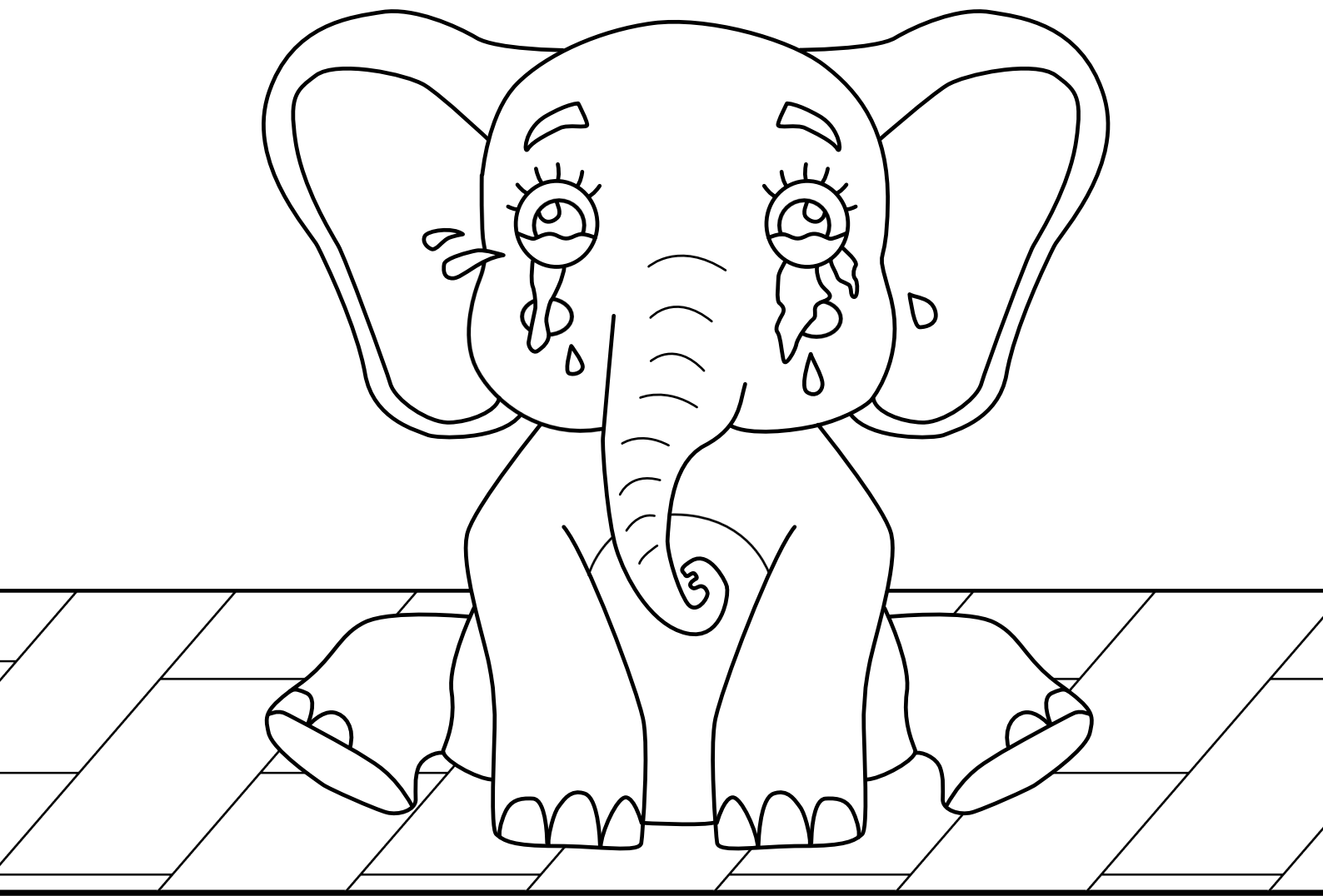
**"They're too young to know",
followed by "but they'll find out
sooner or later."**



**Upon entering, the whispers ceased.
Everyone was gathered in a circle,
sitting solemnly. Everyone but
Grandpa.**

**"What's wrong?" Ellis' words sliced
through the gnawing silence. Father
spoke,**

"Something terrible has happened."



"Grandpa has died Ellis." A great gust of sadness enveloped the small elephant.

"No!" shrieked Ellis.

**"I'm so sorry Ellis," Father continued,
"It happened this morning."**

"Mom, tell me this isn't true!" A single tear cruised down Mother Elephant's face.

"It is."

Breathing seemed to become impossible for Ellis as the clarity of their surroundings faded.

Grandpa was dead. That wasn't true. It couldn't be true! Grandpa was Grandpa!

Taking a few steps back, Ellis looked between the members of their family, liquid rushed to the corner of their eyes. Abruptly, Ellis fled the scene. Not looking back, not even after Mother Elephant shouted them to come back.

Emma, Ellis' older sister, followed.

"Hey!" she called, "Slow down!"

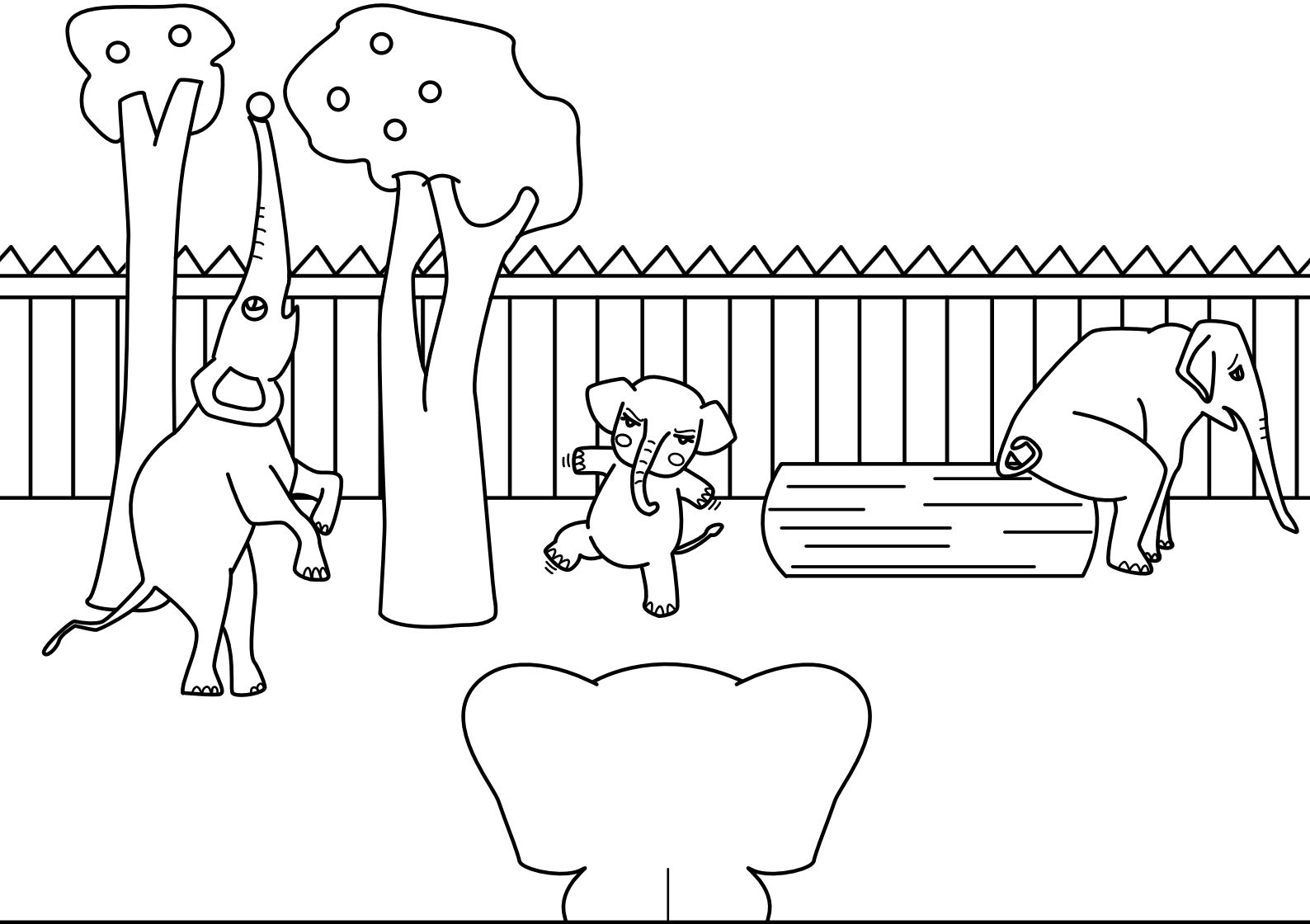
"Is Grandpa really dead?" Ellis cried.

"Yes Eli."

"Oh Emma!" Ellis choked. Their tears cascaded down their face, hitting the floor with a small thud.

"I'm sorry Eli."

Stillness surrounded the two siblings for a moment before Emma spoke again, "Don't cry in front of Grandma, we have to stay strong for her." Ellis nodded their head and Emma turned to walk away.



A few days passed and Ellis observed their family members. They saw their mother collecting food, muttering to herself about how Papa loved these and that she must take some back for him. Ellis didn't bother to remind Mother that Grandpa wasn't here to eat them. She wouldn't hear it. She still put a place for him at the dinner table of the evening despite Father's confusion.

Over the other side of the grounds, Emma was often found stomping and shaking her head with frustration. Ellis would try to make conversation but more times that not was met with nothing or an angry order to leave her alone coupled with a low rumble. This was unlike Emma. Emma was never angry. Ellis doesn't like it when others are angry.

Father had isolated himself. He didn't speak anymore. He just sat away from the family. All alone. He didn't even look at them. Ellis missed their dad.

Everything had changed since Grandpa had died. Ellis was moping in a puddle when Grandma Elephant approached and asked what was wrong.

Ellis explained that they can't tell her.

Curious, Grandma asked as to why.

"Grandpa was meant to take me to his favourite watering hole and now he can't." Ellis replied.

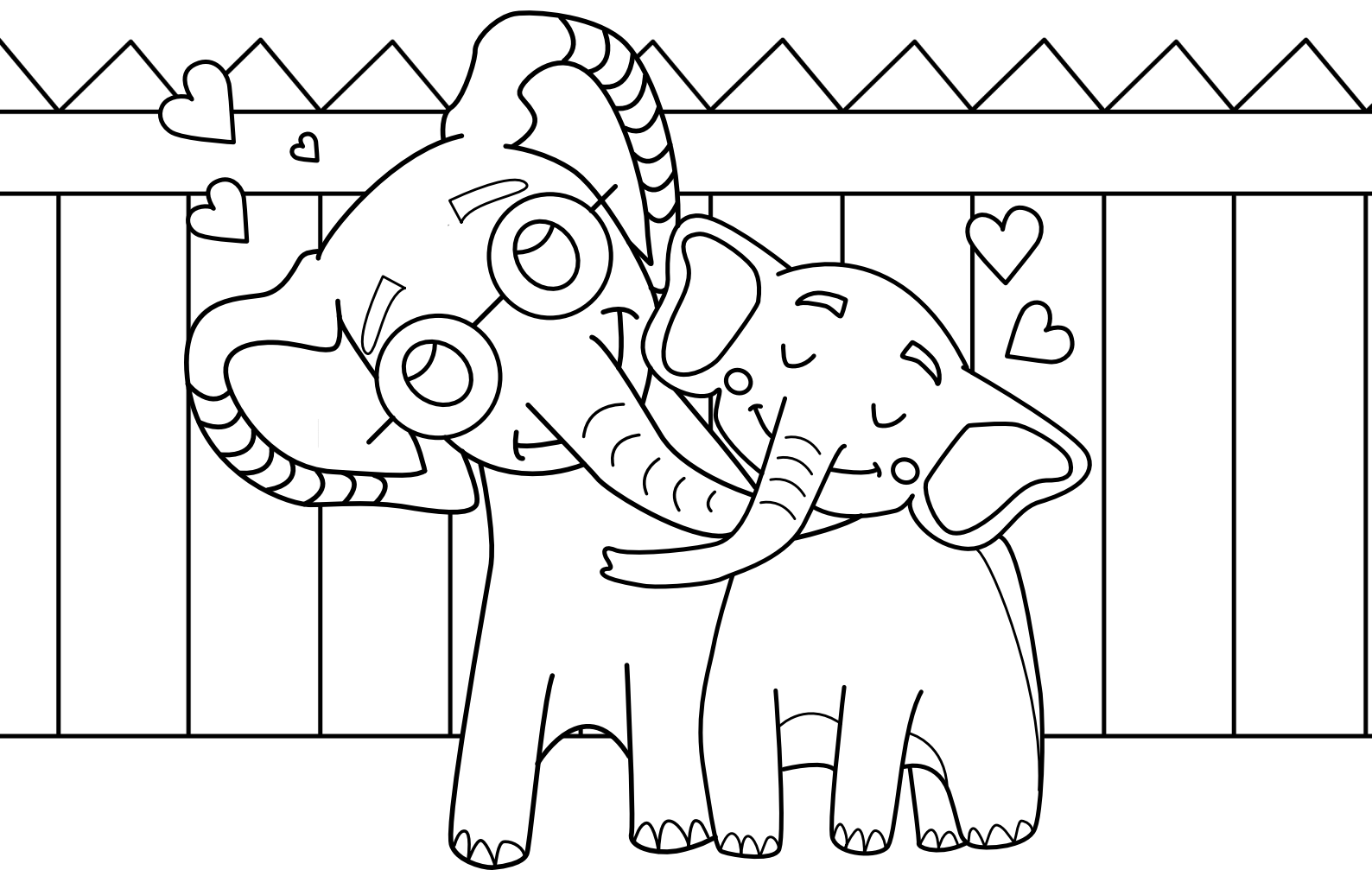
"It's okay to feel that loss Ellis."
Grandma said.

Ellis glanced up at Grandma Elephant, "But if I feel sad, I might cry and then I can't be brave for you."

"Where did you get the idea you had to be brave for me?" Grandma whispered.

"From Emma."

"Oh sweetheart," Grandma placed herself beside Ellis and explained. "Emma thought she was telling you the right thing but that was wrong. We should always share our feelings, that's what makes us a family."



Ellis talked to Grandma about them being Grandpa Elephant's "Little Ellis" and that they really loved him. Grandma explains that they are still his "Little Ellis", even if he's not there. In the same way he is still Grandma's husband. Grandma continued, her voice breaking, "I should have looked after him better, should have told him to rest."

Ellis was surprised by this statement. Grandma had appeared to be handling things so well.

"It's not your fault Grandma, his heart was old."

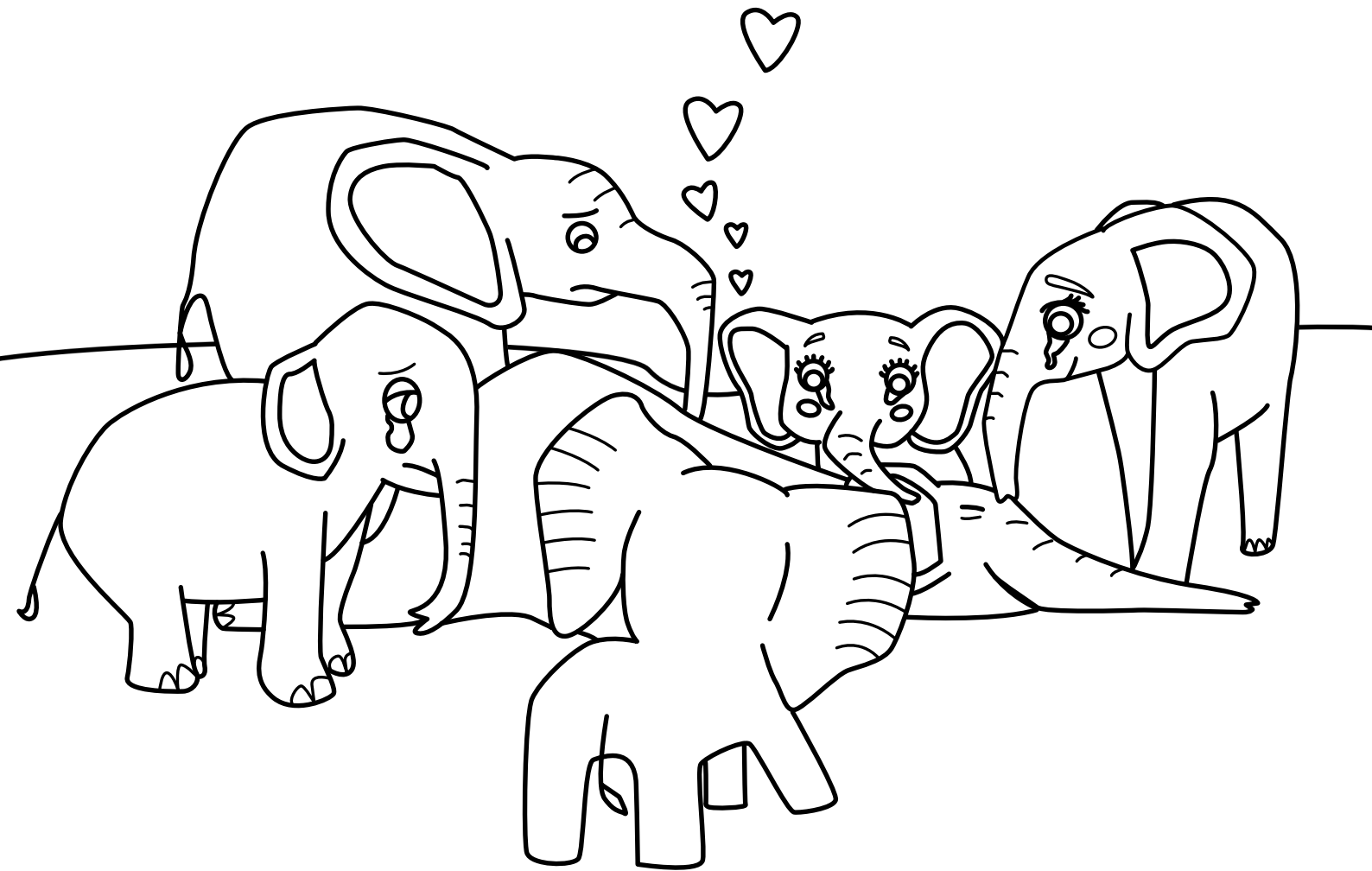
"I know Ellis but it still hurts." Grandma replied.

"It's okay to be sad." said Ellis.

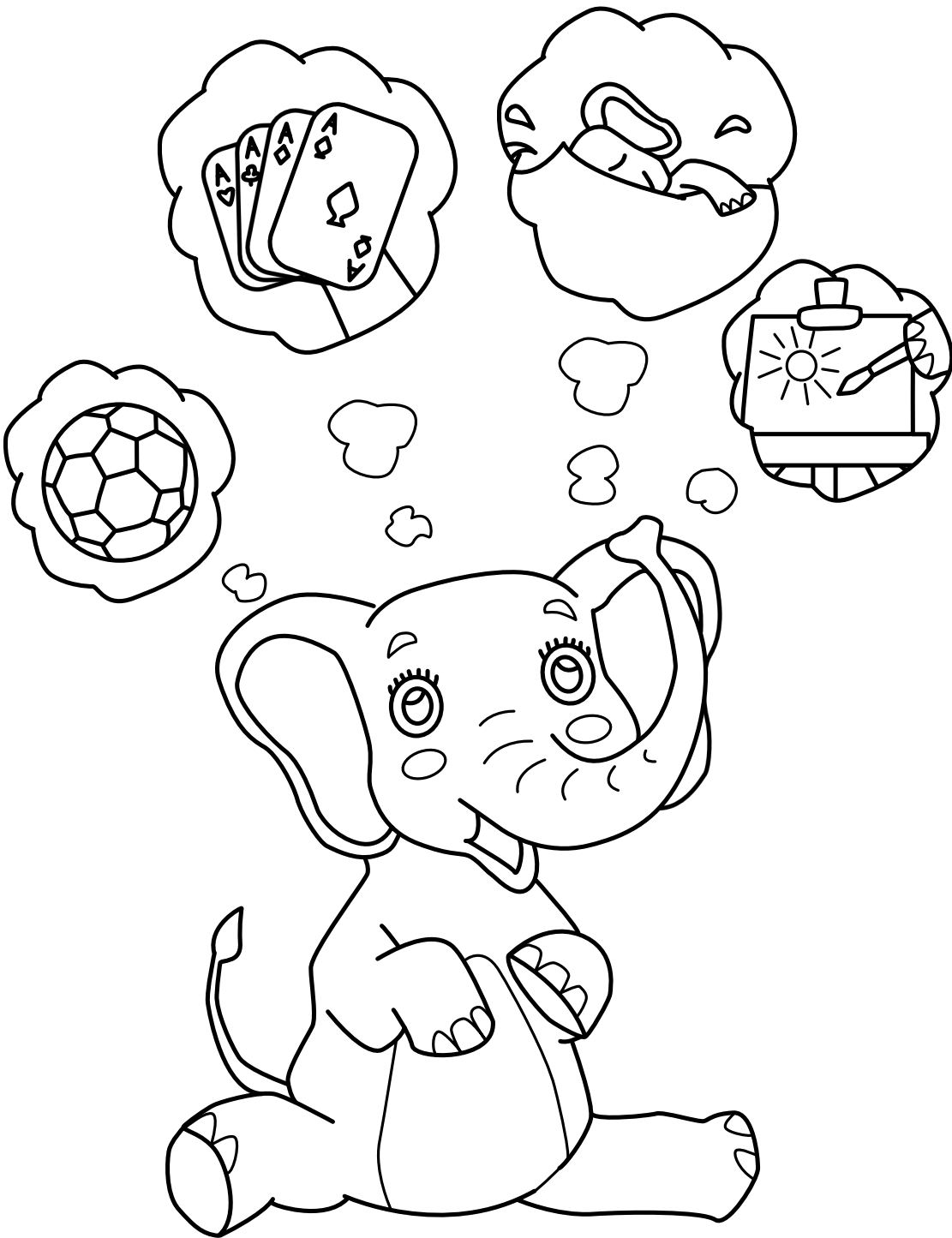
A slight smile appeared on her face before saying, "I've heard that somewhere before"

Unexpectedly, Ellis inquired, "Grandma, is it okay to cry?"

"Yes," Grandma simply stated while wrapping her trunk around Ellis. All the tears in their souls caused by the hurt over the past few days were finally released.



As the end of the week arrived, the family gathered for the funeral. It wasn't as sad as Ellis had expected, but instead they took the time to celebrate Grandpa Elephant's achievements. They surrounded his still body and lovingly stroked it with their trunks. And, for the first time in what seemed like forever, they smiled and felt what it truly meant to be alive.



After the funeral, Grandma Elephant took the whole family to Grandpa's favourite watering hole and they sat together as a family laughing and talking. However, Ellis didn't participate in the conversation much. This was because they were deep in thought, remembering their personal memories they shared with Grandpa. Memories Ellis would remember forever because, as they say, elephants never forget.

