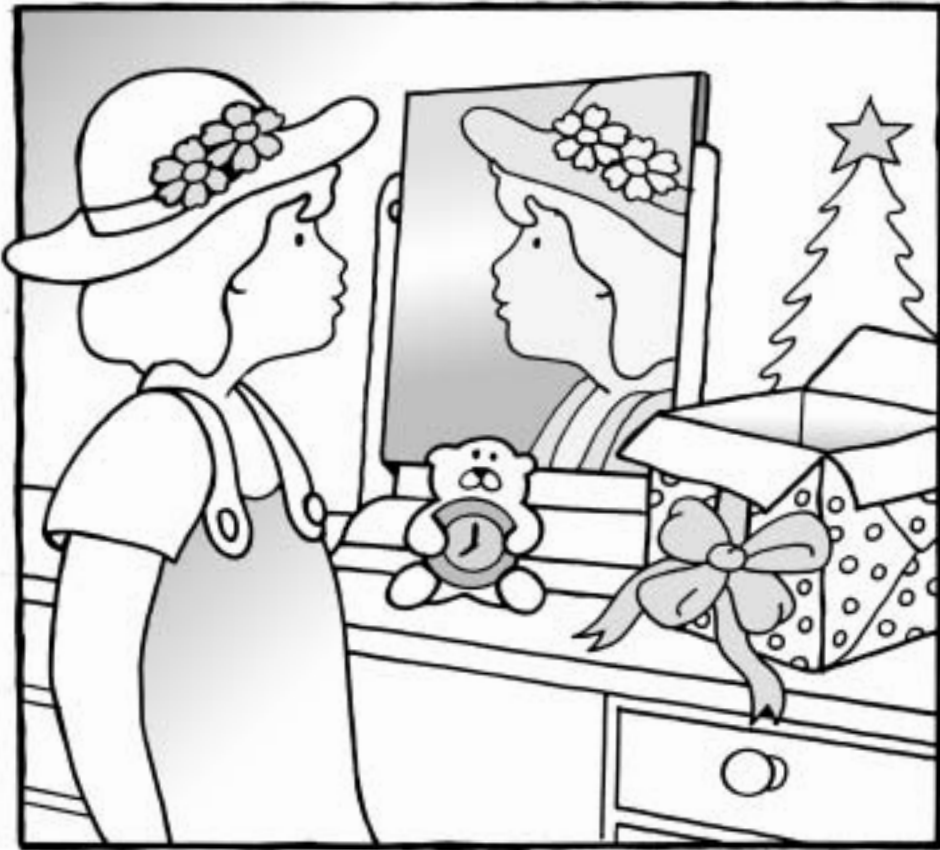


Nearly an unhappy Christmas

Alysha was very proud of her pretty new hat. Her mother had made it for her as a Christmas present. It was pink and had yellow flowers sewn on it. Alysha thought it was the best Christmas present she'd ever had.

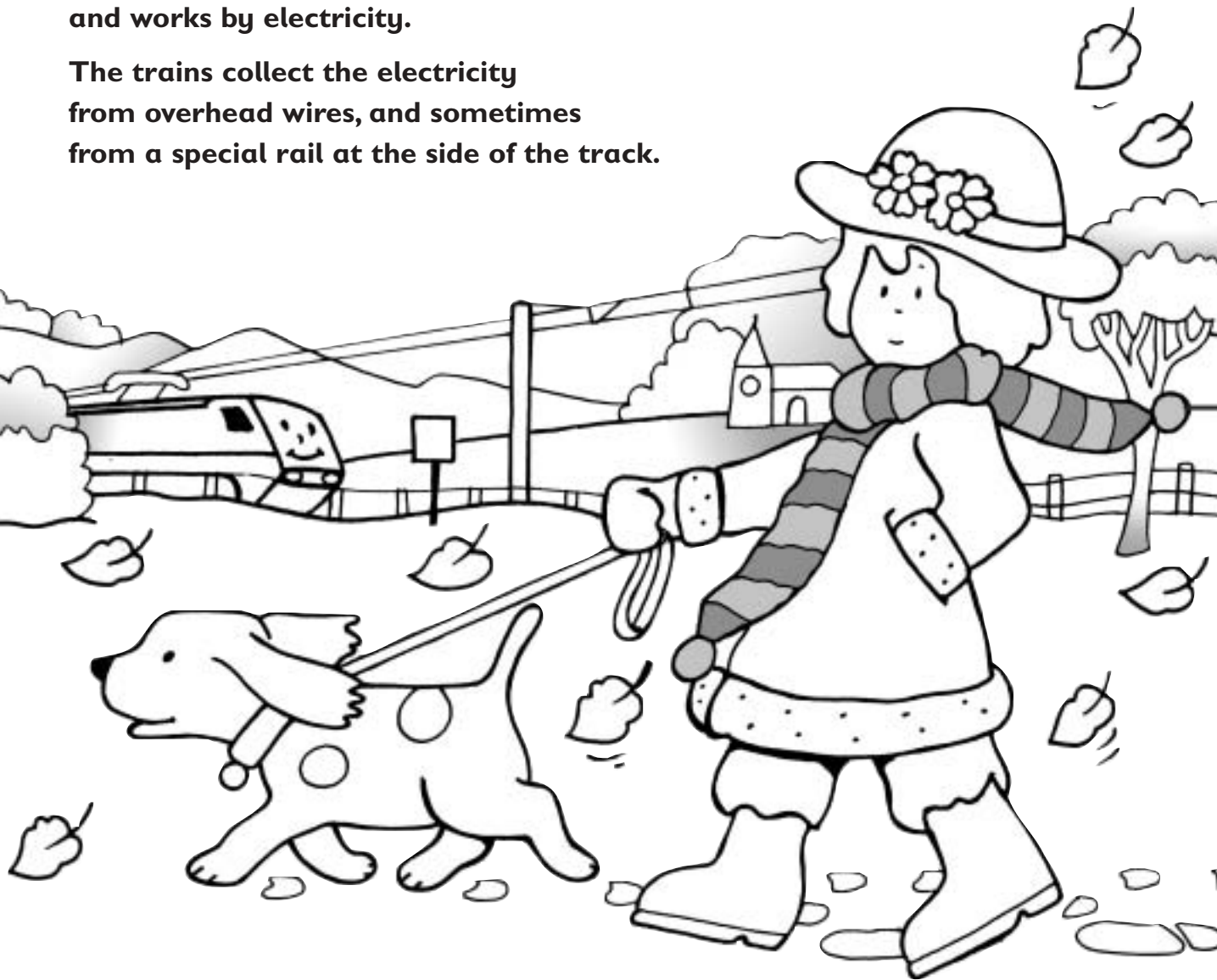


On Boxing Day Alysha's father was unwell, and her mother was busy, so Alysha was allowed to take the dog for a walk. Proudly she put on her new hat.

"Watch where you walk," warned her mother, "and don't be out too long."

Alysha decided to go towards the railway that runs into the hills and works by electricity.

The trains collect the electricity from overhead wires, and sometimes from a special rail at the side of the track.



There were warning signs along the railway because electricity can be very dangerous.

Alysha had often seen the overhead wires,
but she didn't really understand how they made the trains work.



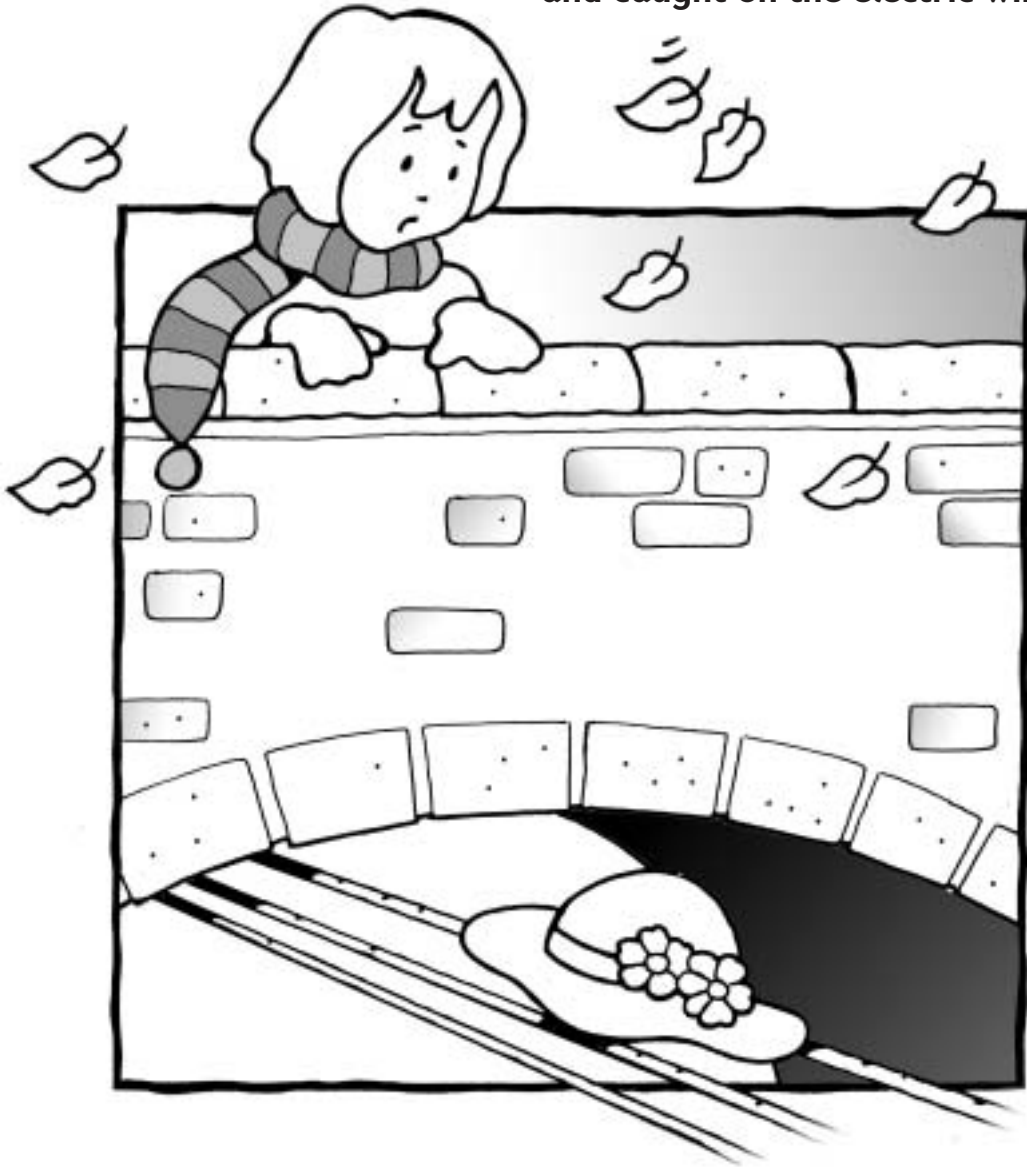
But she knew she must always take care near the railway.

To get home she had to cross a bridge, where, of course, the electric wires were below her. She peered over the bridge, looking along the line.



Suddenly the wind tugged at her new hat. Alysha grabbed at it, but too late.

Her beautiful new hat flipped off her head, sailed over the bridge wall and caught on the electric wires.

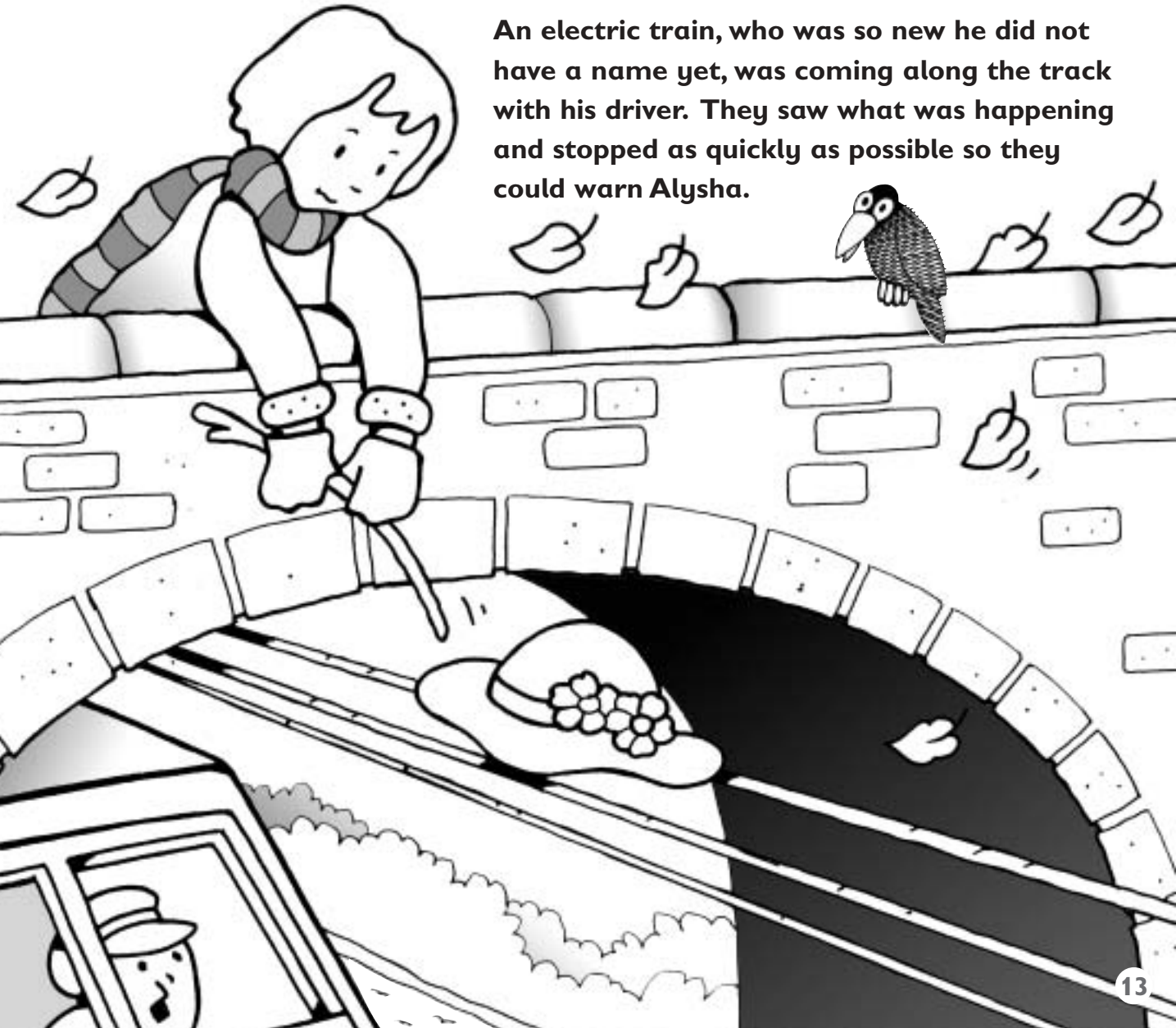


Alysha was thunderstruck.

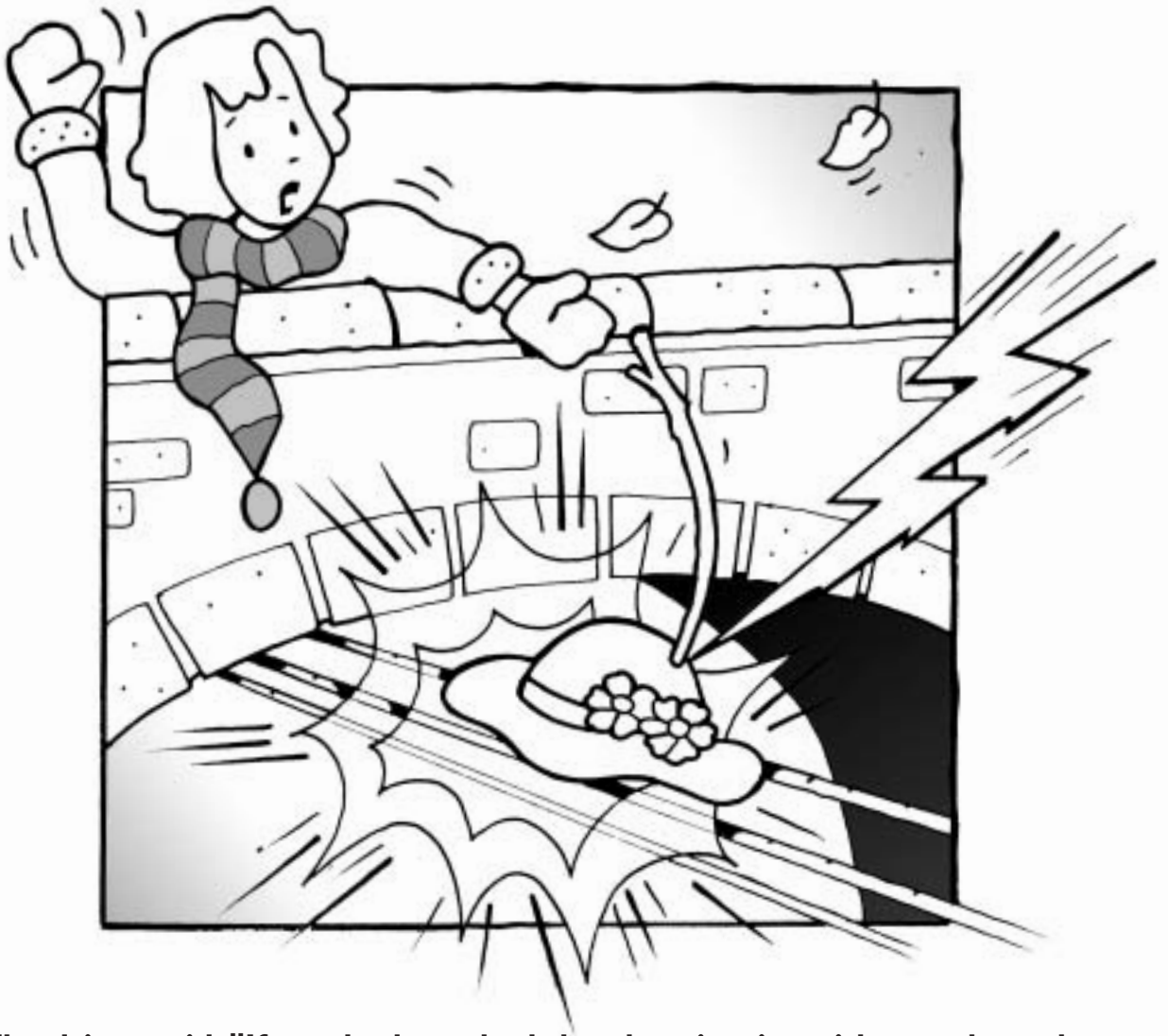
"My new hat!" she wailed. "I must get it back."

A thin tree branch was lying nearby. Forgetting about the electricity warning signs, Alysha leaned as far over the bridge as she dared, carefully lowering the branch towards her hat.

An electric train, who was so new he did not have a name yet, was coming along the track with his driver. They saw what was happening and stopped as quickly as possible so they could warn Alysha.



"STOP!" The voice was so loud Alysha dropped the branch. As she did so she heard a loud **BANG** and there was a brilliant bright blue flash like lightning.



The driver said, "If you had touched the electric wire with your branch you could have been killed. You don't even have to touch the wires to be hurt, because electricity can jump a long way."

"My....my hat," Alysha said weakly.

**"I'm sure we can do something about that,"
said the driver.**

**"I wouldn't have expected your hat to stay
there very long in this wind.**

It's blown to the side of the line already.

I'll see you get it back."



Later that day the driver was as good as his word.

Alysha got her beloved hat back, but her narrow escape had also taught her a lesson.

The burn mark on the hat always reminds her never to take chances with electricity on the railway ever again.

