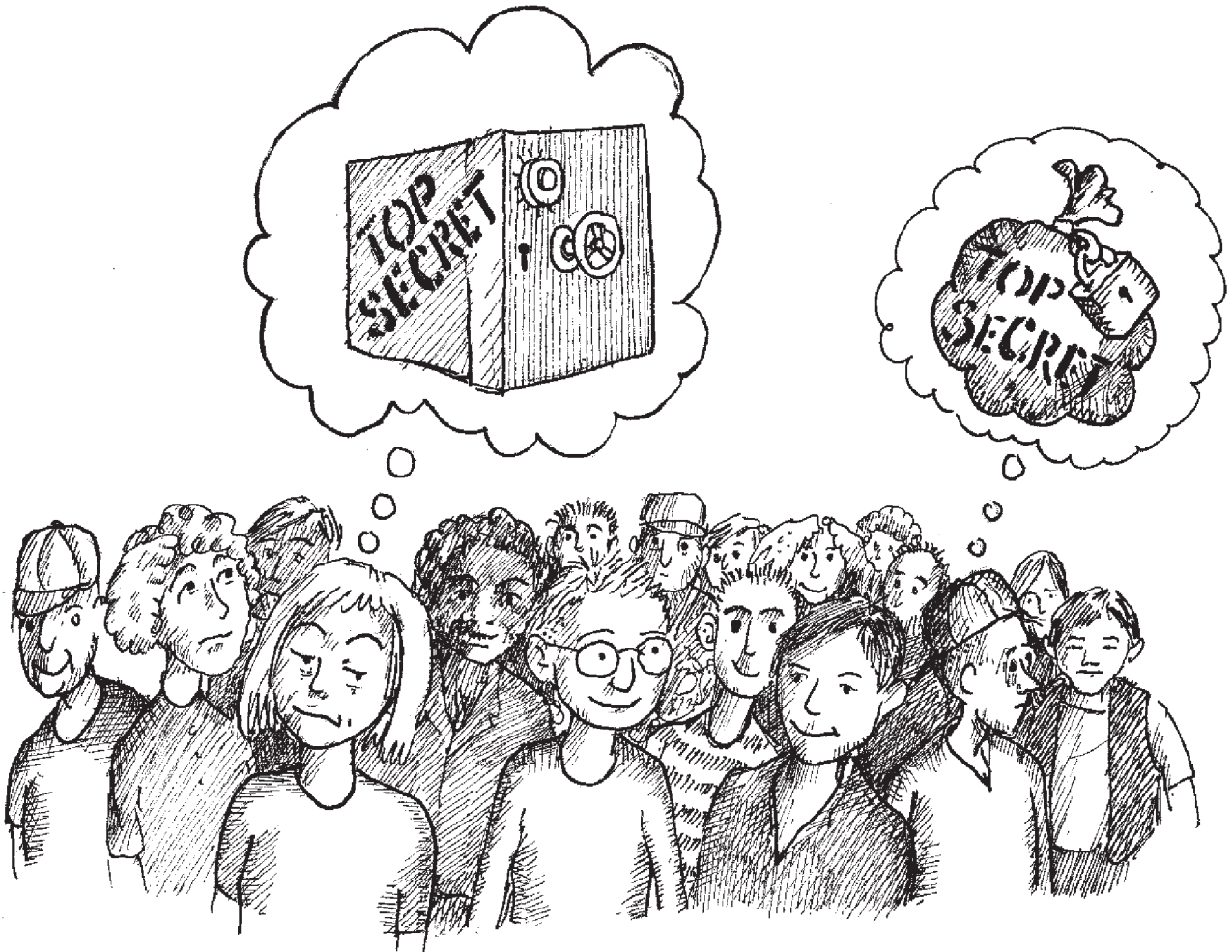


The secret problem

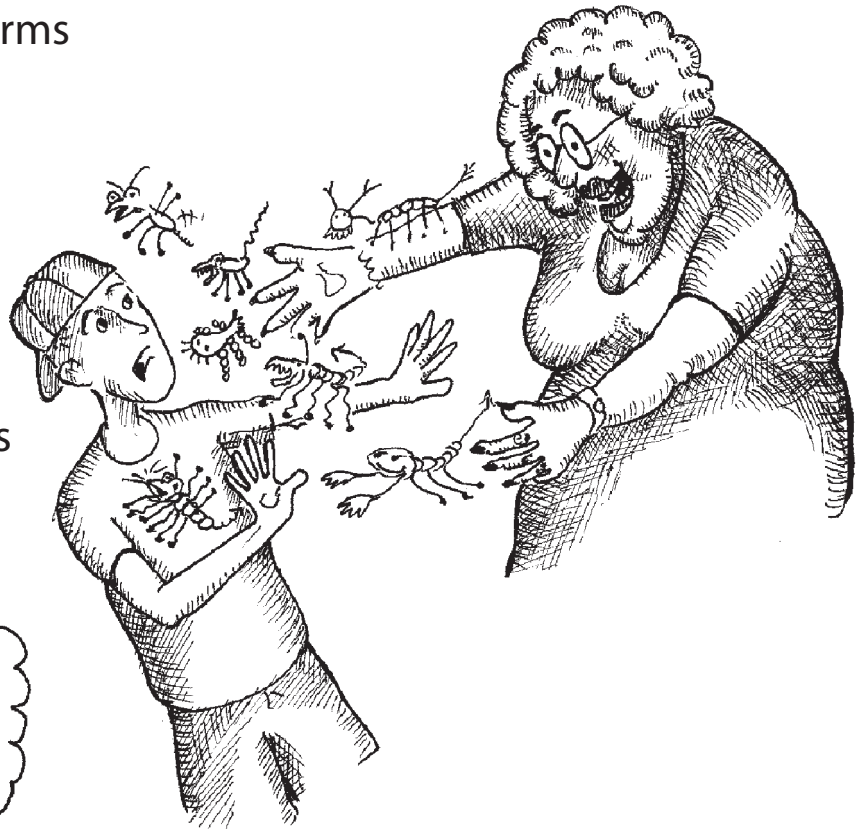
Some children and teenagers have a secret problem. They think that if others knew, they would laugh or think they were weird.



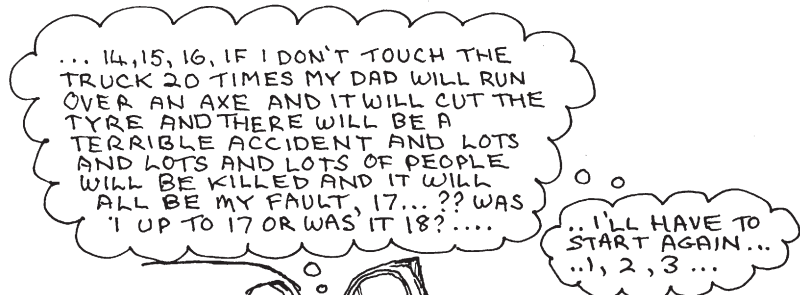
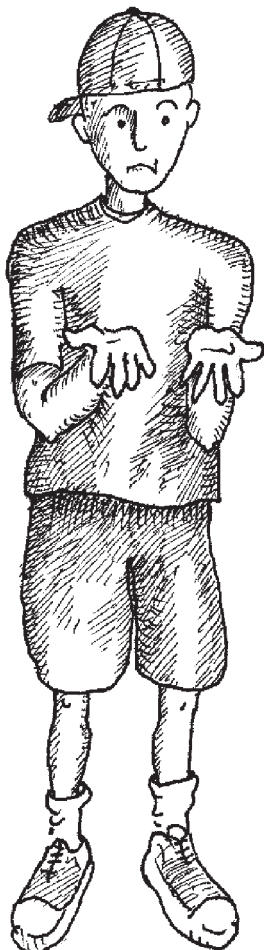
This secret problem can be the way strange ideas keep coming into your head even though you know they are silly. Or it could be doing really dumb things over and over again. Having the strange ideas and doing the dumb things often happen together.

If you have the secret problem it might make you think that...

...you will get germs from people...



...or worry that your hands are dirty, when you know that they are not...



...or fear that something bad will happen to you, your family or other people you like, if you don't do a special thing.

These things you do again and again are called...

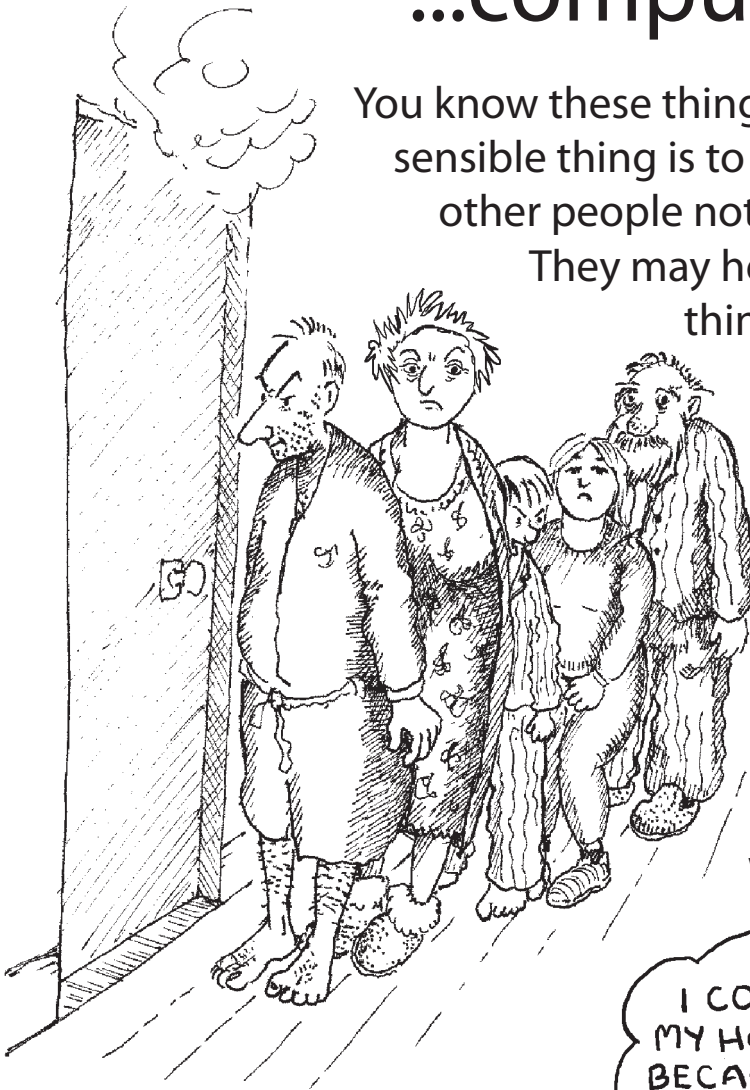
...compulsions.

You know these things are dumb and that the sensible thing is to stop but you can't. When other people notice they often try to help.

They may help you wash, or clean things for you, or arrange things in a way you like.

But they can get fed up with these things you do and often this makes them mad!

They may have to wait outside the bathroom door while you wash and wash and wash.



I COULDN'T DO MY HOMEWORK BECAUSE I HAD TO COUNT MY PENCILS FORTY TIMES.

They may have to wait while you arrange your room, or clothes or count things over and over again.

Teachers get mad because often your school work doesn't get finished.

Then you get mad back because they don't understand your secret problem and you are too embarrassed to tell them.

