

IN
PICTURES
AND
CONVERSATIONS



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Nika Dubrovsky

WHAT ARE KINGS?

edifying and truthful stories

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

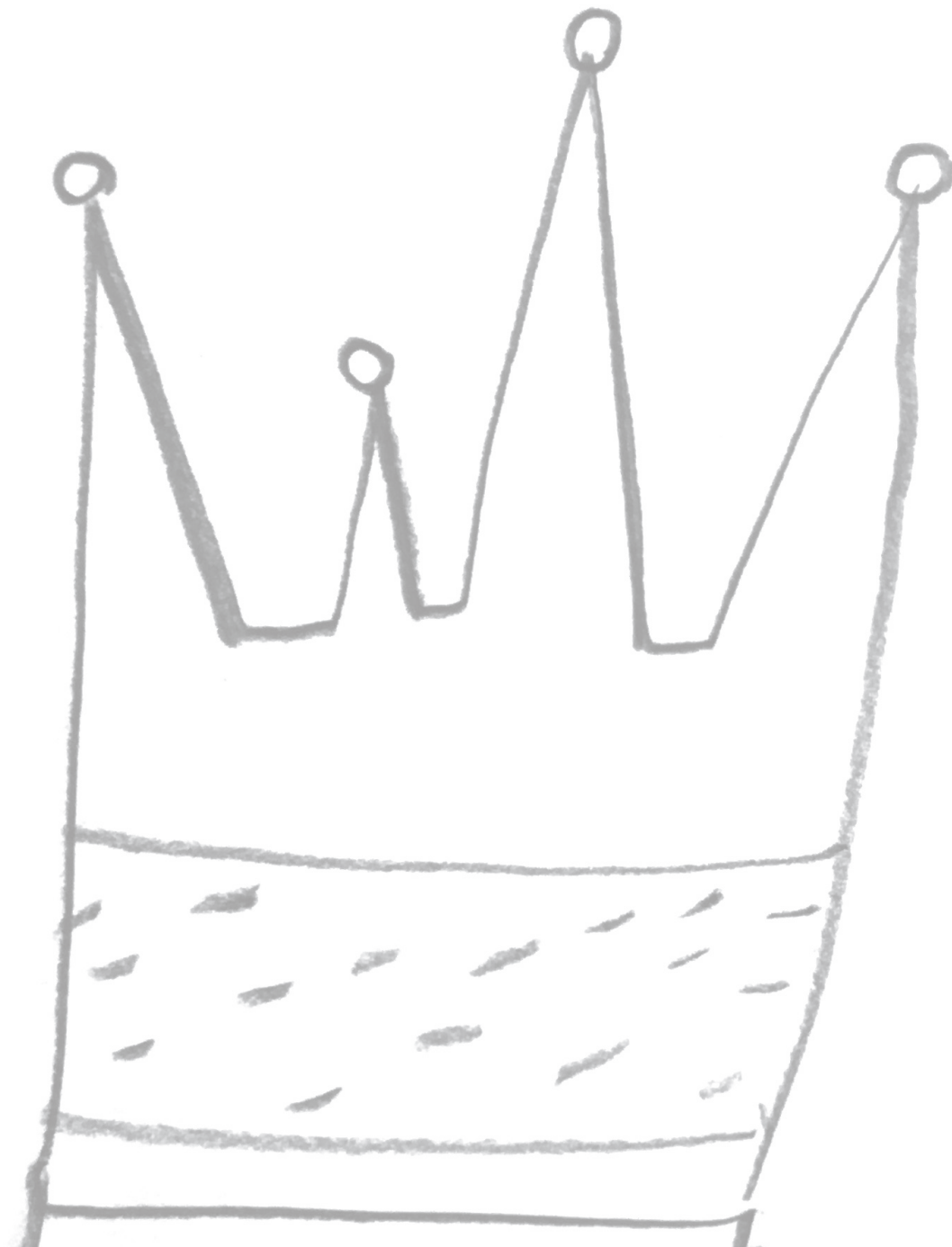


ANTHROPOLOGY
FOR KIDS

2010-2022

INTRO

Dear Reader: We have all read fairy and folk tales about kings and queens, princesses and princes, palaces, courts, lavish outfits, and beyond.



No one knows where the first kings and queens came from. It happened too long ago. Perhaps it doesn't even matter that much. It's just important to remember that they weren't always there, and they don't necessarily always have to be. Once upon a time, either there were no kings, or there were just imaginary, play kings. Or kings for a day or a week or year. But there weren't kingdoms where everybody always had to do whatever some king or queen said.

So that's one very common mistake: thinking that there were always kings. Another one, even more common, is to think that, well, maybe for most of history, most of us have been ruled by kings and queens, but we certainly have nothing like that any more. That might seem true because there are very few people nowadays that call themselves kings and queens, and the ones that do, really can't behave like kings and queens used to, ordering people around, taking their things, even killing them more or less as they had a mind to. But as we'll see, things have changed, but they haven't changed nearly as much as we like to think they have.

One thing no one can deny: kings and queens are fun to think about. That's why people like to dress up as kings or queens, or play games where they get to be kings or queens, or why there are so many books and stories about them. So why write another one? Well, the reason

we wanted to write this book is mainly to ask: why do we find kings and queens so interesting? What is it we really like about them, and what is it we'd find annoying or even terrifying if one was actually around? Where did they come from and why do they never seem to go away? Is it possible to keep all the things we like about kings and queens and get rid of all the other ones?

This book, then, is an illustrated collection of questions and answers that help us get to the bottom of all this. But it also meant to be entertaining in its own right, because, let's face it, kings and queens are pretty entertaining. We'll see what happens when some people get to do absolutely anything they want, and other people try to come up with all sorts of games and clever strategies to keep them out of trouble. We'll see what happens when servant girls conquer the world, mummies who pretend they're still alive, and parents build make-believe towns where everyone's an actor so their children never have to leave the palace grounds. But we don't want to give too much away.

**WE HOPE YOU HAVE AS MUCH
FUN AS WE DID FIGURING ALL
THIS OUT!
NIKA AND DAVID**

WHERE DO KINGS COME FROM?

No 1

What if you could convince your friends and neighbors that you are a goddess, or at least somewhat divine and descended from the gods?

What if they believed that you were born somehow different from them?

DRAW YOUR
SELF-PORTRAIT.

Maybe you can make thunder and lightning.

Maybe you can flip the whole world upside down? fly?

Or speak in the language of the animals and the birds?

Surely these powers are enough to prove your divine right to rule over other people.

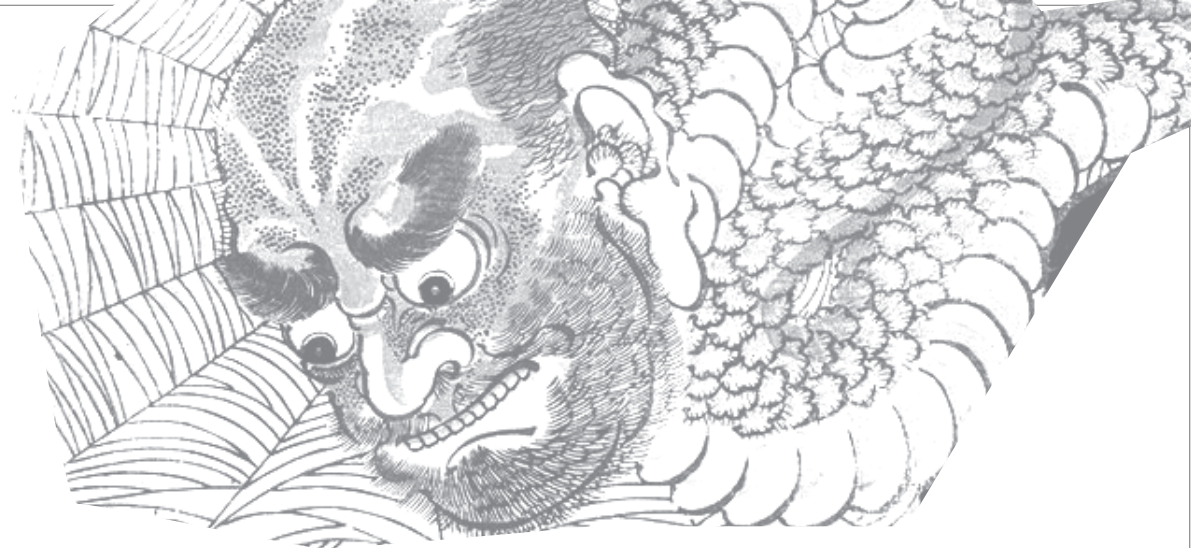
MAKE UP A
NEW ROYAL
NAME FOR
YOURSELF!

NOT KINGS, BUT GODS

No 2

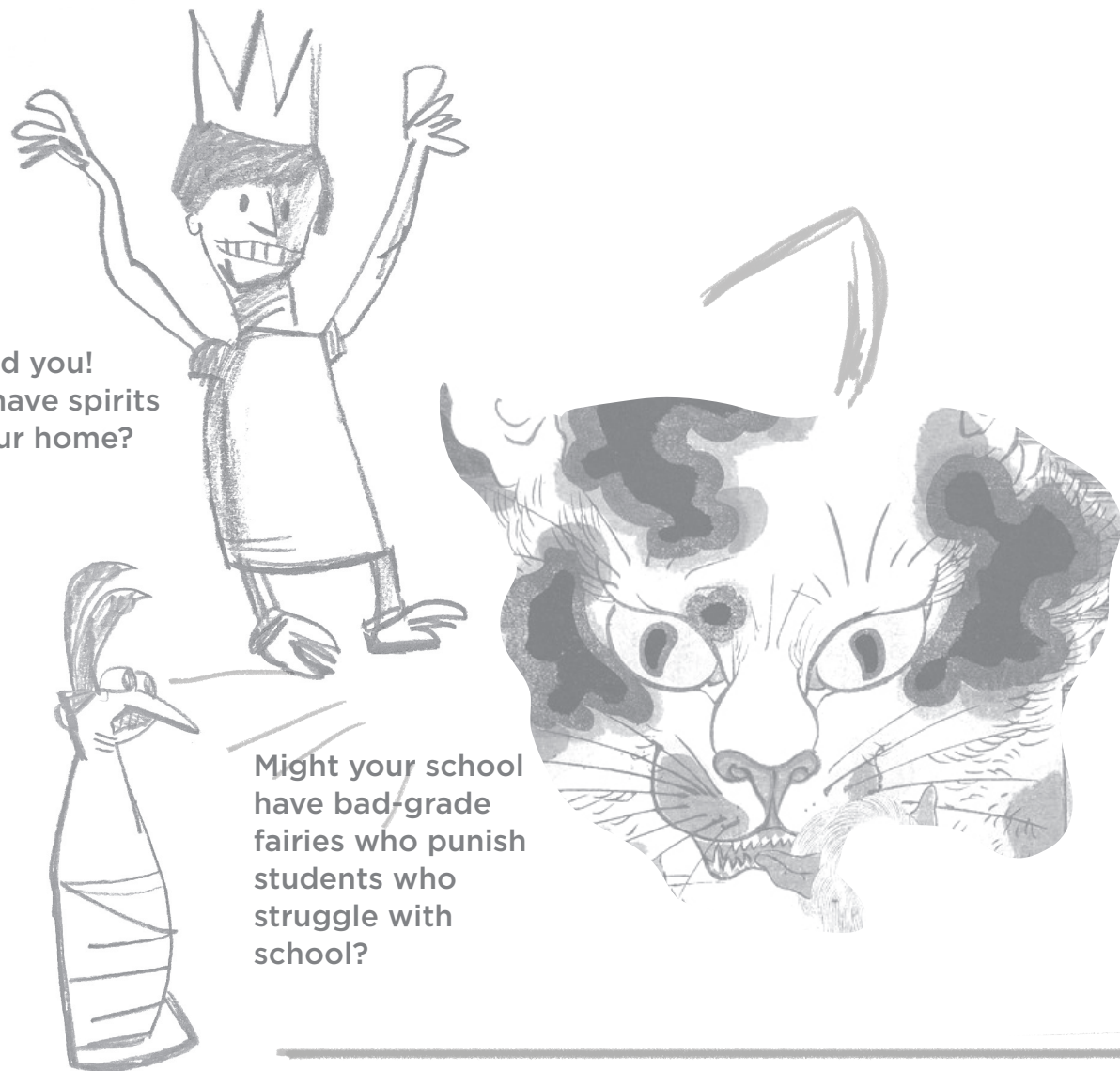
People who live in small bands of hunter-and-gatherer tribes rarely have kings. Perhaps they know each other too well.

But often, they believed in spirit kings, that is divine rulers of the skies or the seas or even the sun.



What kind of human would these spirits obey? Who would they follow?

Look around you!
Might you have spirits
living in your home?



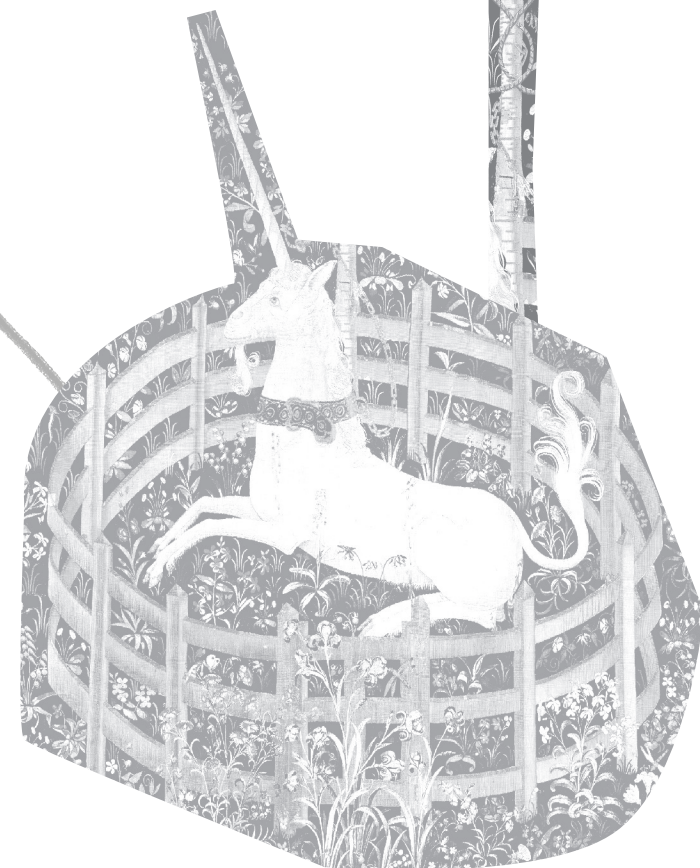
Might your school
have bad-grade
fairies who punish
students who
struggle with
school?

IMAGINE WHAT THESE
SPIRIT KINGS MIGHT
LOOK LIKE AND DRAW
THEM HERE. KINGS
WHO RULE OVER THE
SPIRITS AROUND YOU.

FUNNY GODS №23

Some people believe in funny gods who fart, spit, blow their noses, and giggle.

Often such gods are greedy bullies. Some were once all-powerful and some people believe they even created us humans simply to make fun of us. Thank goodness humans now live on their own and these stupid and greedy gods have all just disappeared.

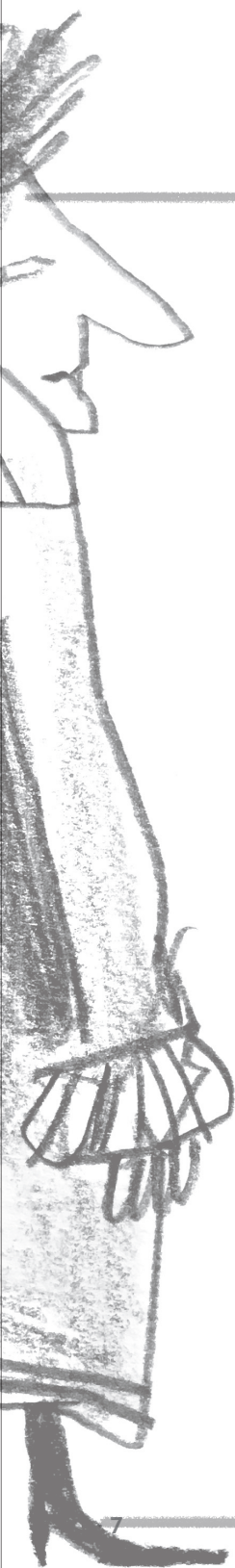


DRAW THE GREEDY,
FUNNY, OR JUST
PLAIN FUNNY GODS
OF YESTERYEAR.

KINGS AS A STRANGER №4

We will never know when or how the first king showed up.

But we do know that kings are almost always people (usually men but not always) who are in some way regarded as different from most other people. Often kings are foreigners, sometimes even aliens or the human children of gods. Archaeologists unearthing ancient burials often find in royal graves the remains of very uncommon humans, such as dwarves or giants or albinos. It appears that for much of our history, humans saw uniqueness as divine.



**DRAW SOME VERY
UNIQUE KINGS INSIDE
OF THESE THREE
SQUARES.**

**LET THEM HAVE
ENORMOUS EARS OR
LOTS OF LEGS.
LET THEM BE REALLY
INCREDIBLE!**

**SURPRISE
YOURSELF!**

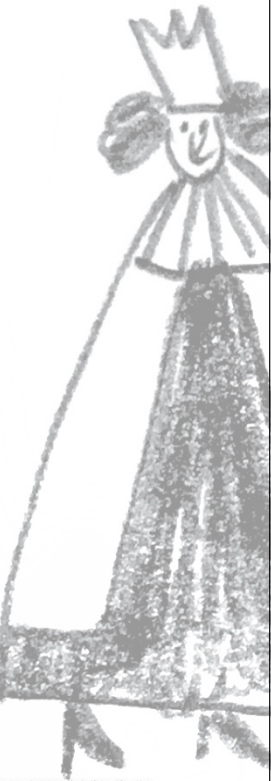
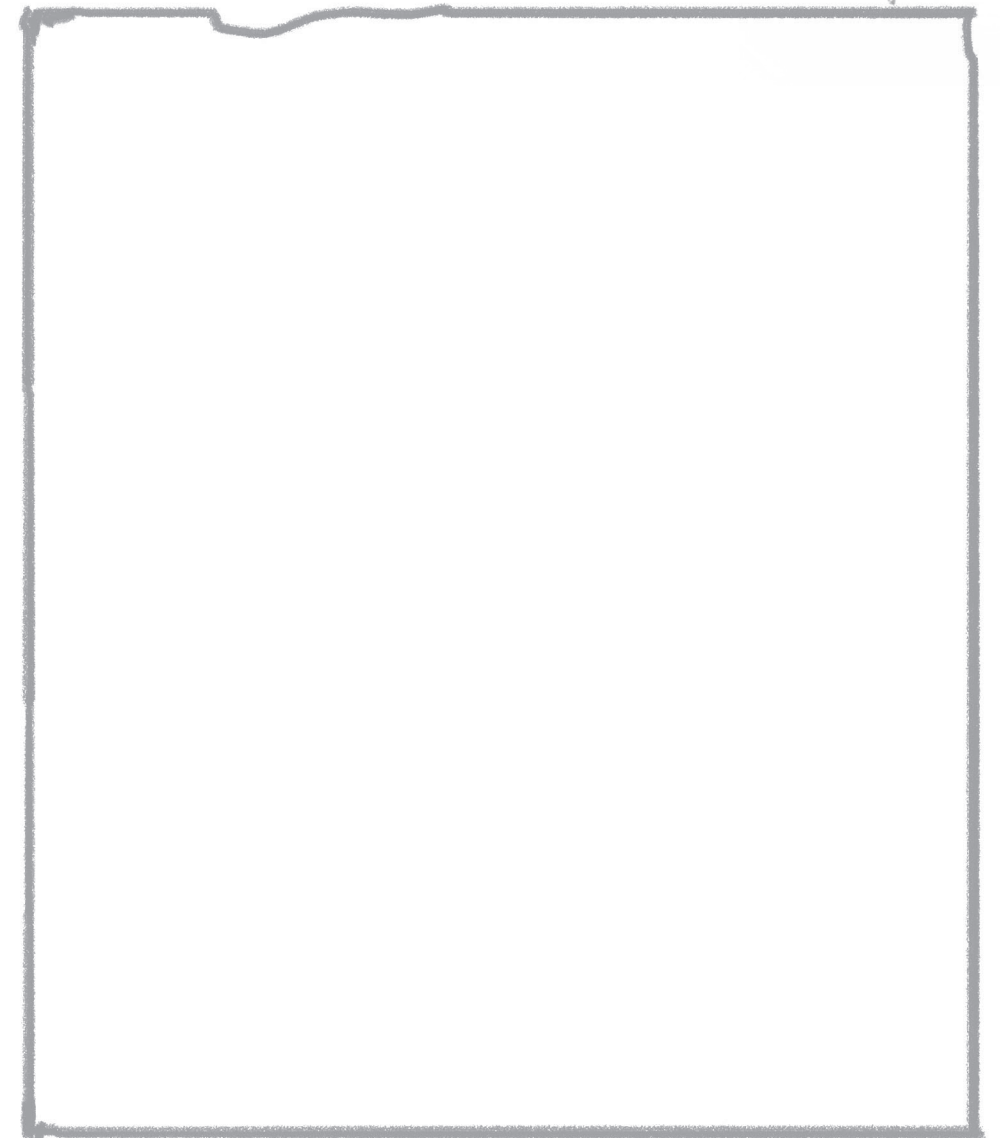
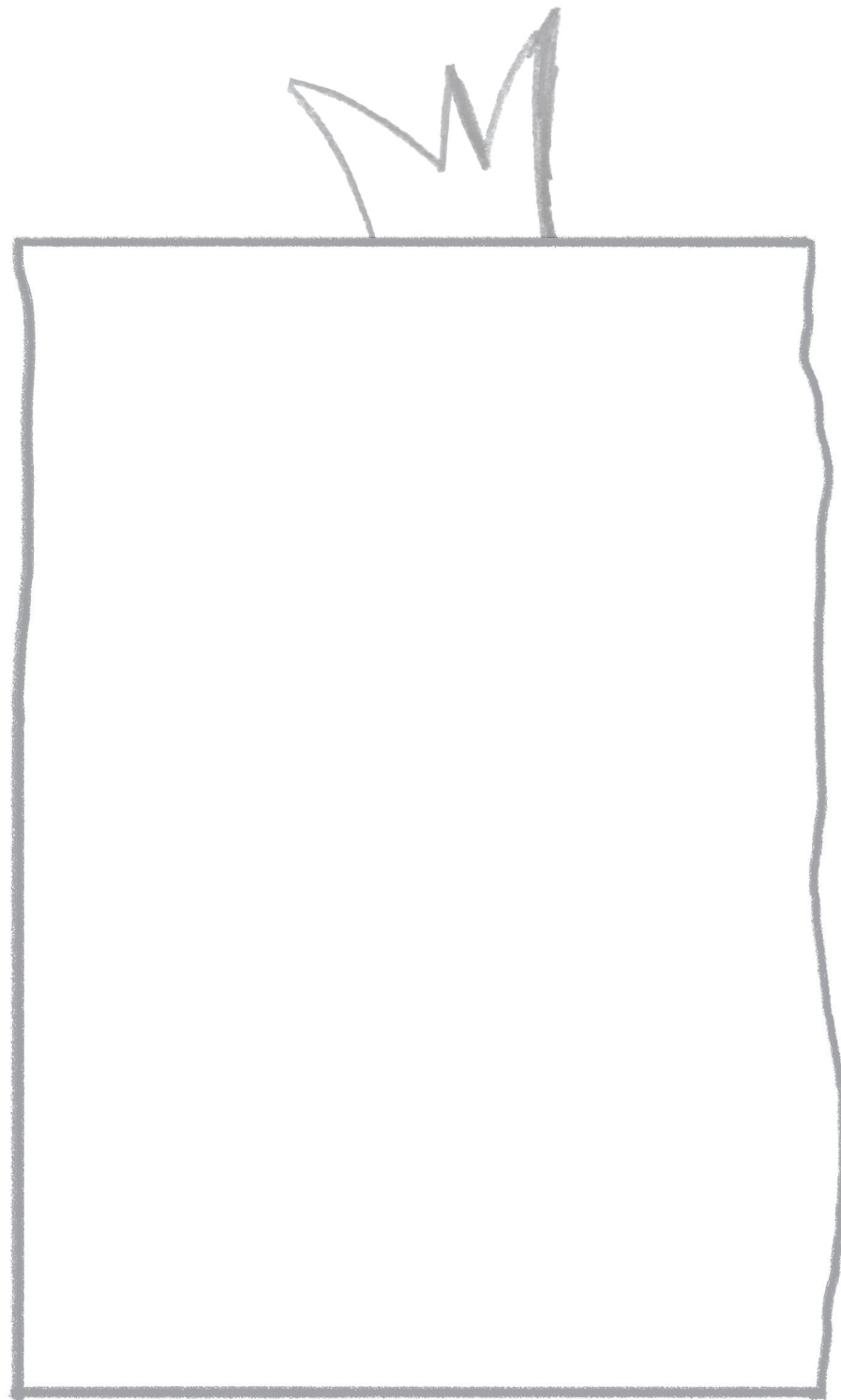


KINGS' CLOTHES No 5

Archaeological excavations of their tombs show that mammoth hunter tribes wore very lavish costumes.

Hundreds of people worked for hours and years to adorn a king with necklaces made from the teeth and bones of wild animals. But while they certainly had the best jewelry around these fashionable kings had no palaces. They maintained no armies or police. They seemed only to get together from time to time with their subjects to create something incredible, such as feasts, festivals or magical rituals.

YOU DREW SOME
INCREDIBLE KINGS
ON THE LAST PAGE—
NOW DRAW FOR THEM
SOME IMPRESSIVE
COSTUMES!



THE KING AS A GOD AND THE GOD AS A KING

No 6



This is Enlil, the
Sumerian King of
the gods.



And this is Alexander the
Great, a king who declared
himself a god.

MAKE UP AND
DRAW YOUR OWN
KING OF GODS
AND A KING WHO
DECLARES HIMSELF
A GOD.



KINGS AND THEIR LAWS

No 7

HERE ARE THREE ROYAL DOCUMENTS. WRITE THREE TYPES OF LAWS: A WISE ONE, A FOOLISH ONE, AND A WICKED ONE

In democracies, we believe that all citizens are equal before the law.

But in monarchies, kings and queens make laws for other people to obey. They do not have to obey those laws themselves—just as the gods make law for humans but not for themselves. Sometimes rulers make good and clever laws: «Help the poor!» and «Be kind to strangers!» Sometimes they make strange laws: «Don't eat fish on Friday!» But, sadly, sometimes they make terrible laws: «Seize and execute all beggars!»



wise king

SIGN WITH YOUR SPECIAL ROYAL SIGNATURE AND DESIGN AN OFFICIAL ROYAL SEAL TO COMPLETE THEM.



foolish king



wicked king

HOW DOES THE KING EVEN KNOW THAT HE IS A KING?

No 8

THEY WILL ...

Imagine something that
set your King apart from
everyone else in his
kingdom. They will fly

DRAW WINGS FOR
THEM

Kings tend to have a lot of kingly
accessories: a scepter, a crown, a
mantle, palaces, royal rings, and
seals.

Do you remember the wonderful
illusions that Goodwin from the
Wizard of Oz showed the citizens
of Emerald City?

They will breathe
fire, like real
dragons

DRAW FIRE



SUBJECTS

Okay, so there are Kings and Queens, and everyone else has to obey them. But who is «everyone else»? Who are these «subjects,» the «people»?

No. 9

Every Kingdom has its own King. They are all his subjects, known as commoners. They are all equally not the King and that's what they all have in common.

Imagine that you are a King or Queen and that you rule over a kingdom of subjects.



What are your subjects like? Perhaps they would all be quite cheerful and happy under your rule. Perhaps they are able to fly?



**DESCRIBE
YOUR PEOPLE
HERE!**

[illegible]

UNHAPPY AND SAD KING

No. 10

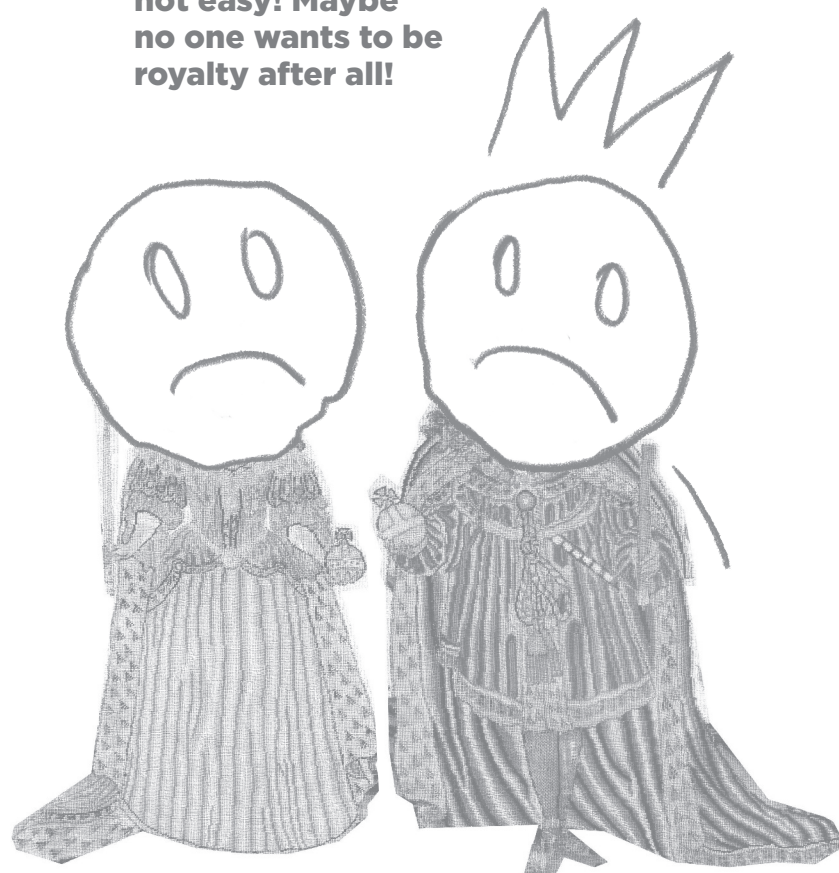
In a King's household lived many people to serve his family.

This may sound wonderful for kings but the reason a king needs so many people around is that there are rules to being divine. Often, kings could not walk on the ground (they were carried by servants on a stretcher). Many were not allowed to talk to commoners (all official decrees were announced by a special herald). They typically had to wear special but very uncomfortable clothes which were made to look good, not feel good). Their marriages were usually arranged by their parents more so for the sake of power than for love or happiness.


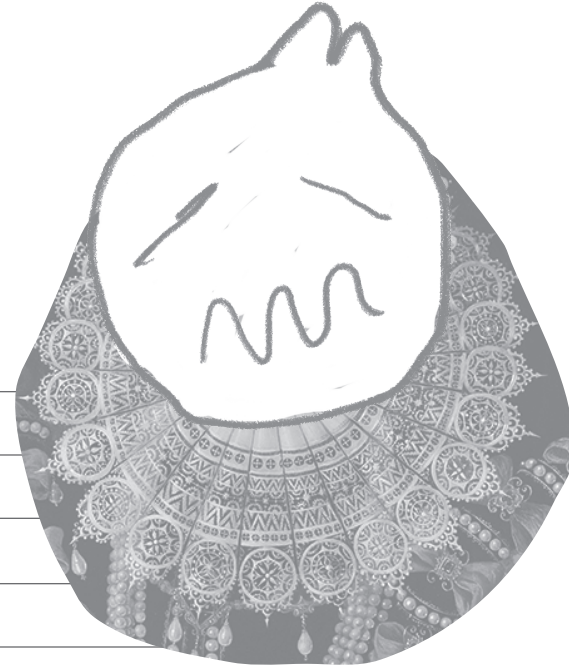


**DRAW AN
UNHAPPY KING
OR A SAD
QUEEN.**

Being royalty was not easy! Maybe no one wants to be royalty after all!



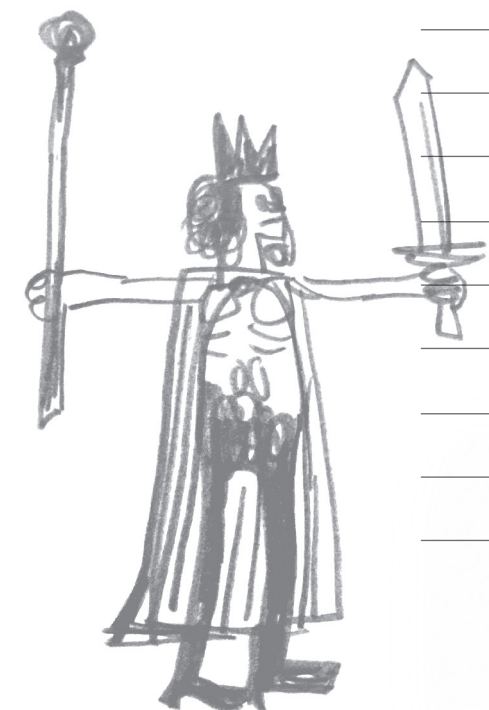
WRITE A RESIGNATION LETTER HERE FROM A KING OR QUEEN WHO NO LONGER WANT TO BE RULERS. LET THEM TELL OF THEIR MISFORTUNES.



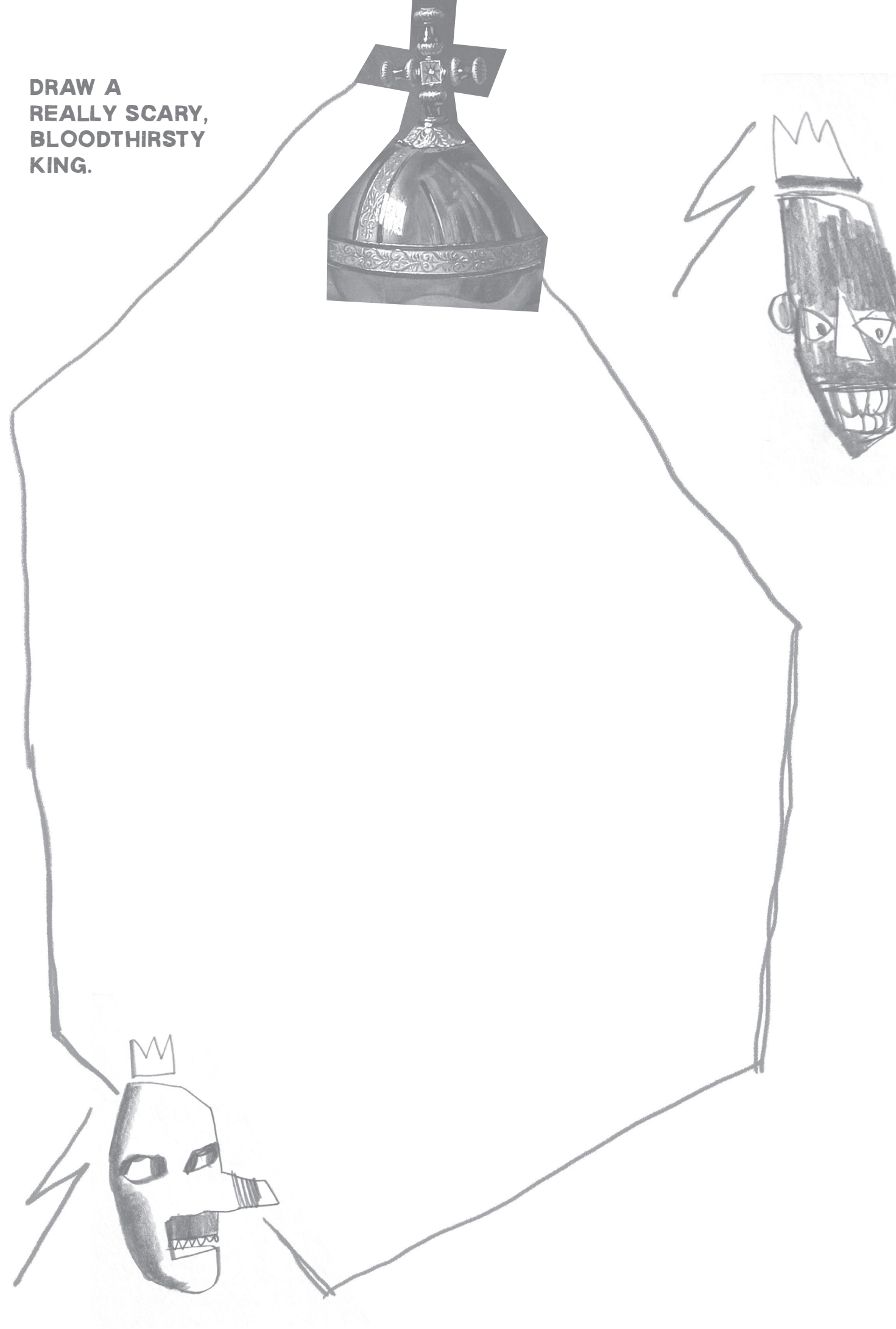
No. 11

**MAKE UP
AND WRITE
WICKED LAWS
MADE UP BY A
BLOODTHIRSTY
KING.**

**Because they
had to show
everyone that
they were
different.**



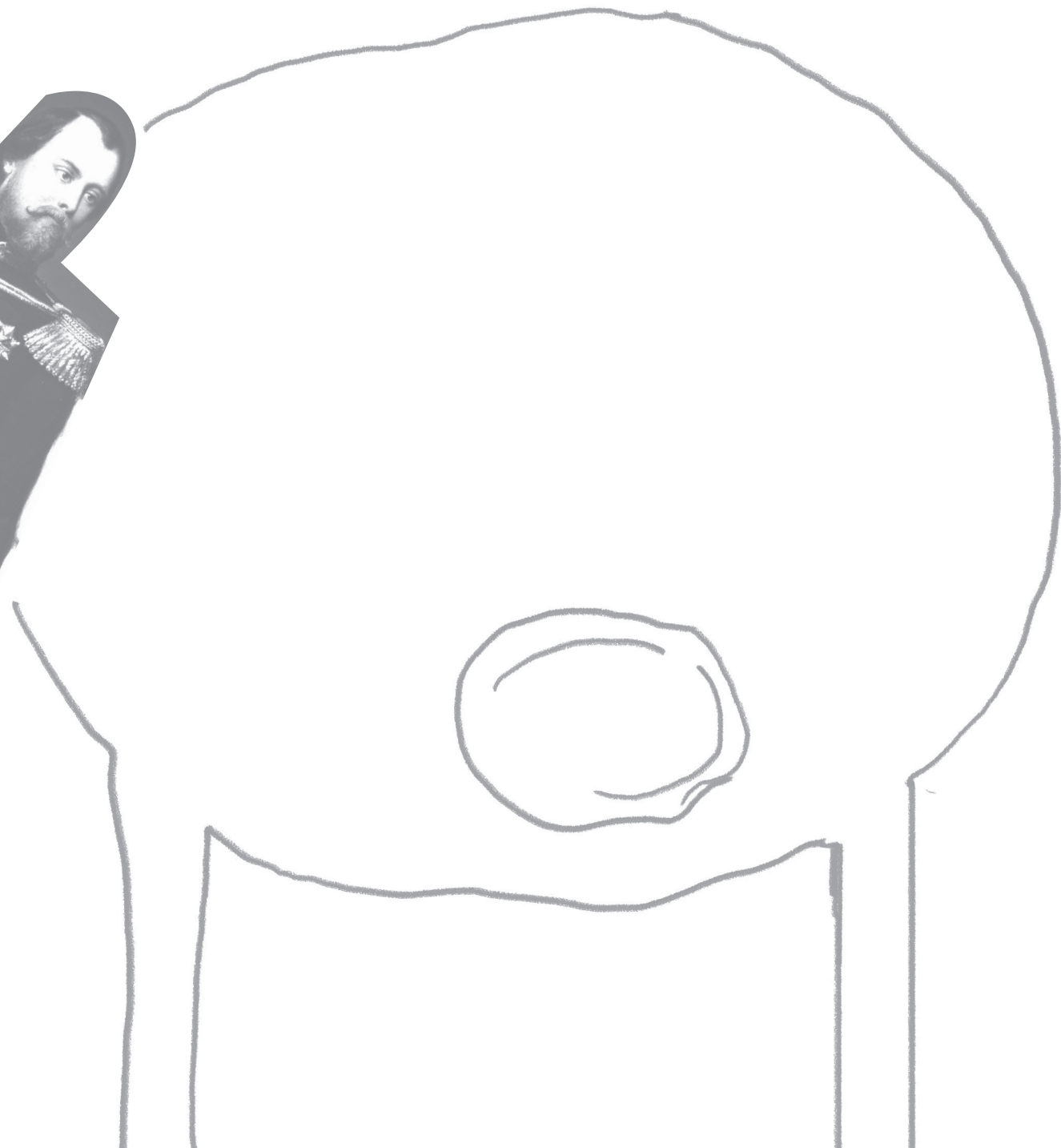
**DRAW A
REALLY SCARY,
BLOODTHIRSTY
KING.**



KINGLY POWER

So how did kings manage to keep their power?

Royalty ate, drank, dressed, and lived better than most ordinary people. Everyone seemed to have accepted this inequality.



**DRAW A KING'S
FEAST ON ONE SIDE
OF THE PAGE AND A
COMMONER'S DINNER
ON THE OTHER.**



And if kings ever got
bored ruling over their
subjects, how did they
have fun?

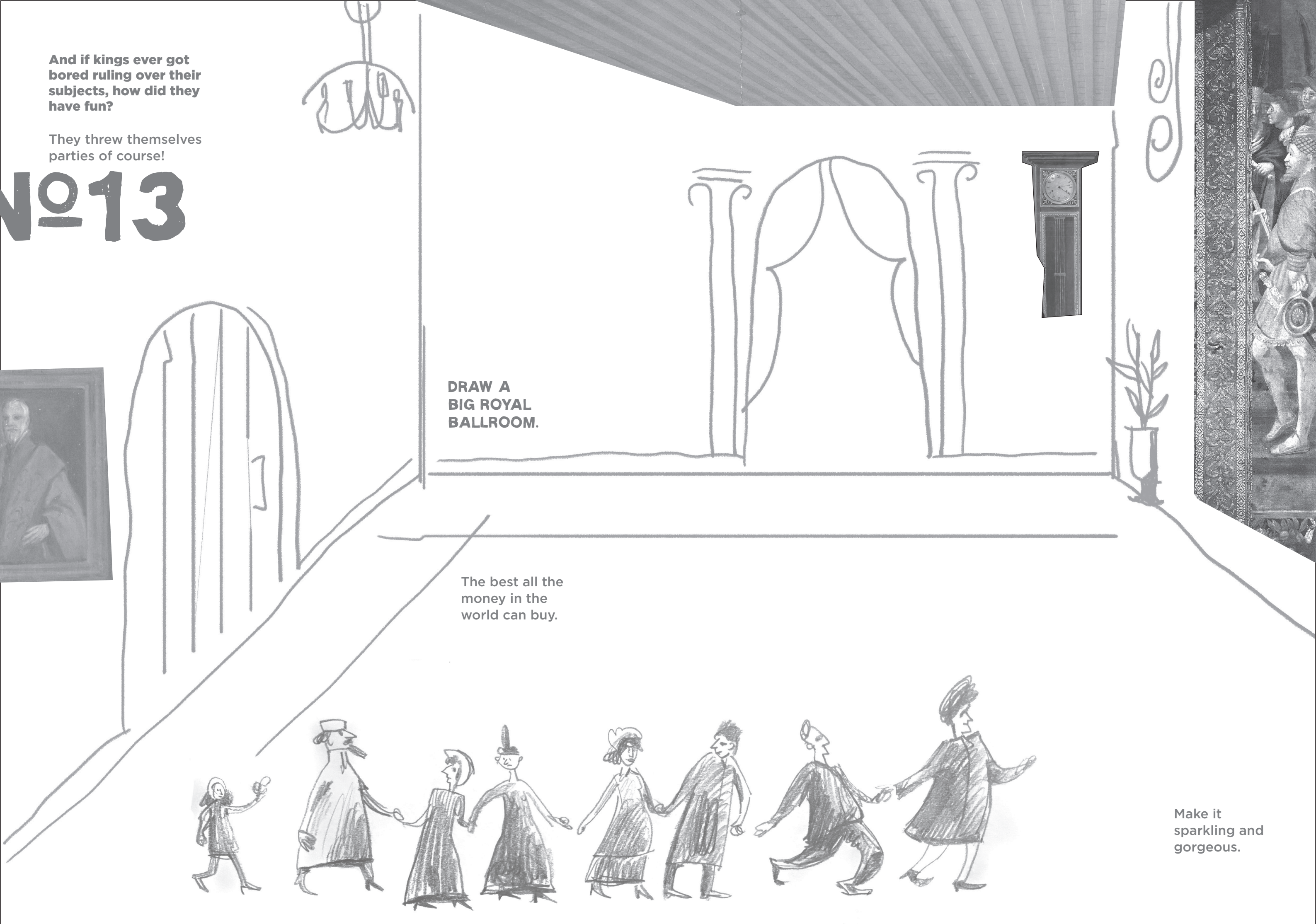
They threw themselves
parties of course!

No 13

**DRAW A
BIG ROYAL
BALLROOM.**

The best all the
money in the
world can buy.

Make it
sparkling and
gorgeous.



JESTERS

No 14

Jesters were usually even stranger than the kings.



In many royal courts, no one but jesters were allowed to tell the truth to a king. In some kingdoms, the jesters were the freest people around.

And yet their job was to make everyone laugh!

THEY WORE COLORFUL COSTUMES, WORE LOTS OF MAKEUP, AND ACTED QUITE WEIRD.



KINGS AND THEIR SUBJECTS

No 15

Do you believe that blue blood runs through royal veins? That's what many kings and queens today still believe.

But what they think doesn't matter! We're talking about your kings and queens. What makes your kings be different from their subjects? Are they from space? Or the future? Maybe they are werewolves.

LET'S SEE WHAT
YOUR KING AND
QUEEN ARE MADE
OF!

Point out the
color of their
blood.

DRAW AND
DESCRIBE THEIR
EYES, HOW MANY
LEGS, HEADS, AND
EARS THEY HAVE.



Nothing about them
is the same as about
common people!



ROYAL DEATH

When kings are still alive, they make their subjects build them giant pyramids and luxurious tombs filled with treasures.

Everyone knows that one day they are going to die and make sure that kingship can outlive them.

№16



But what is this «kingship»?



And is it possible to get rid of it?



Do we need to get rid of it?



THE KINGDOM

No 17

We talk about kings all the time but kings imply kingdoms.

A kingdom is all the land and people over which a king rules. Sometimes, a king even rules over other kings!

NO ONE REALLY UNDERSTANDS IT, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN DRAW IT.

TRY DRAWING ONE GIANT KING WITH MANY LITTLE KINGS AND PEOPLE INSIDE.

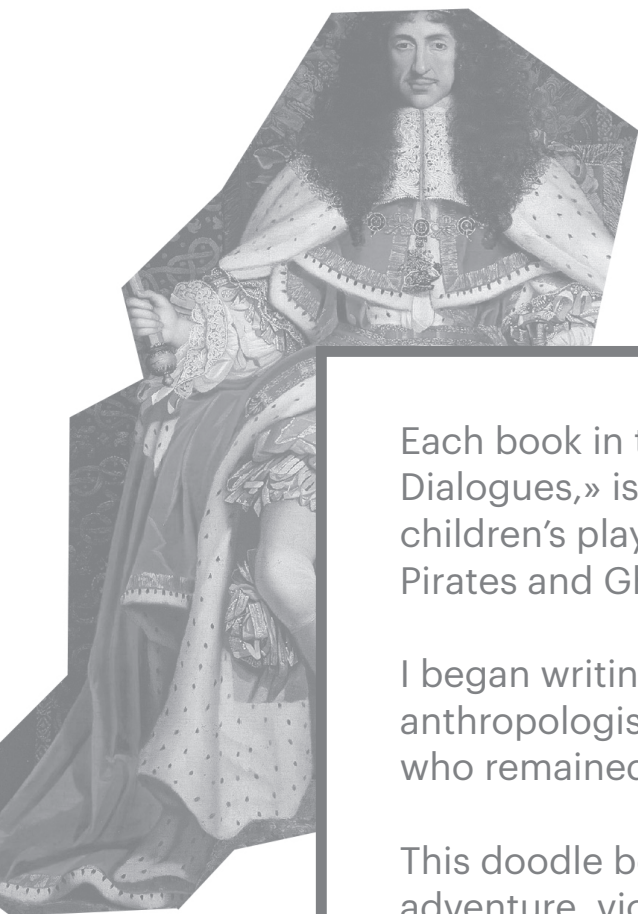


№ 18

Maybe you can find them.



**WRITE ON TOP
OF OR NEXT TO
YOUR DRAWING,
HOW THE
PEOPLE GOVERN
THEMSELVES
WITHOUT A
KING?**



Each book in the series «In Pictures and Dialogues,» is about characters from children's play: they are Kings and Queens, Pirates and Ghosts, Witches and Knights.

I began writing it with my late husband, anthropologist and activist David Graeber, who remained a child until his death.

This doodle book is about pirates, adventure, violence, magic, and freedom.

Now it's filled with your drawings and stories, so it' become our shared book and game.

Thank you, dear co-author!

