"I'm not letting you come to my birthday party!"

The other day our 5-year-old was annoyed with one of his friends.

They had clashed on the playground or in the classroom, and as we were driving home, Daniel was telling me how angry he was.

"So I said to him," he said, and he paused dramatically, "'I'm not letting you come to my birthday party!'"

There it was. The ultimate revenge. No insult could top that threat—the revoking of a birthday party invitation before it is even sent.

It didn't matter that his birthday is still four months away.

It didn't matter that the party itself hasn't been planned.

It didn't matter that he actually has no control over the guest list.

The most powerful way our little boy can voice his anger is by uninviting his friend to his party. So that's what he does in that heated moment as they're arguing about who gets to play with a truck or whose turn it is on the swing.

The preschool teachers have told me that this conversation happens all year. The children extend and revoke invitations to one another over and over and over. Listening to our little boy talk, though, I wondered what the equivalent would be in an adult world. Unfriending or blocking on Facebook, maybe? Not inviting someone out for an office happy hour?

Maybe the next time I'm disagreeing with someone, I should say, "That's it! I'm not inviting you to my birthday party!" I wonder what would happen. I have a feeling we'd start laughing.

A few days later, Daniel started talking about something fun he had done with his friend—the same one who had just been blacklisted.

"Oh, Mama," he said, "he's my best friend again."

Of course he is.