CHILDREN OF GENETICS

Sonia Goerger and Élodie Garcia

Marie, the Little Mouse

ITHACA

European Reference Network
for rare or low prevalence complex diseases

Network Intellectual Disability and Congenital Malformations (ERN ITHACA)

FONDATION IPSEN BookLab

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Marie, the Little Mouse

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One lovely autumn morning at the Baby Mouse Clinic, a little mouse, called Marie, is born. She is a pretty mouse.

But she is much, much smaller than all the others.

Many years pass.

Marie goes to school. She loves to learn. She is a good student. Even though she is older, she is still much smaller than the other mice her age. This is because Marie is born with a disease that prevents her from growing normally.

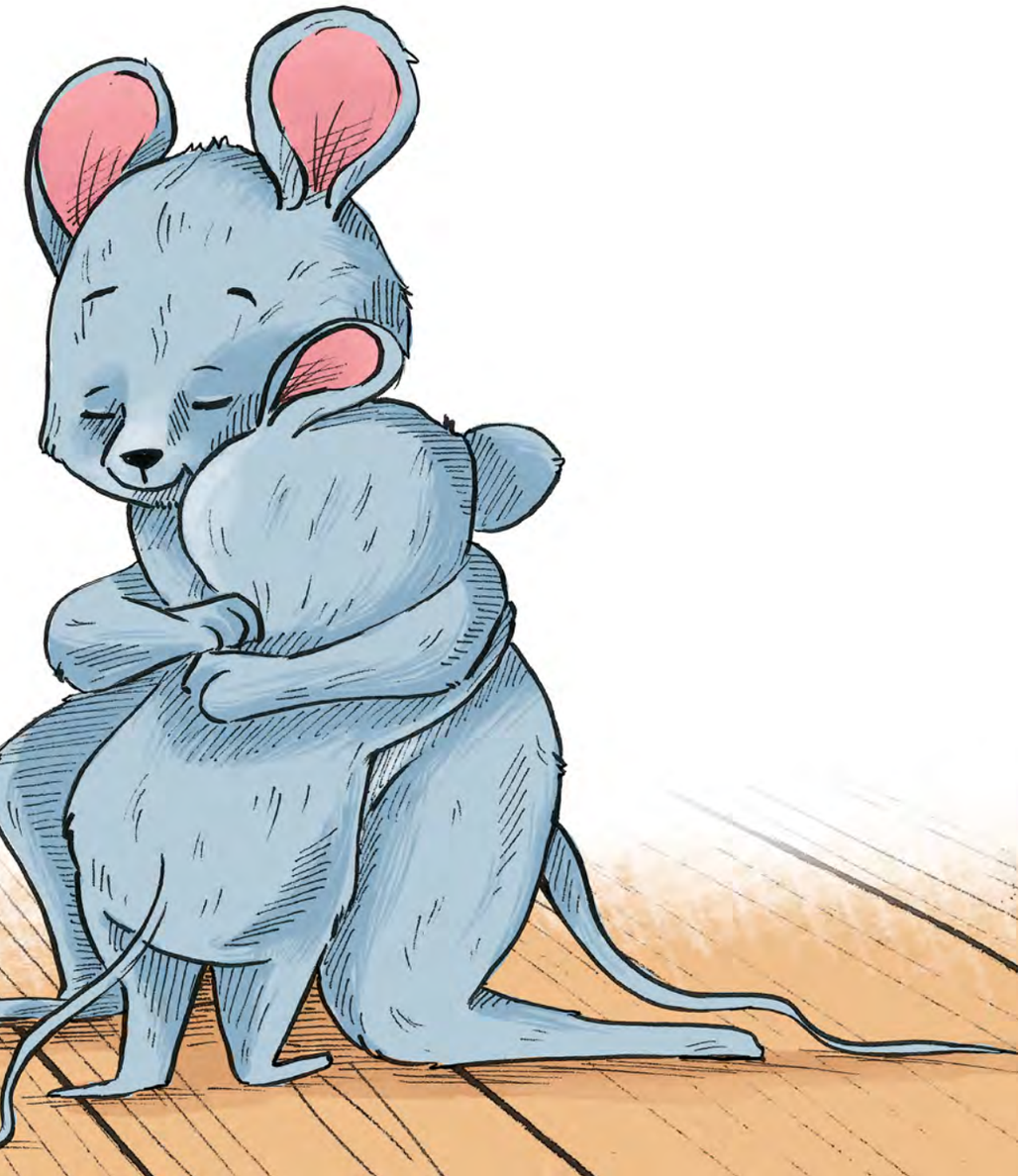
One morning, Mother and Father Mouse find Marie in her room crying. Tears fall down her cheeks.

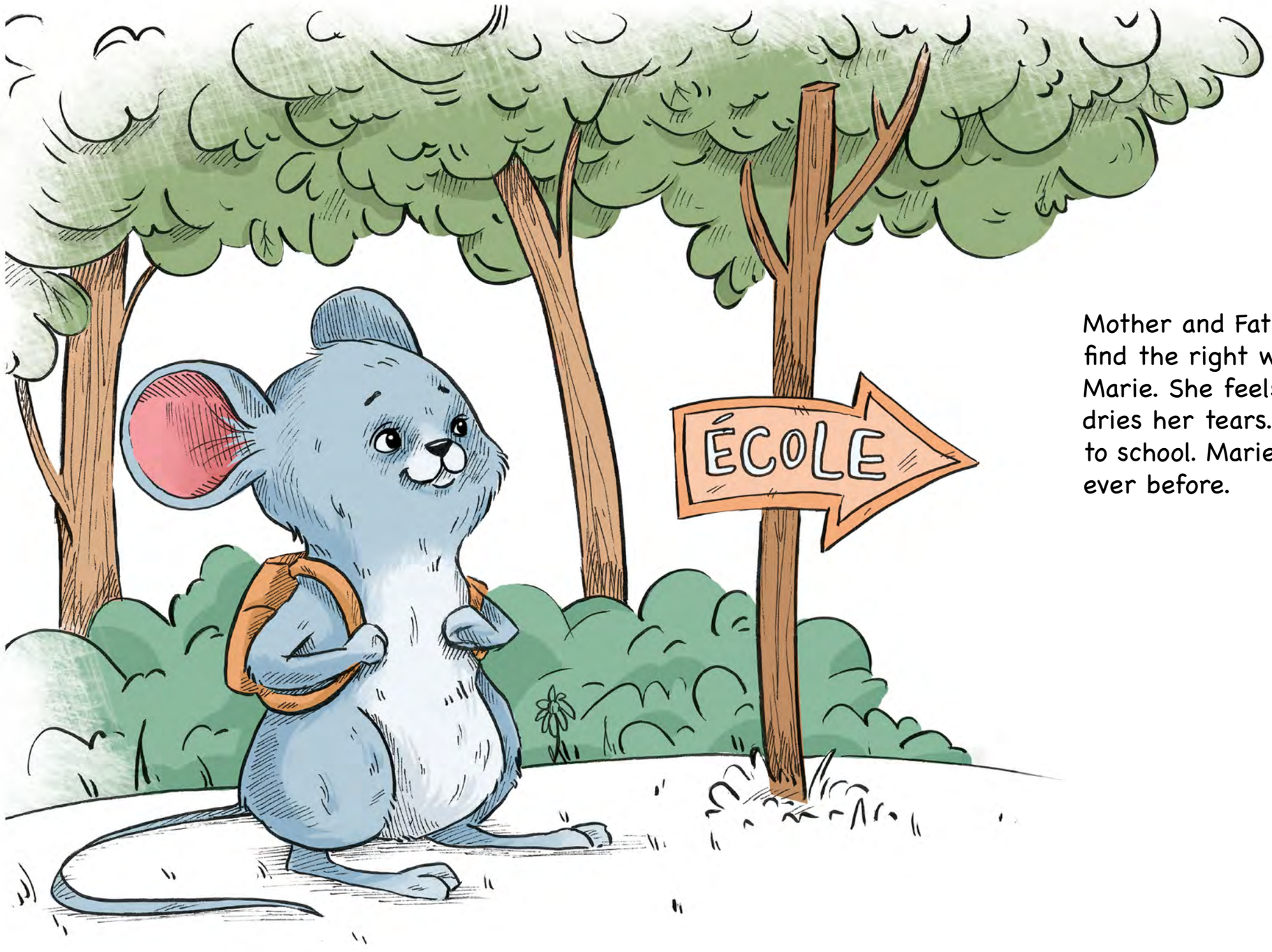
"I don't want to go to school anymore!" she sobs.

"The other kids laugh at me because I am so little."

Mother Mouse feels sad. The children at school are being mean because Marie is different. Mother Mouse hugs Marie and holds her close:

"Marie, listen to me carefully. You are beautiful, strong, and smart. And no matter what your size, you will grow up and do great things! Never let anyone make you believe otherwise."





Mother and Father Mouse always find the right words to comfort Marie. She feels much better and dries her tears. Then, she heads off to school. Marie feels braver than ever before.

During lunchtime at school,
a group of kids shout to Marie:

"Wow! It looks like she needs
to eat something more than just
soup!"

A kid wearing green glasses
frowns. He says in a nasty way,
"Did you forget to grow up or
what?"

Marie's friends take no notice of Marie's small size. They quickly stand up for her.

But all Marie wants is to run away and hide – in a mouse hole! Suddenly she remembers her mother's words.

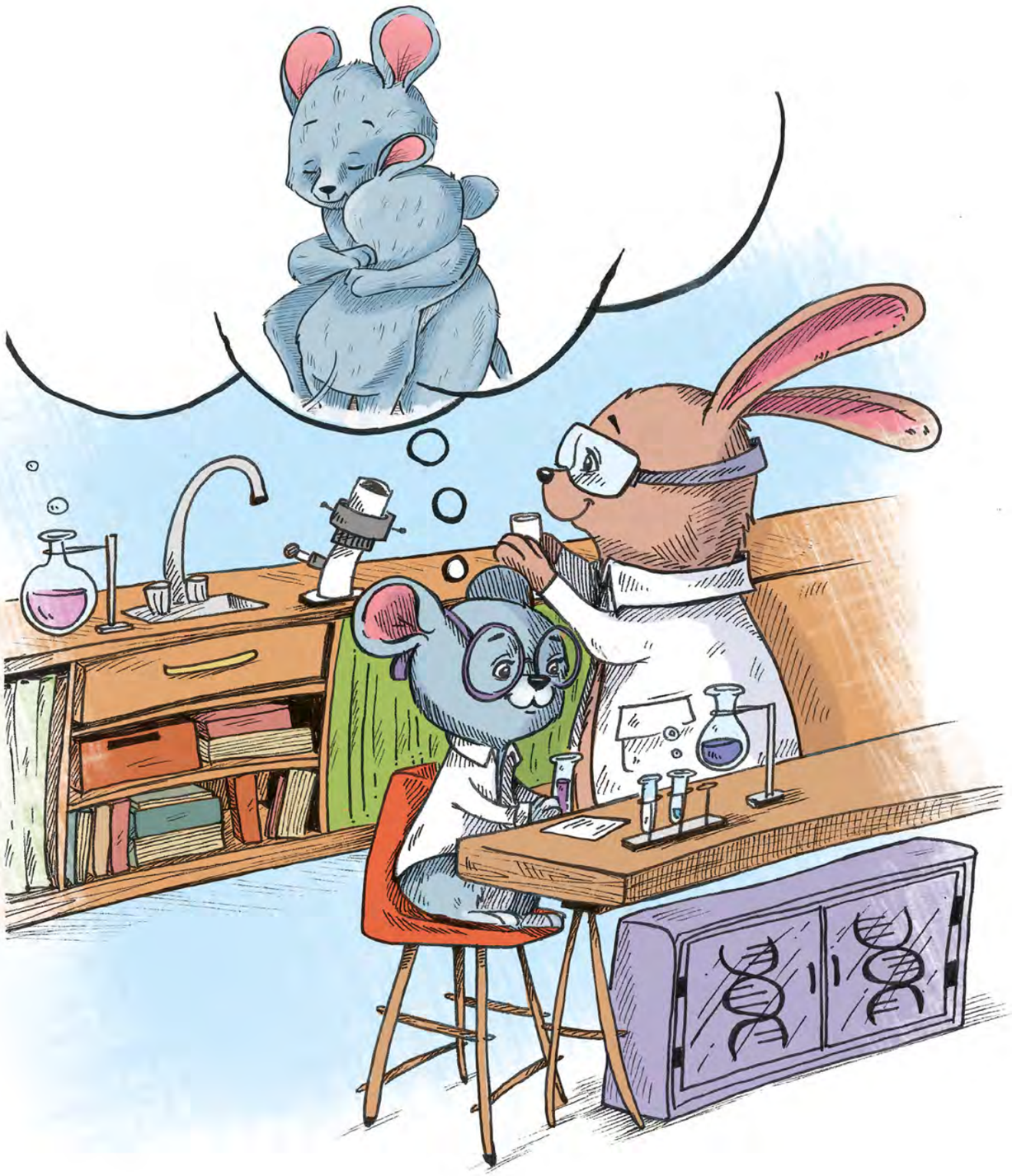
As if by magic, Mother Mouse's positive words of encouragement make Marie smile.

Marie stands, feeling proud and strong. She repeats her mother's words out loud and everyone hears.

"I'm beautiful, strong, and smart. No matter what my size, I will grow up and do great things!"

The students who behaved badly towards Marie feel ashamed of their behaviour. They start feeling very small. So small, they feel like disappearing into a mouse hole!

Many more years go by. Marie does very well in her studies after school. Her parents are very proud. Marie's friends admire her.



Marie has become a famous geneticist. She has learnt to face difficulties and hardship in a positive way.

Whenever things get difficult and don't work out, Marie repeats her mother's magic words. This brings her strength and courage.

One gentle spring morning at the Baby Mouse Clinic, a little mouse is born. She is a pretty mouse.

But she is much smaller than the others. Marie gazes at her adorable baby. She sings a lullaby and whispers:

> "You are beautiful, strong, and smart. And no matter what your size, you will grow up and do great things!"

About Achondroplasia

Achondroplasia is the most common form of short stature stemming from genetic origin. Achondroplasia is a genetic disease caused by an abnormality in the growth of bone or bone cartilage. The condition is a result of a mutation in the FGFR3 gene, carried on chromosome 4. Most commonly, it is the result of a genetic accident occurring in children. The disease can also be passed on from family members, transmitted by one of the two parents who are affected. Achondroplasia's frequency is estimated to occur in 1 out of 25,000 births. Adults affected by Achondroplasia measure between 120-130 centimeters in height for women, and 125-135 centimeters for men.

About the Author

Medical secretary, Sonia Goerger, has been welcoming and meeting numerous patients dealing with genetics for many years. This interaction inspired her to create this series of books on *Children of Genetics*.

The books within this collection address challenges these patients may face daily, in simple terms and with endearing characters.

About the Illustrator

A graphic designer for several years, Elodie Garcia is an author and illustrator of children's books and comics. The delicacy of her line allows her to approach, in a gentle way, difficult subjects. By illustrating the *Children of Genetics* book series, she hopes to help families facing rare diseases.

About the ARGAD Association

The Association for Research in Genetics and Support for Families and Professionals of Dijon-Bourgogne (ARGAD) is a non-profit association under the 1901 law, created in September 2010.

ARGAD engages in numerous activities:

- Improving reception and care conditions for patients with rare diseases in Burgundy, within the Genetics Centre of Dijon CHU;
- Raising awareness among health professionals in the Burgundy region, and among the general public regarding rare diseases;
- Contributing to a better and improved training of health professionals involved in rare diseases;
- And, supporting clinical and biological research activities in the field of genetic mutations associated with abnormalities in development and intellectual disabilities in Burgundy.

To support the ARGAD Association and its mission, visit: **http://www.translad.org/**

About Fondation Ipsen BookLab

Truthful transmission of science to the public is complex because scientific information is often technical and leads to the diffusion of inaccurate information. In 2018, Fondation Ipsen established BookLab to address this need. BookLab publications are created through a collaborative process between scientists, doctors, artists, authors, and children. Existing in paper and electronic formats, and in several languages, BookLab provides books to more than 50 countries, for people of all ages and cultures. Fondation Ipsen BookLab publications are provided free of charge to schools, libraries and people living in precarious situations. Join us! Access and share our books by visiting **www.fondation-ipsen.org**.

Book # 10.1

Have your say!

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Marie is a very small mouse,
smaller than the others. She has
Achondroplasia, a genetic disease
that prevents her from growing normally.

Will her small size be an obstacle
to achieving great things?

"Children face many challenges in their lives.
Disease is hard to discuss. These books explain that every child is powerful
and that their spirit is greater than any disease."

– **James A. Levine**
MD, PhD, Professor, Fondation Ipsen, President
www.fondation-ipsen.org

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