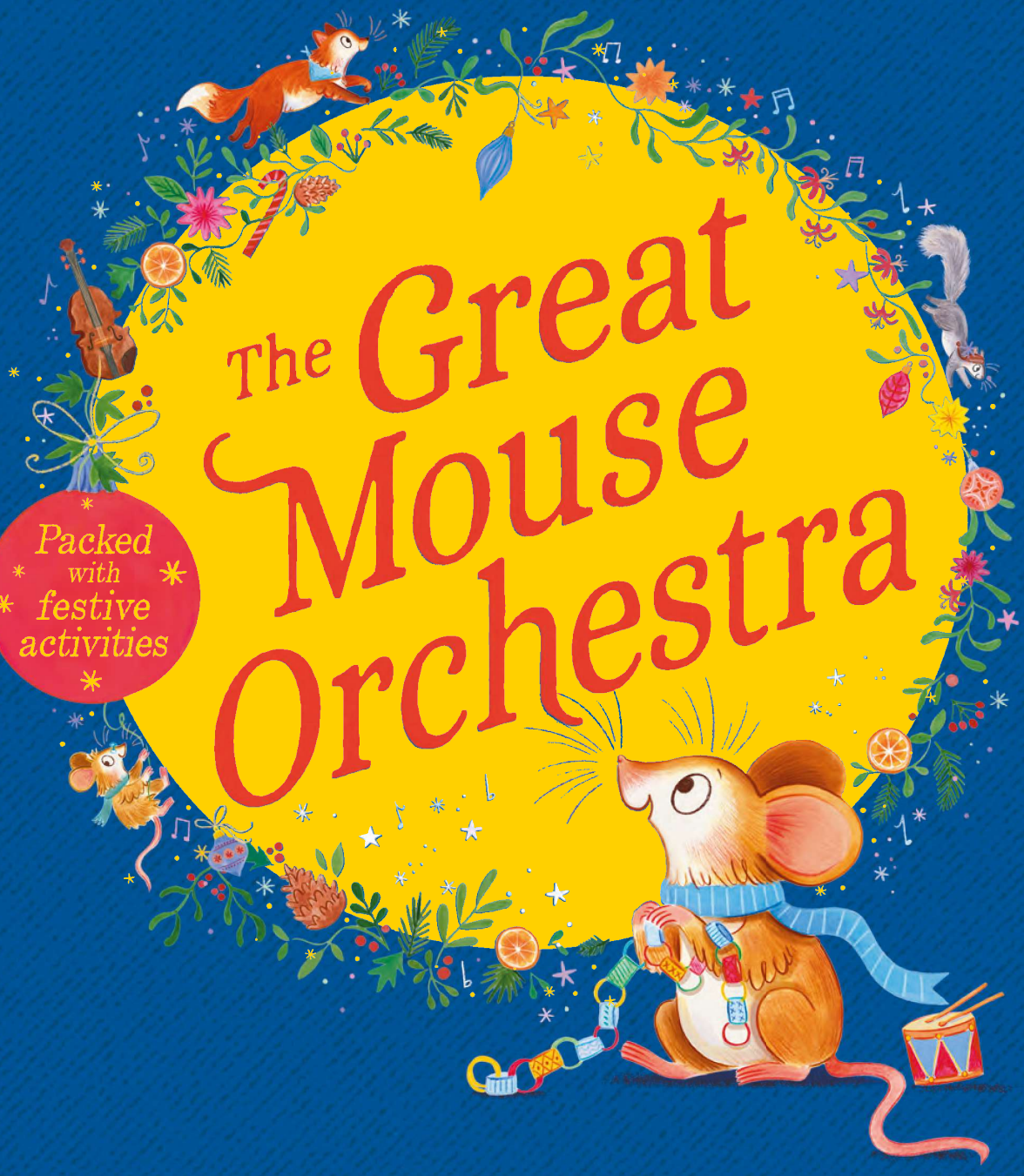
ELLA RISBRIDGER ♥ ALICE COURTLEY



One brave mouse. One secret song. One magical night.

BLOOMSBURY



The Great Mouse Orchestra



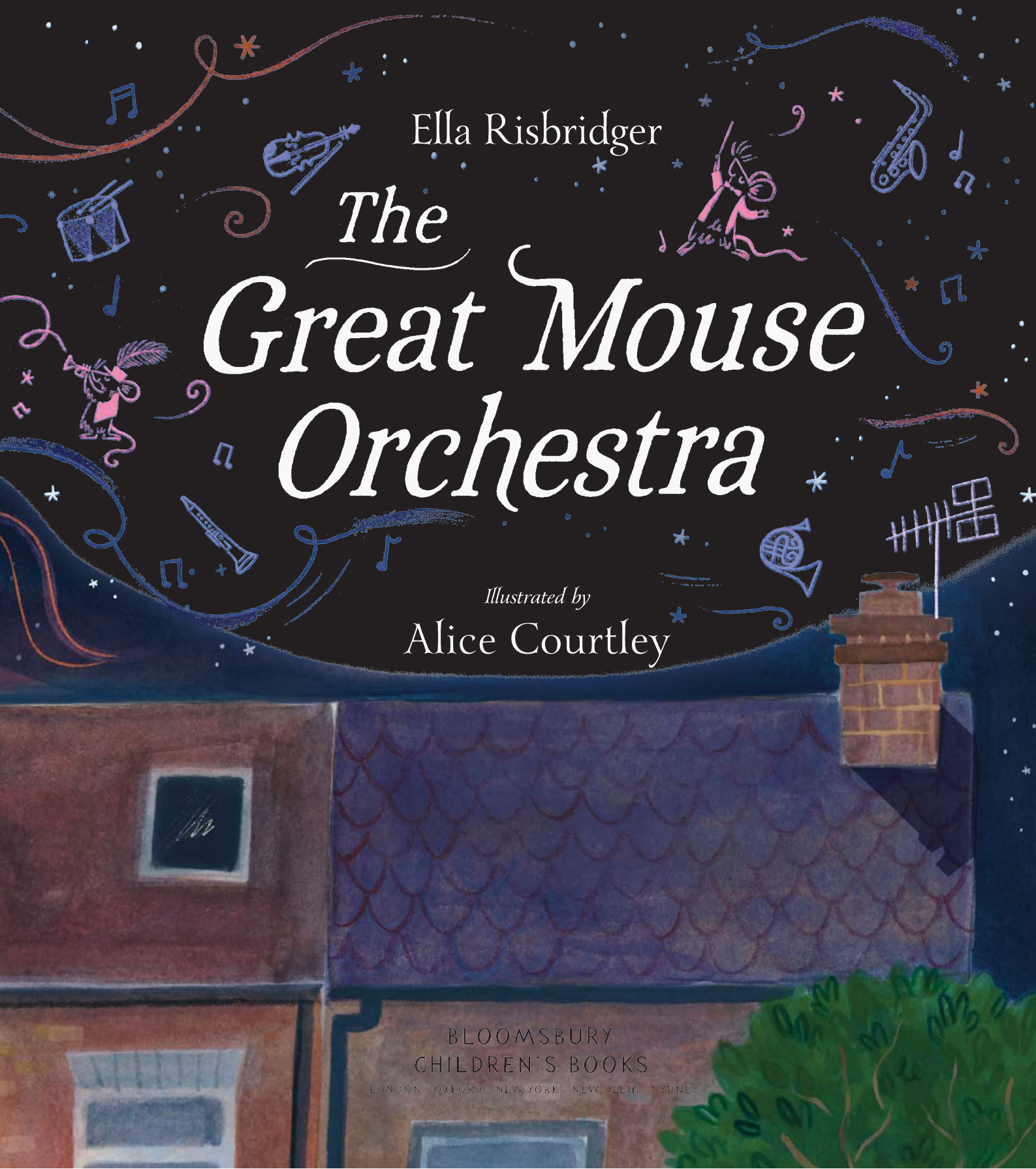




There is a story that all mice know.
Big mice tell it to little mice; and little mice,
when they grow up, tell it to their children;
and they tell it to their children;
and now I am going to tell it to you.

It is the story of . . .




Ella Risbridger
The
Great Mouse
Orchestra
Illustrated by
Alice Courtley
BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY



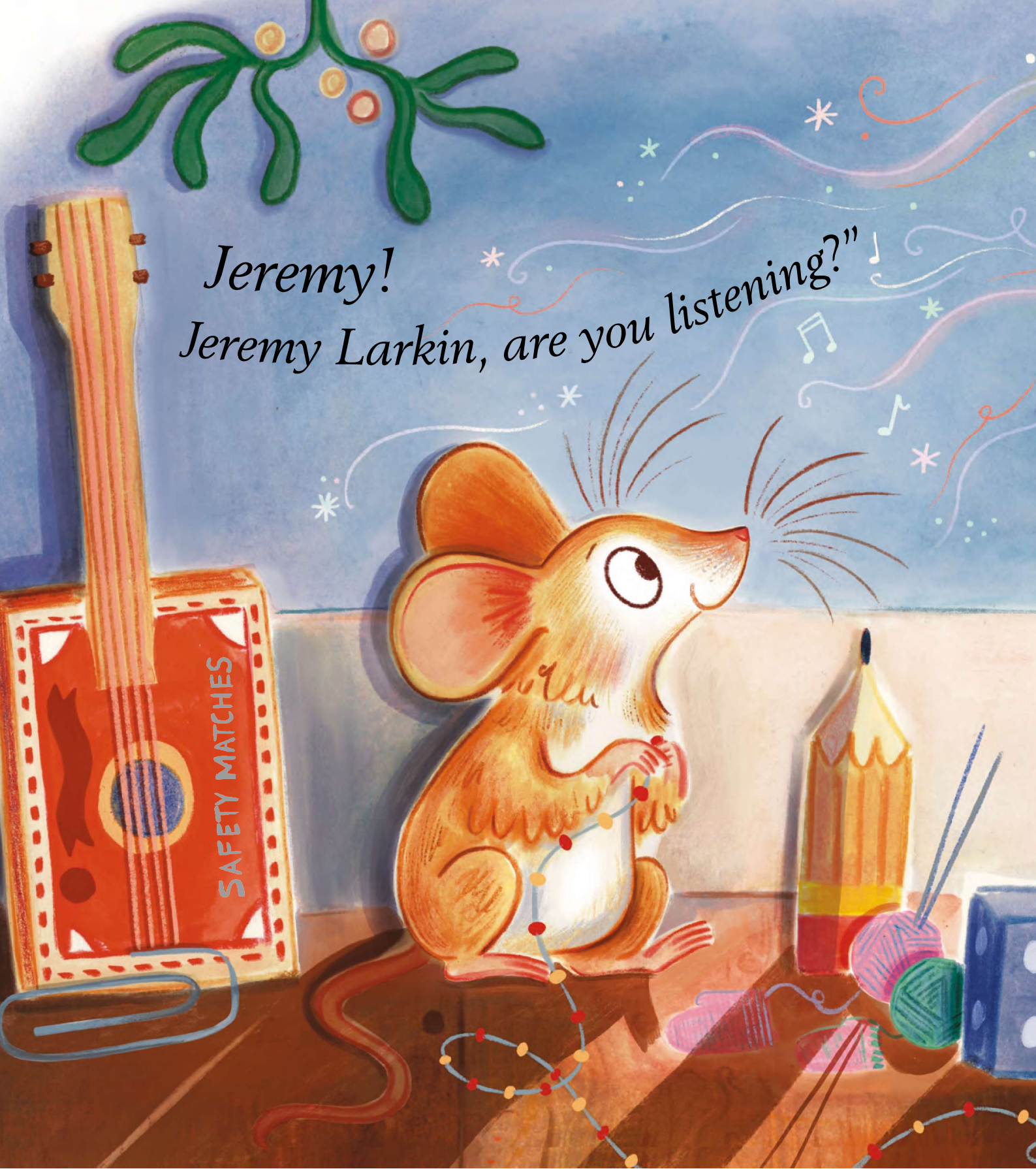


"It is the longest, darkest night of the whole year, and somewhere in the darkness, an orchestra is preparing to make music.

No one has ever seen the Great Mouse Orchestra, but everyone knows it's there. All mice know that on just one night – this very night, this longest night, this darkest night – the Maestro Mouse will lift his baton, and the Great Mouse Orchestra will come together under the shining moon to make the sweetest, strangest music anyone has ever heard.

And here, in the candlelight, we make our mouse-house beautiful to welcome the music. We make our special cheese-cake. We weave our special paper chains. We take our baths and wash our ears, to be sure to hear the sweet, strange music we know is coming . . .




Jeremy!
Jeremy Larkin, are you listening?"
SAFETY MATCHES



This is Jeremy Larkin, and Jeremy Larkin IS listening, *actually*.
He's listening so hard, he's almost dreaming. Jeremy is listening
for the sound of the Great Mouse Orchestra, because this is
Jeremy's favourite story in the whole wide world.
And it's not just a story to Jeremy: to Jeremy, it's really true.
Jeremy believes, you see.
He really believes in the Great Mouse Orchestra.

"Silly Jeremy Larkin believes in mousetales!"

"Silly Jeremy Larkin thinks it's true!"

All the other little mice start laughing.

Their paper chains go all over the floor.



"Settle down now," says Old Mouse. "It's a lovely story, isn't it?"

"It's not just a story," says Jeremy, quietly.

Because Jeremy doesn't just believe: he *knows*.
One night – maybe even tonight – he's going to hear the strange, sweet music, and meet the Maestro Mouse.

"Come on, Jeremy!" the little mice laugh. "If it's real, how come you've never seen them? How come you've never heard them?"

"Maybe we weren't listening properly," says Jeremy.

"Why don't you help us make the paper chains to make the mouse-house beautiful?" says Old Mouse,
trying to distract him. "Look!"



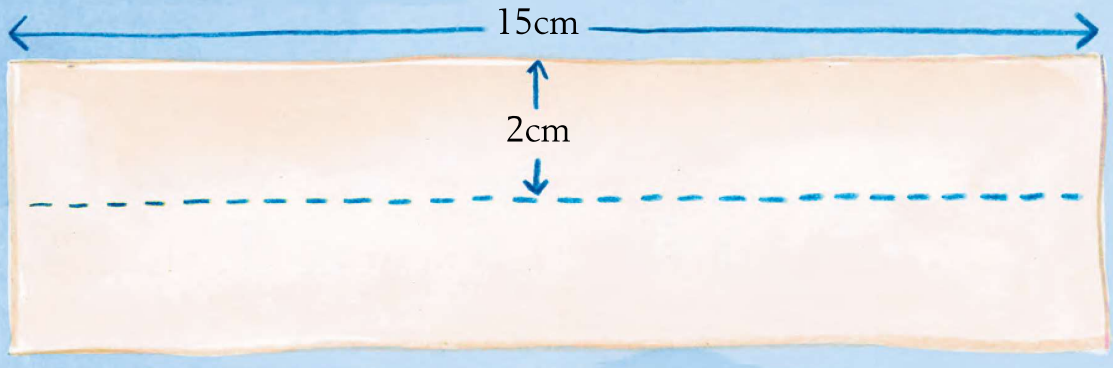
SPECIAL PAPER CHAINS FOR WINTER NIGHTS

Making paper chains is the perfect way to make your mouse-house feel cosy and festive on cold and frosty nights!



YOU WILL NEED:

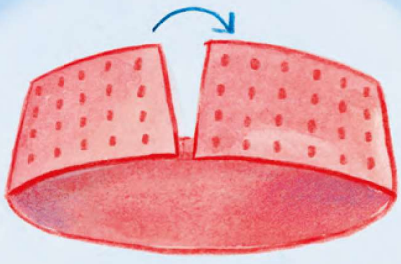




1. Carefully cut or tear your paper into neat strips.



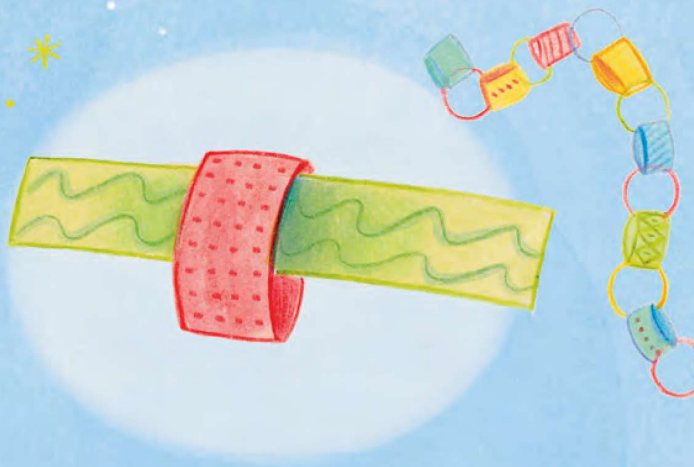
2. Take a strip of paper and glue just one end.



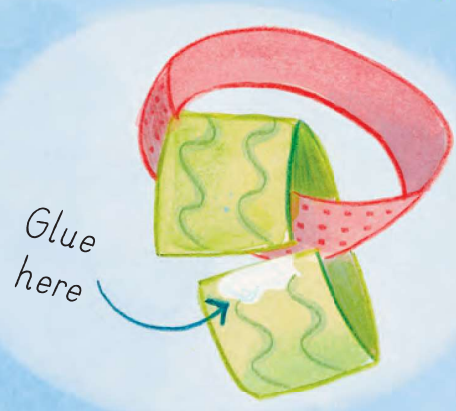
3. Bend the strip into a loop and stick the sticky end to the other end.



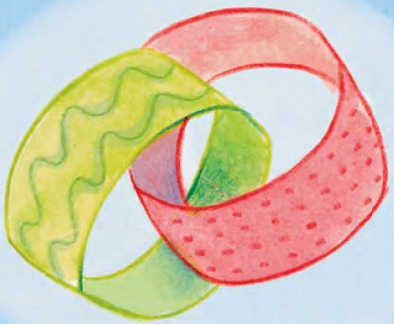
4. What a brilliant loop!
Time to do it again, but this time . . .



5. Slide the second strip through the middle of the loop you just made.



6. Glue the end of the second strip, bend it into a loop and stick the sticky end to the other end.



7. Now you have two brilliant loops! You can do this as many times as you like to make your paper chain longer and longer.



Now it's time to hang it up, ready for your celebrations!