

Georgie and the Giant Germ

a coloring book



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Georgie woke up excited to go to school.



As he bounced down the stairs, his mom said, “Georgie, no school today. A germ is going around that makes people sick. We have to stay home until the doctors make sure the germ is gone.”



When he went to the kitchen for breakfast his mother said, “Georgie, with this big germ, we are going to need to be really careful to wash our hands before we eat, and when we come in from playing outside.” Georgie looked at his hands for a long time, but he couldn’t see anything on them at all! This was all very confusing.

Not going to school made Georgie feel sad at first. He missed his friends and Mrs. P., his teacher. Then, he got to spend the whole first day with his mom and she even let him play some extra video games.



But then he stayed home from school the whole week, and the week after that, too, and it started to feel like a really long time. He wasn't even allowed to play outside with the kids in his neighborhood. Everything felt different.



“Why can’t I go back to school?” he asked his mom. “The germ is still out there, Georgie.” she said, “Everyone has to stay home until it’s gone.” Even though he still couldn’t see the germ on his hands, the germ had started to feel really big. Bigger than his house and bigger than his school. He wanted it to go away.



As the days went by, Georgie had a lot of feelings. Sometimes he felt happy that he didn't have to go to school, but most of the time he was sad. And mad. And scared. "I want to see my friends!" he cried, "Why won't the germ just go away?"

His mom was acting grumpy. "Stop complaining!" she huffed in a loud voice.



This made Georgie worried, "What did I do wrong?" he thought. His mom was busy a lot. She used to spend a lot of time reading to him, giving him hugs, and helping him feel safe, but now she always seemed grouchy and told him to "go play." "I wish she was like she used to be," he thought. His tummy ached and he felt like crying.



Then, one day he heard the word “virus” on the TV when he wasn’t supposed to be listening. “What is a virus? Is that the same as a germ?” he wondered. “How big is it?” “Will it come to our house?” Georgie had lots of questions, but he didn’t want to ask his mom. He thought she might get mad.



He started to feel squished by the germ and the worries it caused. He wondered if it was his fault his mom was so grumpy. Maybe he hadn't done something right. Had he forgotten to wash his hands before dinner the other night? He worried that he might have brought the germ into their house. How could something he couldn't see seem SO big? "I hate this germ!" he thought.



Later on, his mom apologized, "I'm sorry I got angry at you, Georgie. This germ makes me worried and sometimes I make a mistake and yell. I bet it scares you when I'm acting grumpy." Georgie nodded and felt like crying. "Is it going to hurt us?" he asked.

“Is that what you think?” she asked quietly. He nodded. “I am strong and healthy, Georgie, and so are you.”

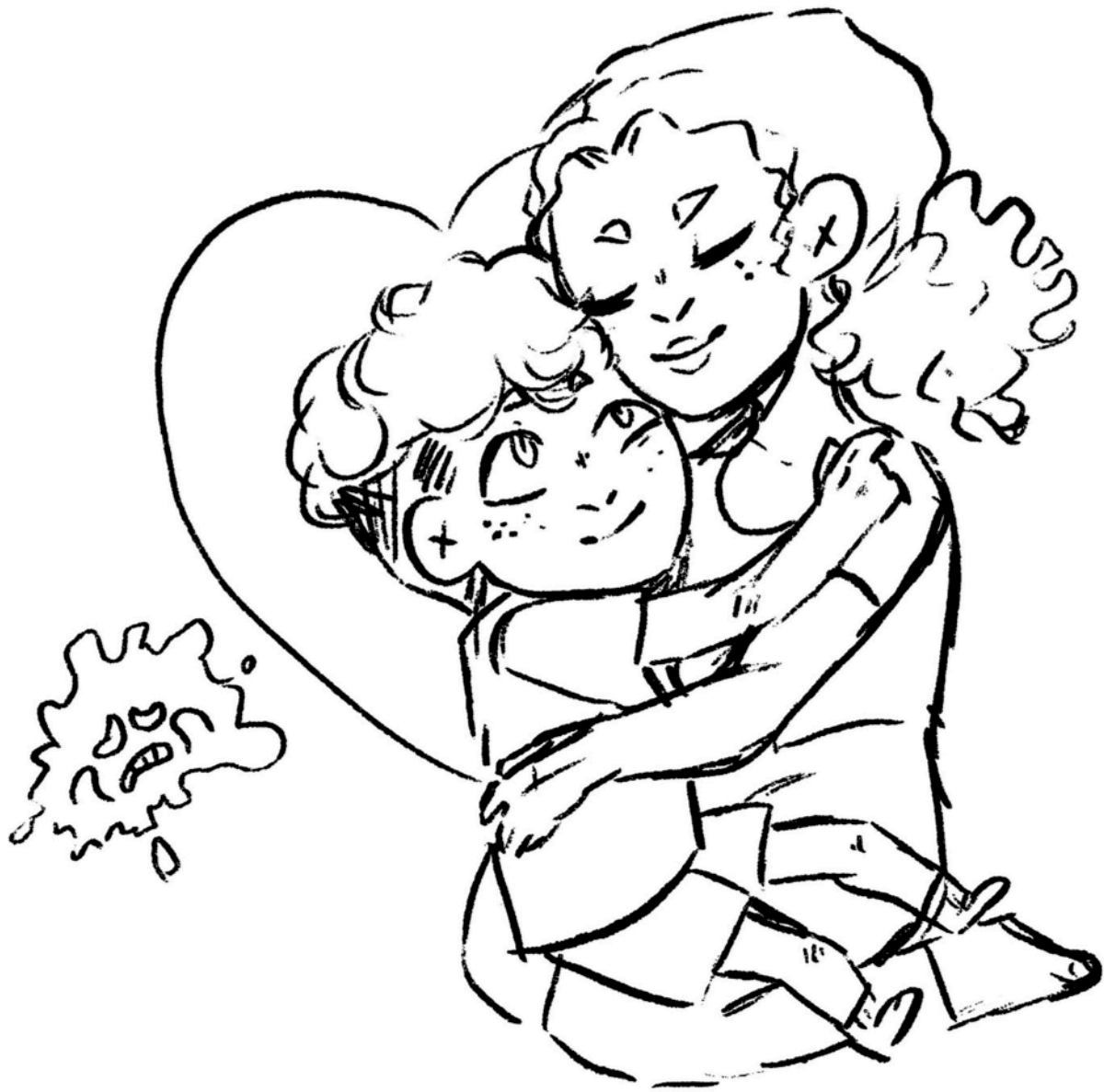


“But what if you get sick?” he asked.

“Well,” his mom said, “sometimes people do get sick from germs, and that could happen. It’s not fun to be sick, but our bodies know how to fight off the germ.”



“Remember when you’ve been sick before?” Georgie nodded and looked up at her. He did remember. He had to stay in bed and felt bad, but he did get better.



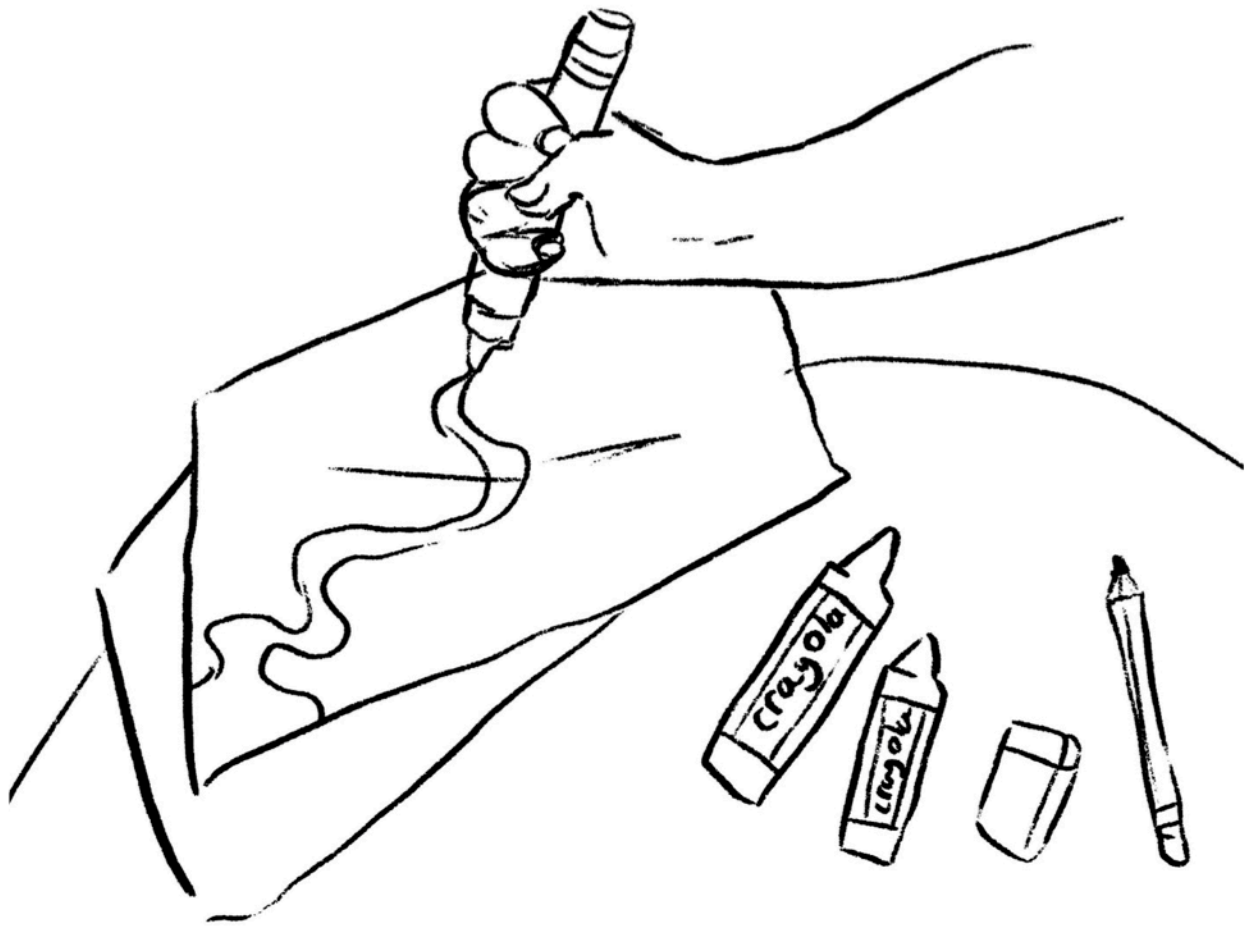
His mom swooped him into her arms. He loved the way she smelled and snuggled in close. “Georgie,” she said, “we want people to stay safe and healthy, that is why we are not going to school and work, so the germ can’t spread.”

“While we are at home doctors and nurses and scientists are working hard to get rid of this germ.”



Georgie nodded but he was still sad. “I miss Grandpa and Mrs. P., and my friends at school.” “I know you miss them, Georgie.” his mom said. “It’s okay to be sad and to talk about it with me. Since we are missing them, how about we let them know that we are thinking about them? I know they really miss you, too!”

Georgie's stomach stopped hurting and he suddenly had a lot of energy. He jumped up excitedly. "I'm going to draw a picture for Mrs. P. to show her when I go back to school!" And off he ran to the crayon box.



Georgie drew the doctors and his mom fighting the germ, and in his picture his mom was so big she almost filled the whole paper!



Georgie felt safe and strong.

He called out to his mom, "The germ isn't so big after all!"

Contact us

We would love to see your child's colored version of Georgie and the Giant Germ or original drawings related to their experiences of staying at home during this time! Post the drawings to our Facebook page facebook.com/tenderpressbooks or email them to us at tenderpressbooks@gmail.com. Visit our website at tenderpressbooks.com.

Resources

Additional resources for caregivers, families and mental health professionals about supporting children during the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) can be found at zerotothrive.org/covid-19.

Additional trauma-informed resources for adults can be found at strengthsofallparts.com.

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About Tender Press

Tender Press is a coalition of social workers and psychologists who have specialized interest and training in supporting relational health, from conception through adulthood. Our aim is to support caregivers of young children in meeting the emotional needs of infants and young children. We began by developing a coloring book, *Cecilia and the Long Walk*, for children who were separated from their parents as a result of the 2018 family separation immigration policy. *Georgie and the Giant Germ* is a new coloring book created to address children's fears, worries and misunderstandings about COVID-19.

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Kate Rosenblum, PhD, ABPP, IMH-E is a clinical and developmental psychologist and a Professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics and Gynecology at Michigan Medicine. She co-directs Zero to Thrive (www.zerotothrive.org), a program at the University of Michigan that aims to support family resilience and relational health from pregnancy through early childhood through research, service, partnership, and training. She lives with her partner and their daughters in Ann Arbor, MI, and is very proud of both girls as they are social justice champions, and of their daughter, Maja, who contributed the illustrations for this coloring book. katier@med.umich.edu

Maja Rosenblum-Muzik is a 12-year-old 7-th grader in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her prior work includes the coloring book illustrations for Cecilia and the Long Walk. Her Instagram is @im_a_rock52.