THE BABY BOOK

This book belongs to

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THE BABY BOOK

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with the help of the Book Dash participants in Cape Town on 19 November 2016.

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THE BABY BOOK

Alex Latimer, Diane Awerbuck and Christian Jaggers

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Dear girls and boys –

We hope that this book will help you understand your wonderful body and how babies are made. When you're much older, you can decide if you want to have one.

The special words in this book are in **bold**, and there are pages at the back, a Glossary, to explain them. There's also information there if you need help.

We hope this book answers your questions.

Love is a feeling we all have, but sex is something grown-ups do. Some people have sex for fun, but it can also be the start of a very long journey that can make a whole new person!

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Dear parents, guardians, teachers & community leaders –

Talking to children about their bodies can be awkward, especially if it's not a part of your culture. But if we don't talk about how our bodies work, children might learn things that are untrue or harmful, and they might have sex or make babies before they are ready.

We hope that you sit down somewhere quiet and read this book slowly with the child in your care. Let them look at the pictures for as long as they want. Try to answer their questions calmly, and help them feel comfortable with their bodies.

We've asked a variety of parents – doctors, sex educators, feminists, politicians, writers and therapists –to help us get everything right. We know that you'll also use your own culture, religion and beliefs to help your children make healthy choices.

WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS BOOK HELPFUL.

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Humans are mammals. We are warm-blooded, have hair, and can suckle (breastfeed) our young.

If there's something technical you're not sure about, look at the Glossary at the end of the book. Try to use the scientific language about private parts, even if you feel embarrassed. The bits in brackets after the words tell you how to pronounce them in English.

You'll also find phone numbers and websites of South African groups that support families. If you're in another country, there should be similar organisations.

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Human pregnancy takes a long time – nine calendar months or ten lunar (moon) months from fertilisation to birth.

Like other animals, a baby is made when one female and one male have sex at the right time. During sex, the man's **sperm** fertilises the woman's egg, and a baby can grow inside the woman's belly, in her womb (**uterus**).

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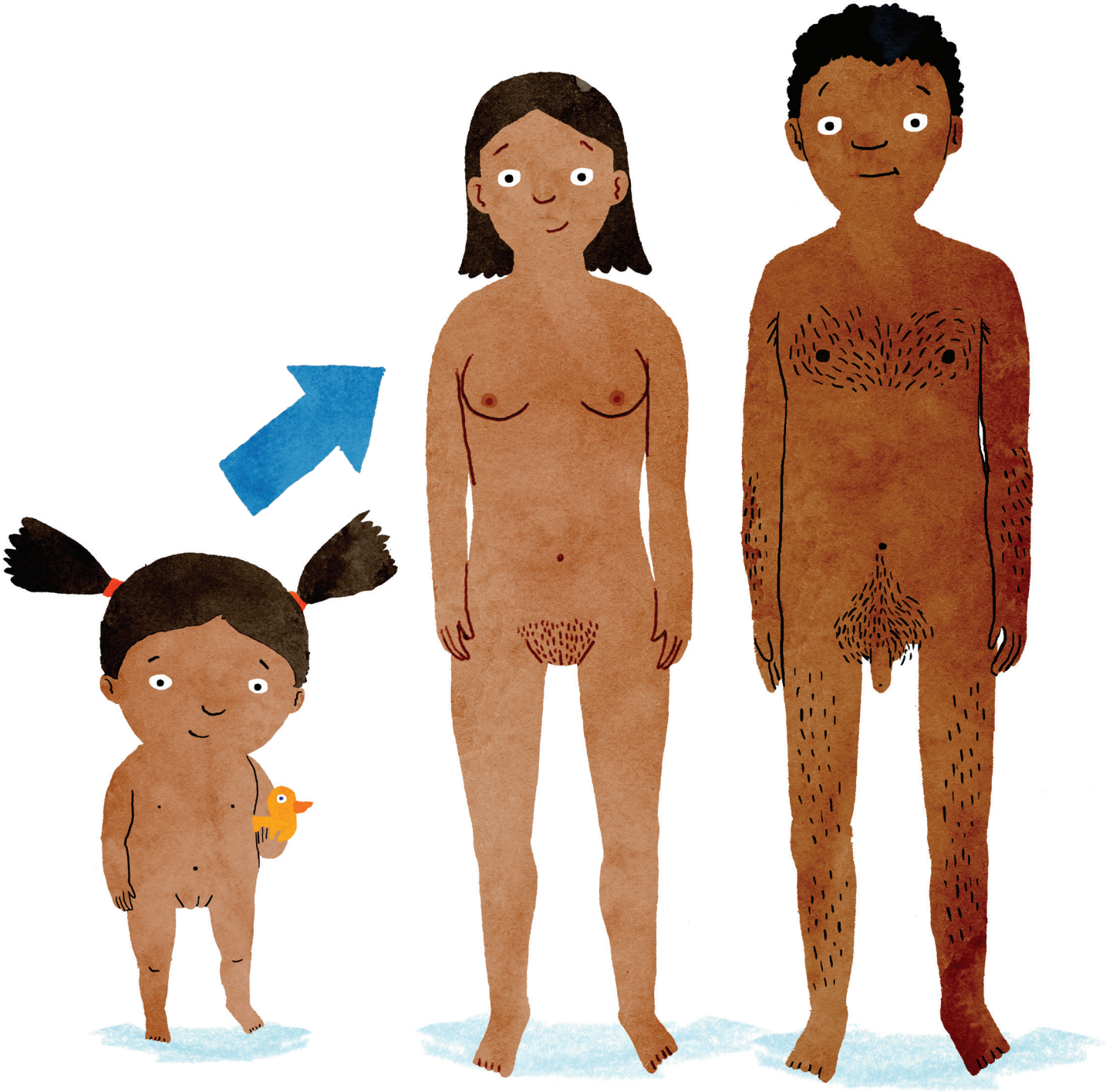

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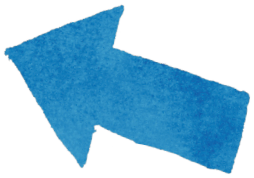
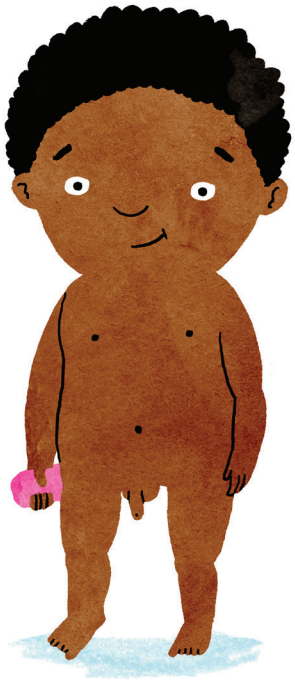
Let's start at the beginning. A girl is born with thousands of eggs inside her **ovaries**. Any time from the age of eight, **puberty** (getting a grown-up body) can start. Girls' and boys' brains send messages to their bodies and they start to change: they swell, smell different, and get hairy. Bodies and their parts come in all shapes and sizes.





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When a girl reaches puberty, she gets a special power to make babies. An egg (**ovum**) comes down her **Fallopian tube**. This is called **ovulation** and two weeks later she gets her period (**menstruates**). This cycle usually happens every 28 days, following the moon's phases, but everyone is different.

When a boy reaches puberty, white liquid, called **semen**, might start to come out of his penis. This means that he is able to make a woman pregnant. If it happens when he is asleep, it is call a **wet dream**, and most boys have them at some time.

Periods can be messy and sore, but they are a normal part of life. Girls should not feel embarrassed about it.

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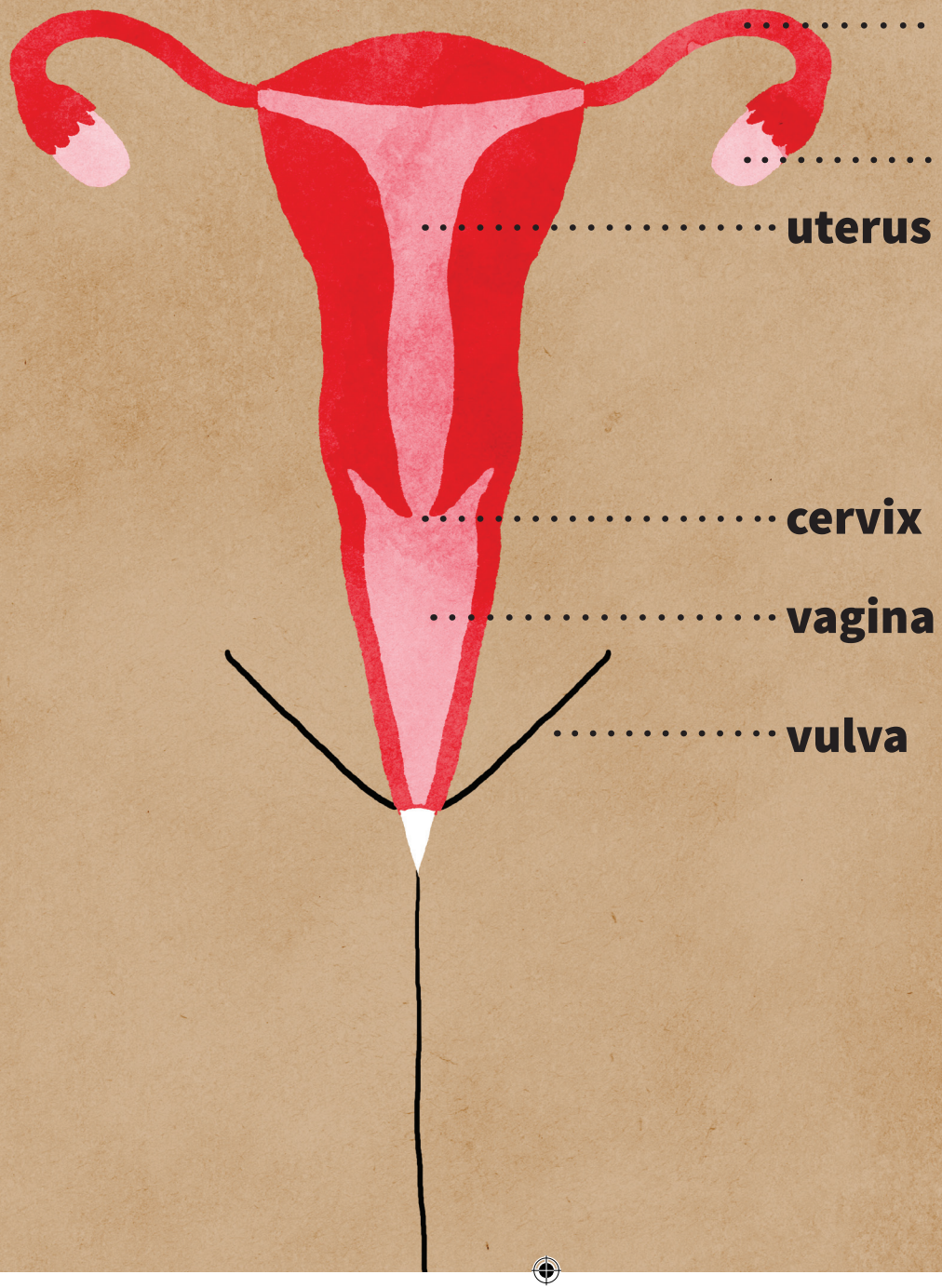

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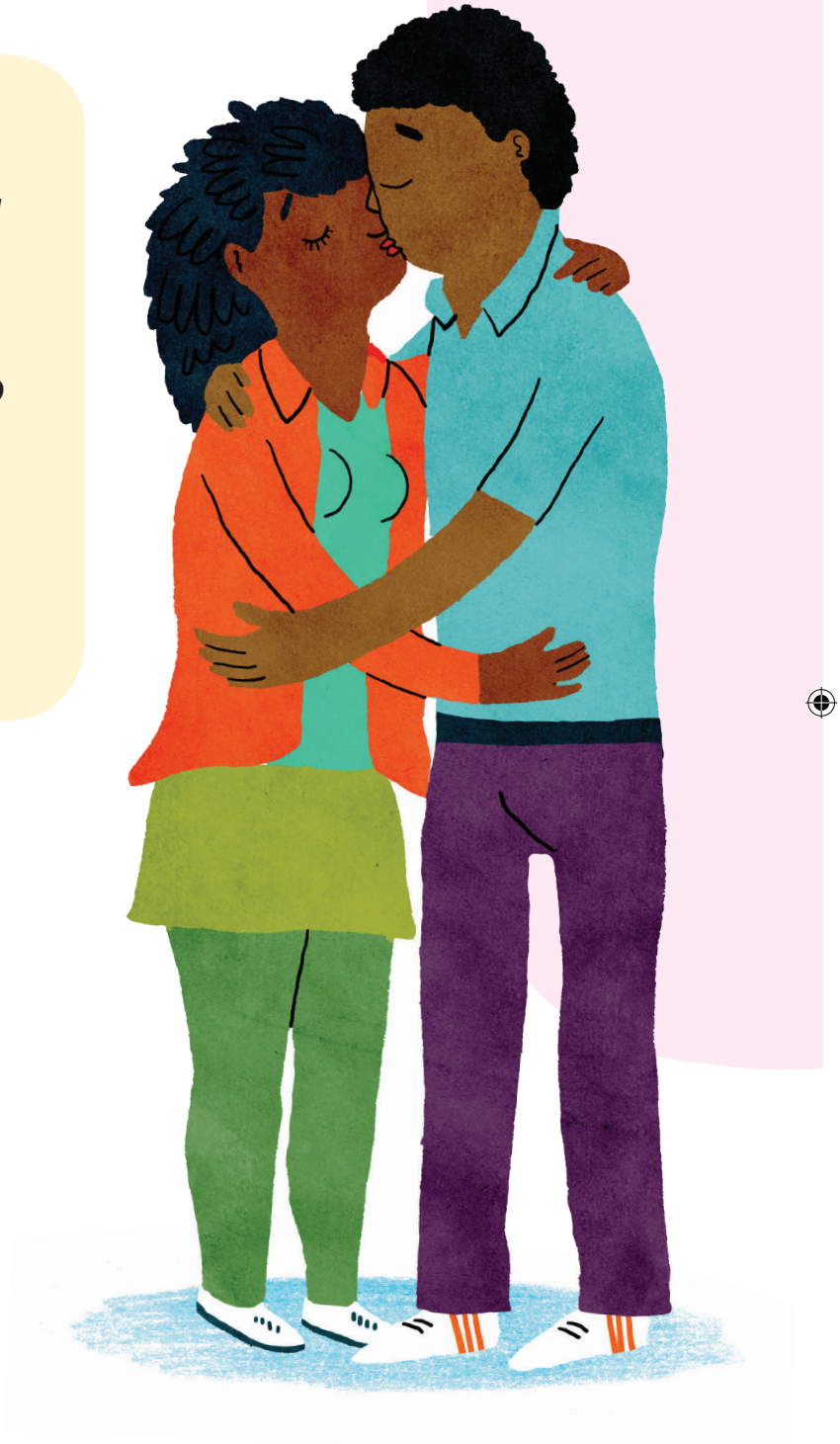
Your body may be ready to make babies, but your mind and your feelings must be grown up too. It's very important to finish school so you can find proper work and make your own money in the years afterwards. Choose wisely.



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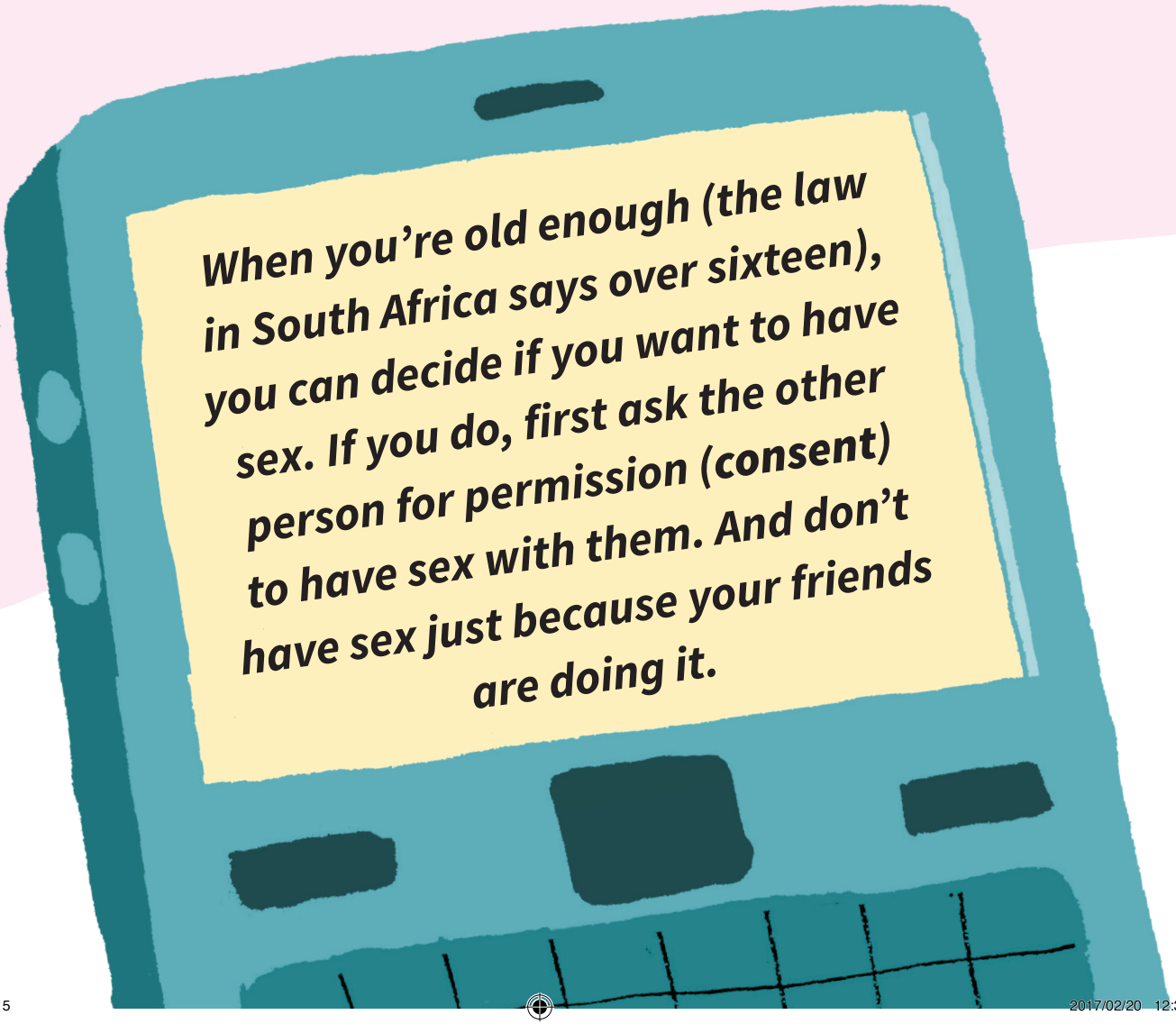
The chemicals (**hormones**) in your glands can make you excited when you think about kissing or touching. This feeling of want (desire) makes people want to have sex. It's nature's way of making more humans.



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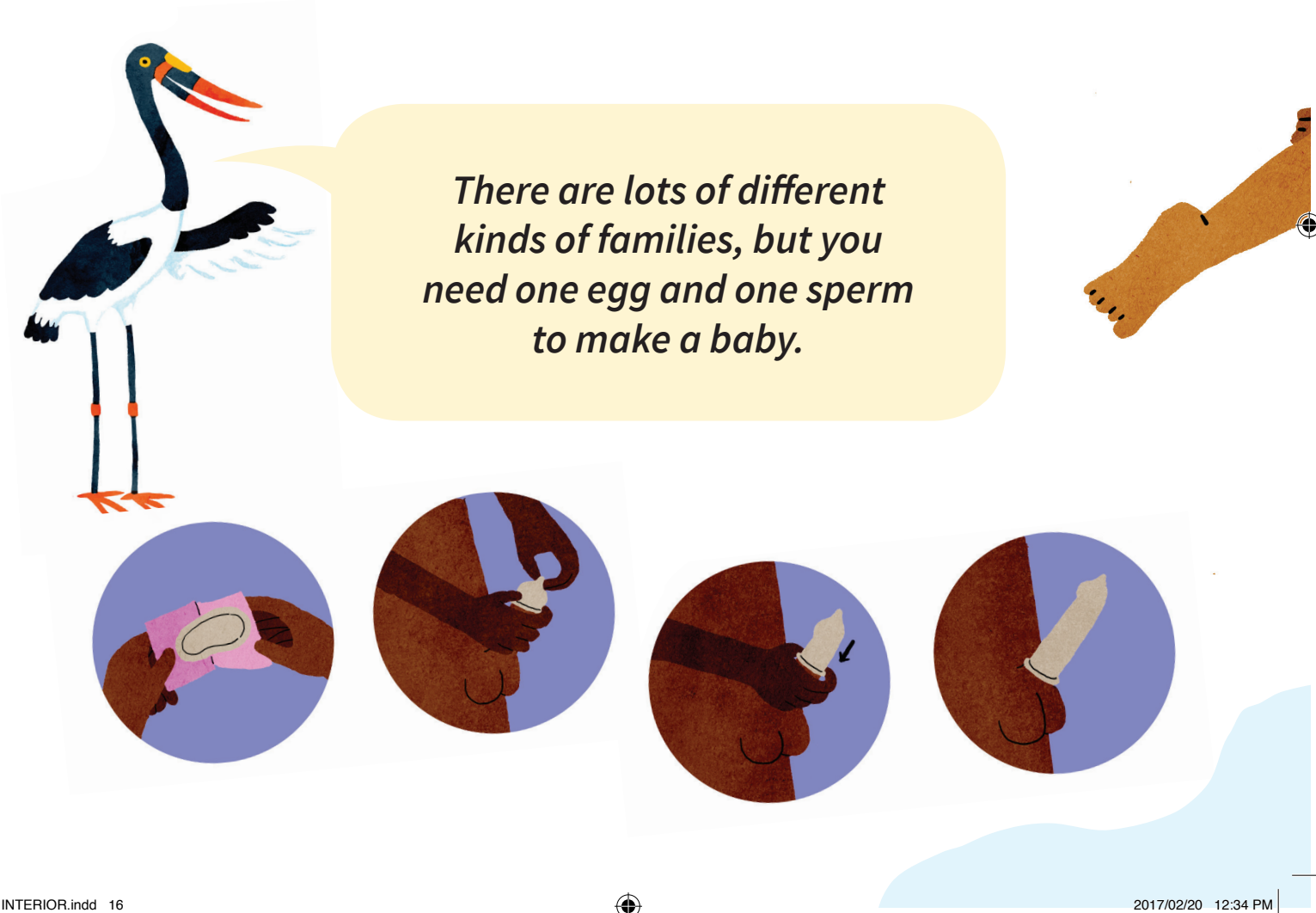
When a man and a woman kiss and touch each other's naked bodies, sometimes they also have sex. When they are ready, the man gets an **erection** and his **penis** becomes hard. The woman's **vagina** will get wet. The man and the woman lie together, and he pushes his stiff penis into her vagina. This is called sex.



There are lots of different kinds of families, but you need one egg and one sperm to make a baby.

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*Sex can feel ticklish – or it can feel tight, squishy or sore at first. There are lots of different ways to have sex, but always protect yourself with a **condom** so you don't share a sickness such as **HIV**, and so you don't get pregnant. Even if you aren't having sex, but you think you might want to, have condoms nearby, just in case.*

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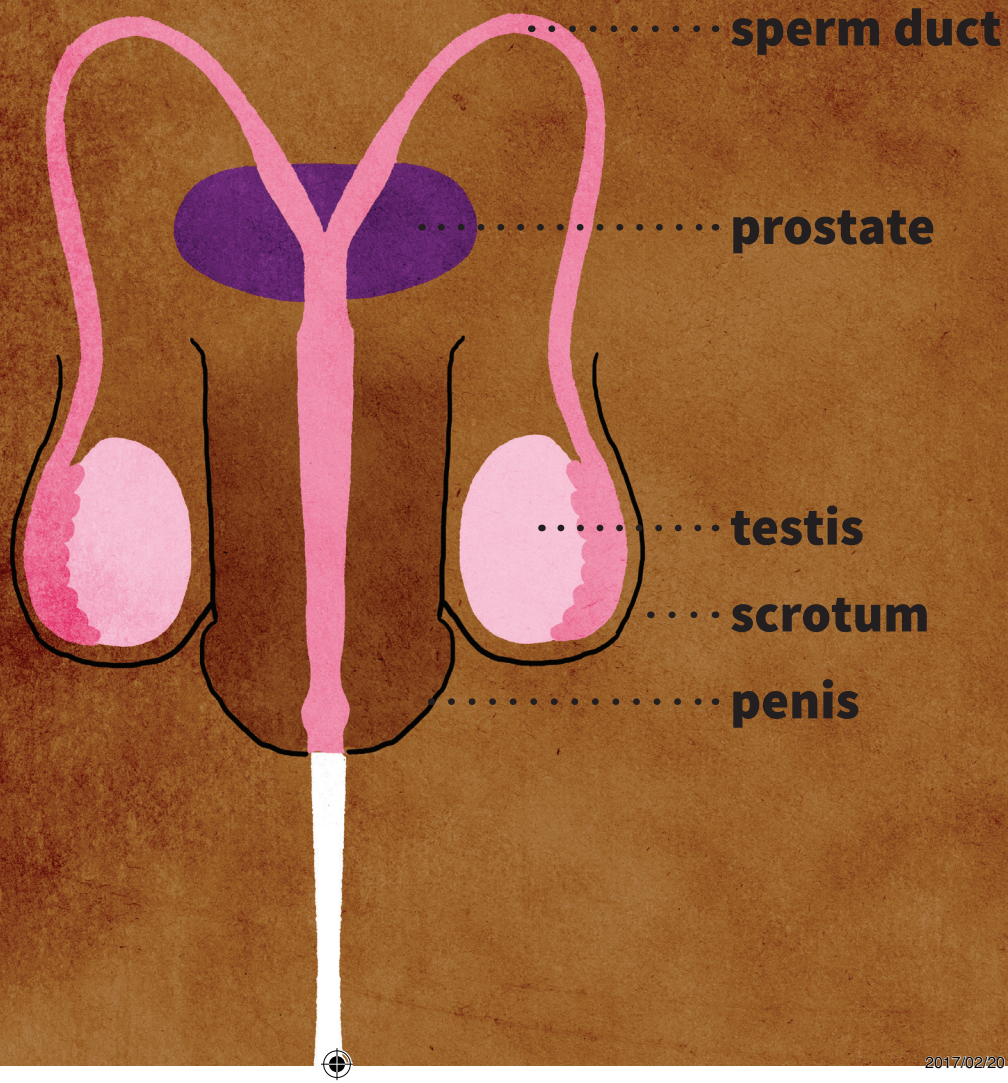

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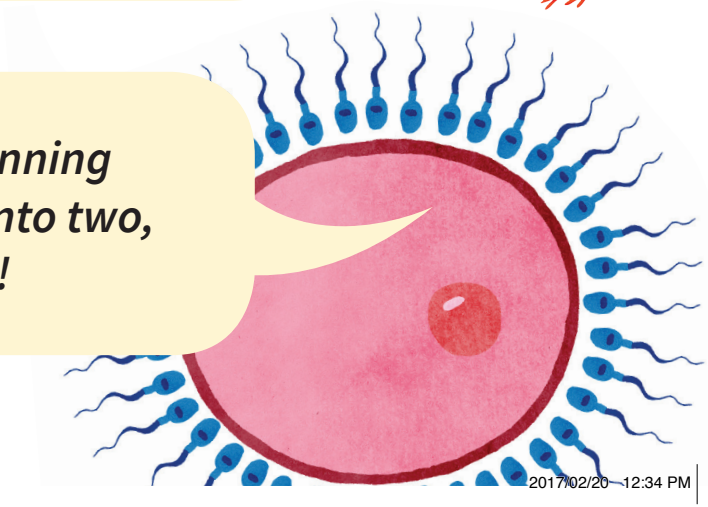
While the penis is inside the woman, the man and woman rub against each other until they each have an **orgasm** (pleasure explosion). The man **ejaculates**, and about a teaspoonful of semen squirts out of his penis and into the body of the woman. **Semen** has millions of tiny sperm in it! They swim up the woman's vagina, through the cervix, into the uterus and the Fallopian tubes. It is a race, and only one sperm can make its way into the egg.

A woman can get pregnant even if the penis is on her thigh (play sex) and not in the vagina. Some semen always escapes before the man ejaculates. Sperm travel long distances.

If there are two eggs and two winning sperm, or the fertilised egg splits into two, the mother will carry twins!



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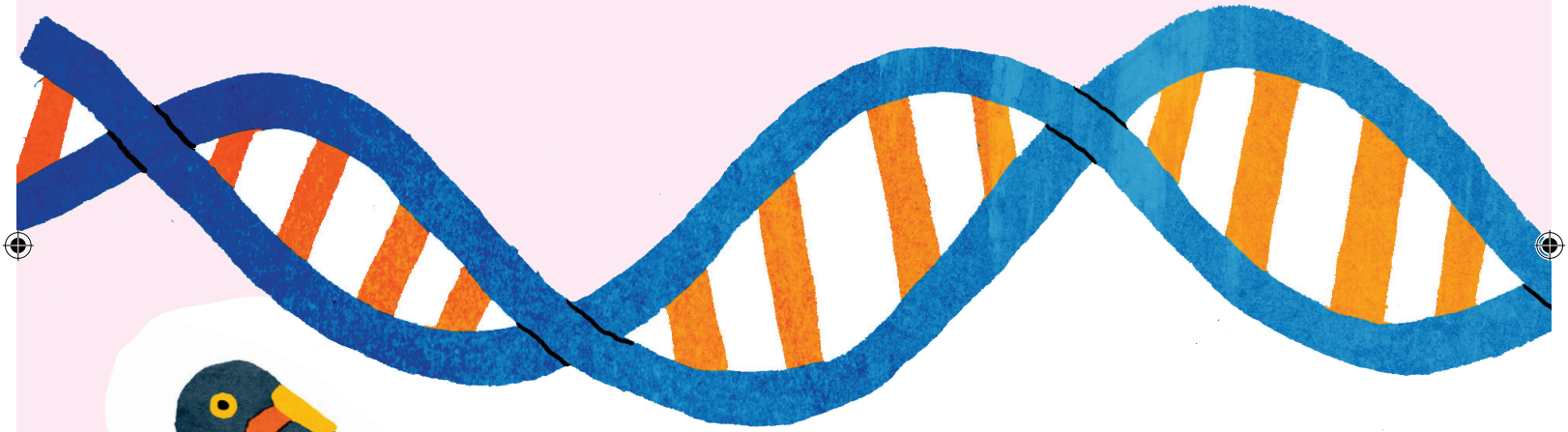
Over a few days, the fertilised ovum travels to the womb. It plants itself in the warm lining of the womb and keeps growing by making many, many new cells. Each cell has the same set of 46 **chromosomes** or **gene** map that will make the baby look like his or her family – the same hair and eye colour, and so on.



The father's sperm decides if the baby is a boy or a girl. Eggs carry the X (female) chromosome. Sperm carry the X (female) or the Y (male).

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X+Y means that cell will become a boy.

X+X means the cell will become a girl.

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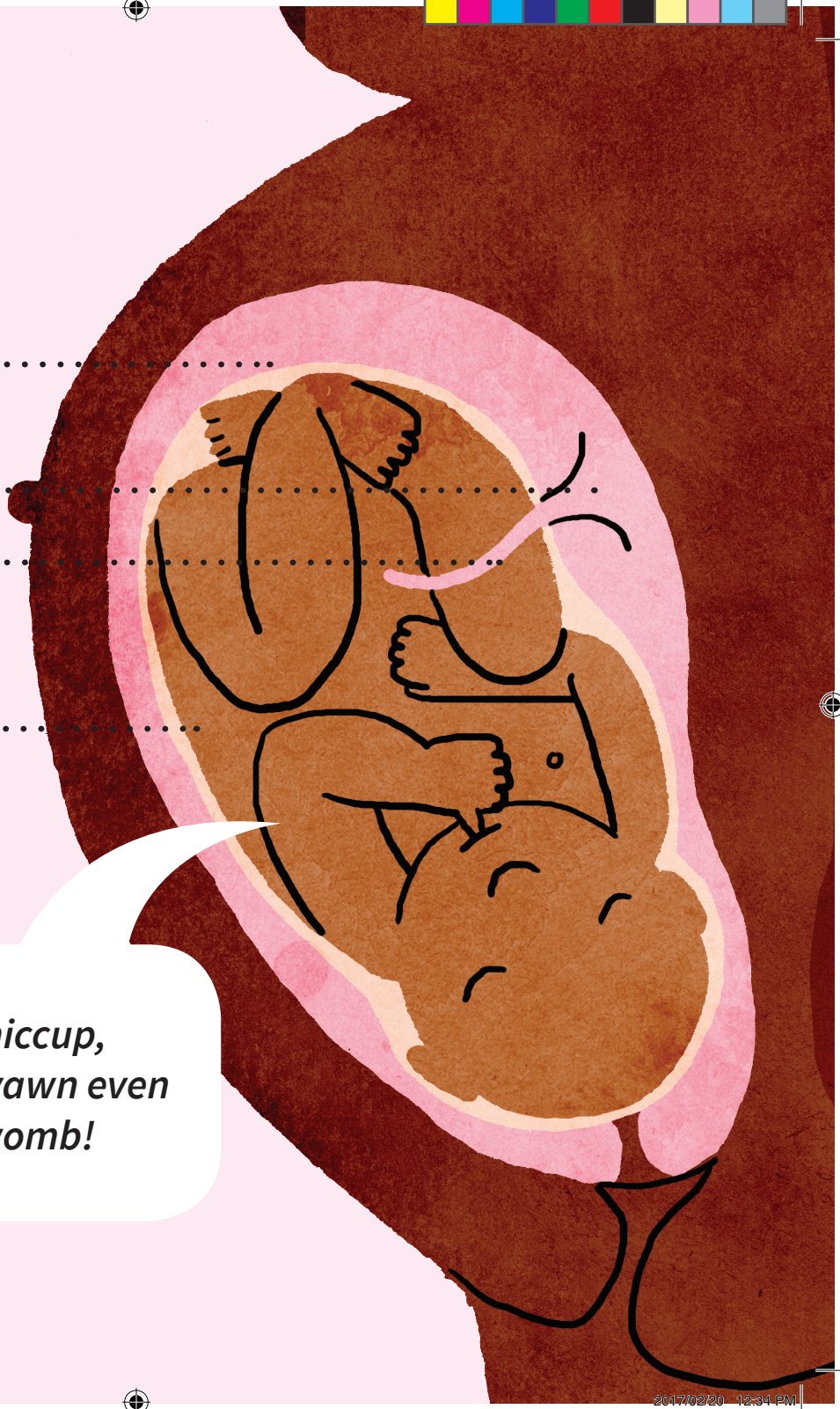

Babies hiccup, cough and yawn even in the womb!

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In the mother's womb, the baby rests inside a thin, strong sac (membranous bag). The **umbilical cord** joins the mother and her growing baby or **foetus**. If she eats healthy food, the foetus grows well. If the mother smokes (or is often in the same room as a smoker), takes drugs or drinks alcohol, she can damage the foetus.

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A pregnant woman visits a midwife, clinic or doctor a few times to check on the baby. When the baby is ready to be born, the woman goes into **labour**. Labour can last from an hour to two days, and it is exhausting.

In an ordinary birth, the womb muscles squeeze in waves to push the baby out of the uterus and out through the vagina. This is very hard work for the mother, but easier if her body can relax. It must be very slow because the **cervix** and vagina have to stretch to free the baby. Your body is amazing!

When babies are born they are covered in blood and waxy white substance called **vernix**. This waterproofs the baby inside the womb.

The umbilical cord is cut and tied in a knot. It dries out and falls off after about three days and becomes the belly button.

Some women have a painkiller (anaesthetic) and an operation called a caesarean section. Then the woman does not go into labour. A few days before the baby is ready to be born, the mother goes to hospital. The doctor cuts through the abdomen and uterus linings to pull out the baby, and then sews the mother up again.

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Being born is hard work. For the first three months of their lives, babies just want to feed and sleep like other mammal babies so they can grow. Breastfeeding is best for the baby's health, brain development and feelings of love (bonding), but this is not always possible for everyone.

Soon the baby will start looking like a person. Babies' necks are weak, so be careful to support their heads when you hold them. Can you believe that was once you? Well done, mammal!

Babies don't cry real tears for the first few weeks, until their tear ducts are fully formed. Some babies' eyes are dark blue when they are born, like puppies or kittens, but the colour can change! By the time they are nine months old, they will have the eye colour they will have when they are grown up.

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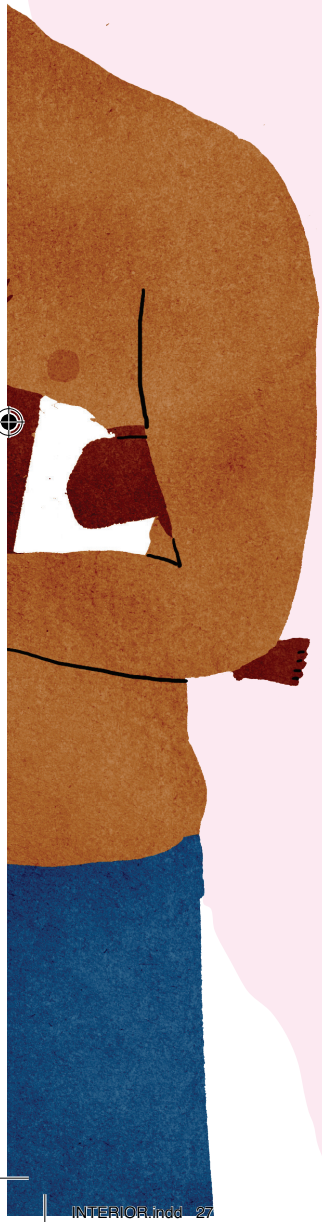
REMEMBER



You should only have sex when you are over sixteen, and if you and the other person both want to have sex. Use a condom to protect each other from viruses such as HIV, and to prevent pregnancy.

It is ***never*** okay for a grown-up to have sex with a child or someone under sixteen. If they do, this is called **statutory rape**. If this happens to you, even if they tell you to keep it a secret, tell another grown-up you trust – a parent, a teacher, a social worker, a community leader – so that they can help you stop the **abuse**. Adults are here to protect children, not bully them. You have not done anything wrong, nobody will be angry with you and it is not your fault.

Do not have sex with an older person for protection, money or special treatment. They can pass on diseases such as HIV because they have more than one sex partner.

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GLOSSARY

Here are some of the big words in this book, and how to say them.

abuse (a-byoos): bad treatment; cruelty
anaesthetic (a-nis-theh-tik): painkiller, such as an injection (epidural) in the spine
caesarean section (suh-zeh-ri-un sek-shin): A 'caesar' is when a doctor delivers the baby in hospital, with painkilling drugs and surgery. The mother does not go into **labour**, unless a caesar is used when there is an emergency, and the doctor has to deliver the baby quickly.
cervix (ser-vicks): a cushion of muscle between the **uterus** and the **vagina**
chromosome (kro-mo-zohm): the information inside each cell in your body
condom (kon-dom): thin rubber covering for **penis** to stop sperm from entering the woman's body
consent (kon-sent): asking permission ("Do you want to ..?" or "Is it okay if I..?")
ejaculate (e-jak-yoo-layt): when the **penis** squirts **semen**
embryo (em-bree-yo): the cells after fertilisation, up to two months old
erection (eh-rek-shin): when the **penis** becomes stiff
Fallopian tubes (fuh-low-pi-yin tyoobz): the little tubes connecting the **ovaries** to the **uterus**
foetus (fee-tis): the baby inside the **womb**, from three months old to birth
gene (jean): the information in a **chromosome** that makes you look like your parents
hormones (hor-moanz): chemicals in your glands, such as oestrogen (ees-tra-jin) and progesterone (proh-jes-tuh-roan)
HIV (aych-ai-vee): Human Immunodeficiency Virus. A virus that attacks your immune system and weakens your body's defence against infection. An infected person can pass it to another person through bodily fluids such as semen and blood.
menstruate (men-stroo-ayt): When the egg is not fertilised, the **uterus** has to let go of the spongy lining which is filled with blood vessels. (If the woman is pregnant, this lining protects and feeds the fertilised egg, so it can grow into a baby.) When fertilisation does not happen, the lining comes away and leaves the body as menstrual blood, through the **vagina**.

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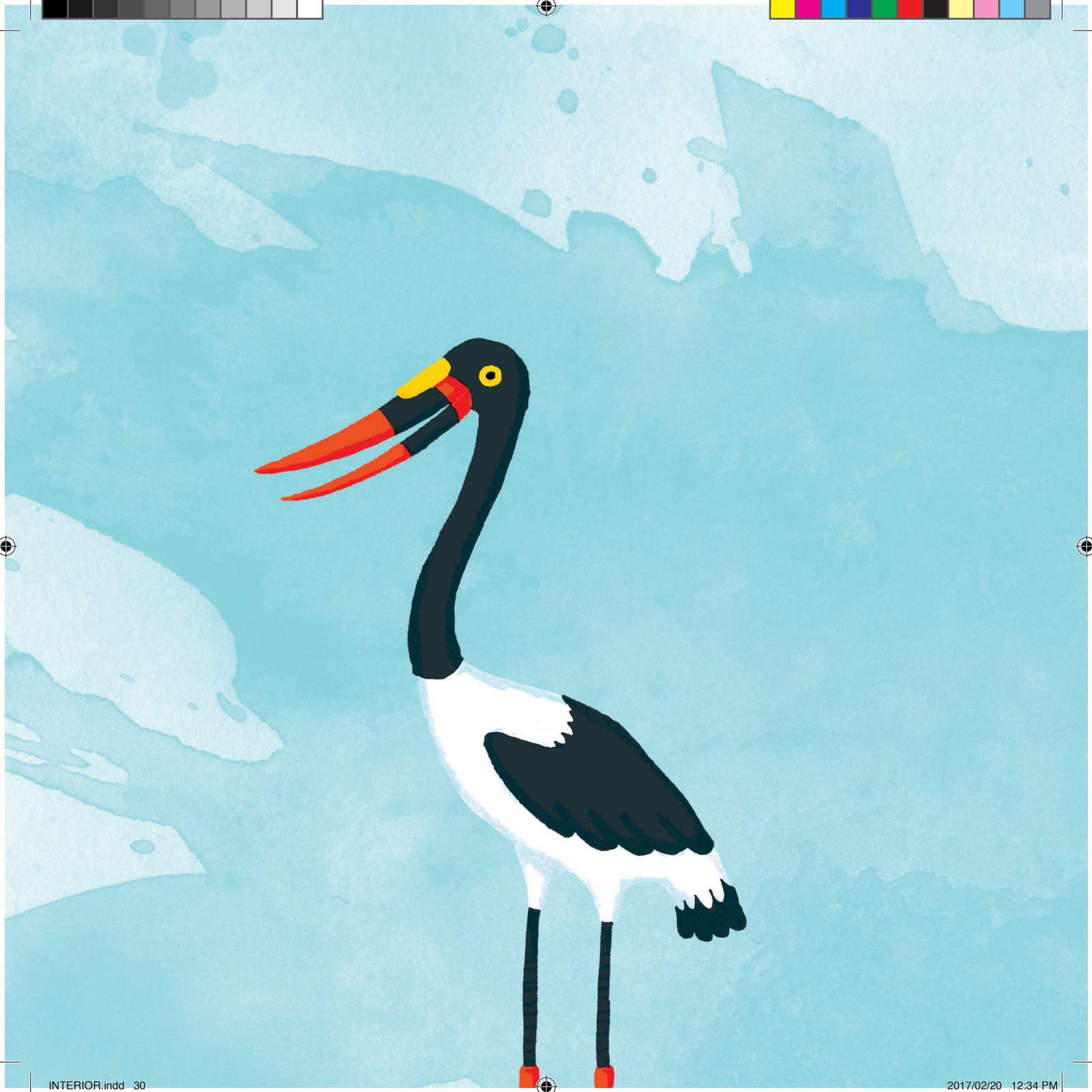
orgasm (or-gaz-um): moment of most intense pleasure during sex
ovaries (oh-vuh-rees): two little organs near the **uterus** that store all the girl's eggs (**ova**)
ovum (oh-vim): one female egg
ovulation (ov-yoo-lay-shin): when an egg travels down the **Fallopian tube**, trying to be fertilised
penis (pee-nus): men's sex and urinary organ
placenta (pluh-sen-tuh): the organ that connects the mother and baby's blood supply through a tube called the **umbilical cord**. It sends **hormones**, food and oxygen from the mother to the **foetus**, and also takes waste back to the mother's bloodstream
puberty (pyoo-ba-tee): when the body can make babies
rape (rayp): forced sex
semen (see-min): liquid as well as the seed in **sperm**
sperm (spuhrm): spermatozoa – male seed that can make a baby if it finds the right egg
statutory rape (stat-yoo-taw-ree rayp): when somebody has sex with a child under the age of **consent** (sixteen, in South Africa). Even if the child agrees to it, this is the law of the country, and the older person who has sex with them should go to jail.
umbilical cord (um-bil-i-kil kawd): part of the **placenta**. An organ that connects the mother and baby's blood supply. It sends **hormones**, food and oxygen from the mother to the foetus, and also takes waste back to the mother's bloodstream
uterus (yoo-ta-ris): muscular sac in a woman's abdomen that holds the baby during pregnancy
vagina (va-jai-nuh): muscular canal inside the woman's body, for sex and giving birth
vernix (vir-niks): waxy white covering that waterproofed the baby's skin in the **uterus**
vulva (vul-vuh): the folds of skin on the outside of the **vagina**
wet dream (wet dreem): when **semen** comes out of the boy's **penis** when he is asleep
womb (woom): the **uterus**
zygote (zai-goat): a one-day-old cell body



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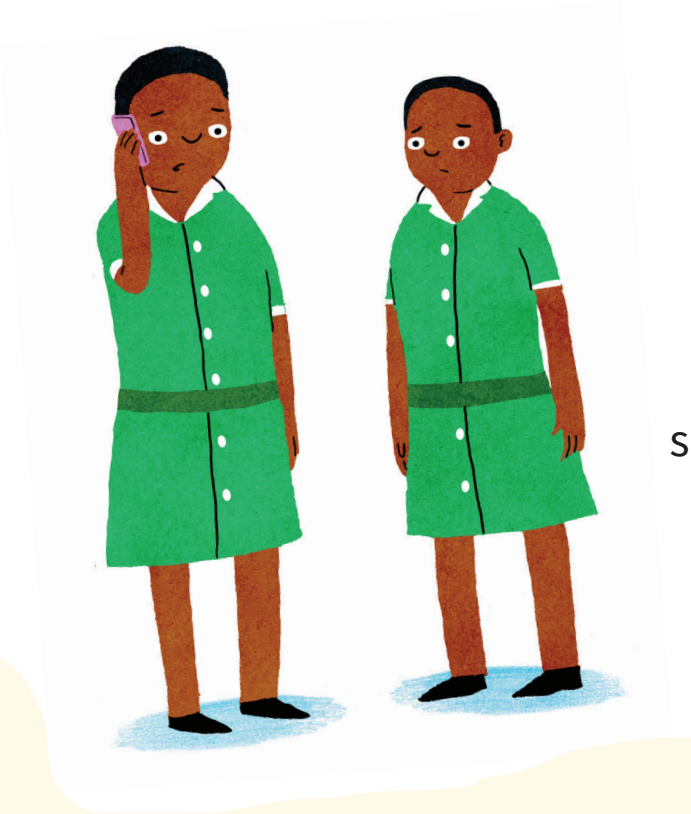

It doesn't matter how old you are, if someone forces you to have sex, it is called **rape**. Call one of these organisations and ask for help. Here are some numbers for South African groups, but your country will have similar organisations:

FOR CHILDREN

Molo Songololo: +27 (0)21 448 5421 **Email**: info@molo.org.za

Childline: 08000 555 55

RAPCAN: +27 (0)21 712 2330 **Email**: info@rapcan.org.za

FOR ADULTS

Rape Crisis: +27 (0)21 447 1467

Stop Gender Violence Helpline: 0800 150 150

Email: safetalking@lifeline.org.za

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