

THE MAGIC CORKS



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on a dangerous journey
through the world of sounds

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Author: Valdís Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir PhD, Iceland

Co-authors: Leena Rantala PhD, Finland and Anita McAllister PhD, Sweden

Illustrations: Sallamari Rantala, Finland

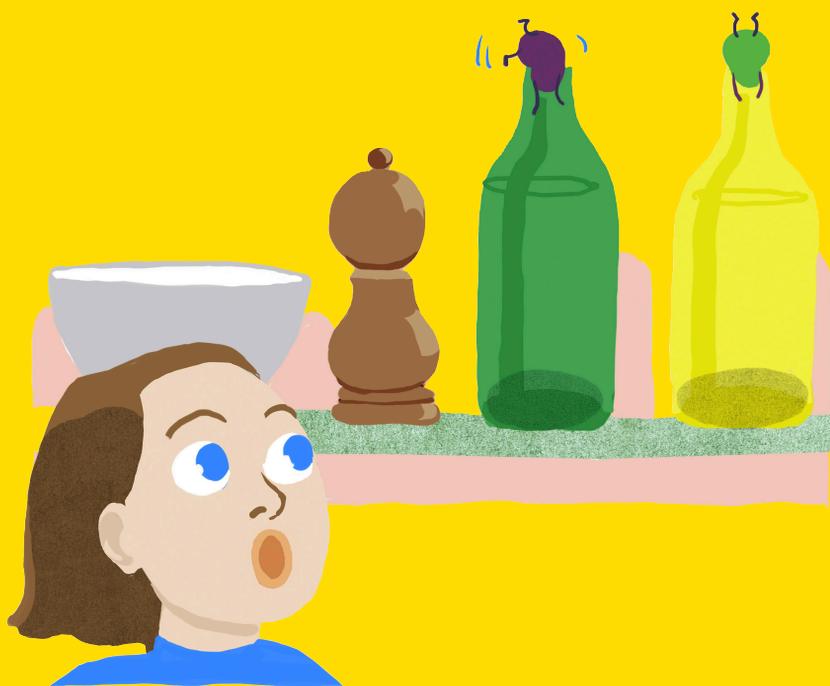
Graphic design: Ásdís Ívarsdóttir, Iceland

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England

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The magic corks

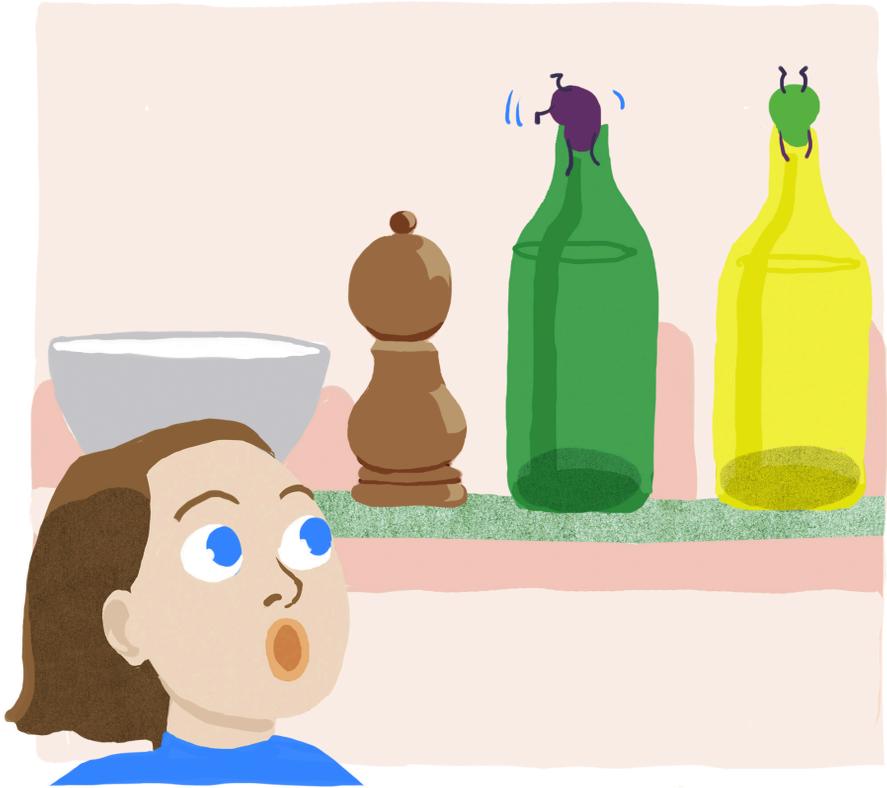
meet a kind woman





A kind-looking woman walked into her kitchen and heard strange puffs and groans coming from the kitchen shelf.

On the shelf was a sugar bowl, a pepper mill and two bottles.



The woman looked at the shelf in amazement.

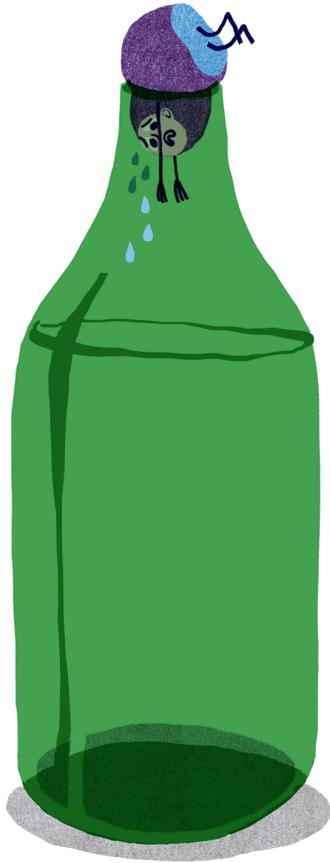
What's going on here? she said in surprise.



The noises came from the bottles.

The cork of one of the bottles was moving.

He turned first to the right and then to the left, and then backwards and forwards.

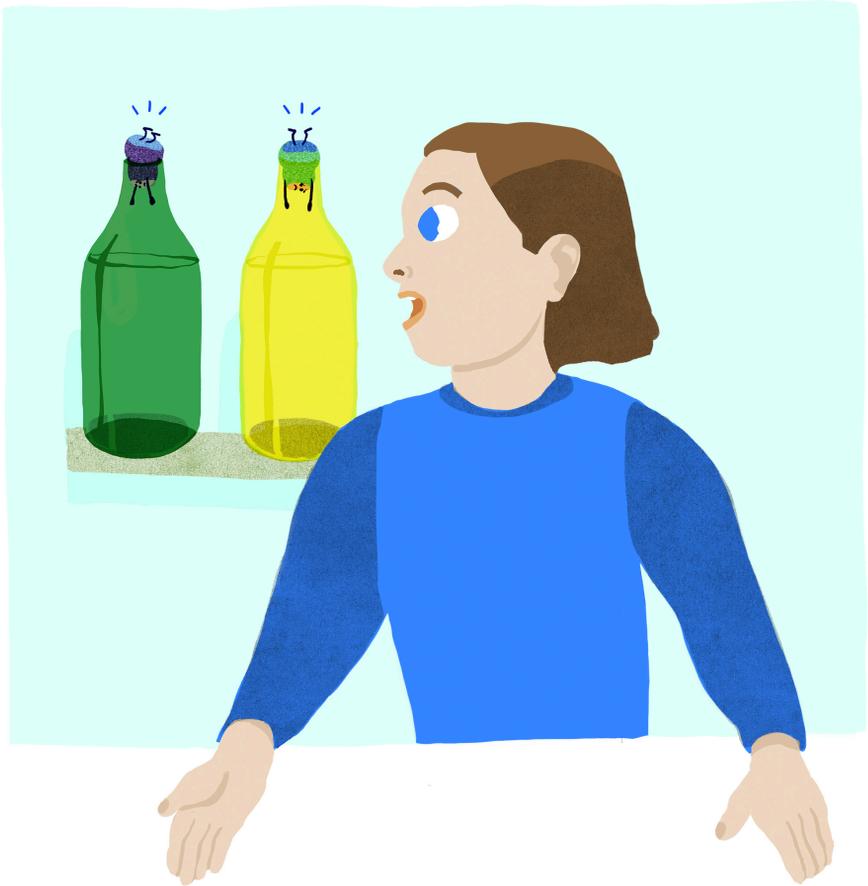


Puff, puff, puff, this is awfully tight,
the cork puffed. Awfully tight, indeed.
Then another little voice could be heard
from the other bottle.
I agree. What's your name?



My name is Quirky Cork and I am a magic cork and what's your name?

My name is Corky Cork and I am a magic cork too. said the other cork.

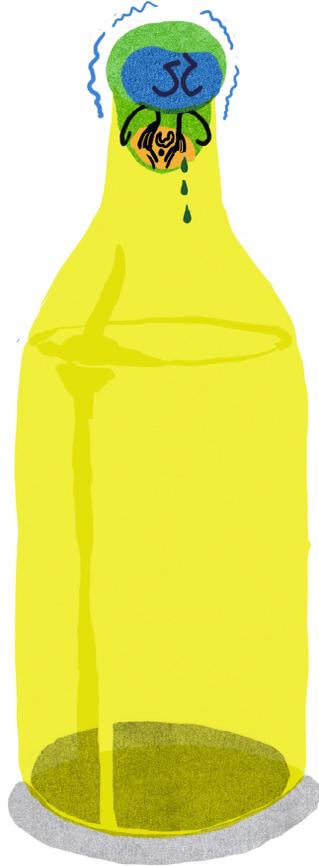


The woman said in amazement: Oh dear, magic corks that can talk! I've never seen this before.

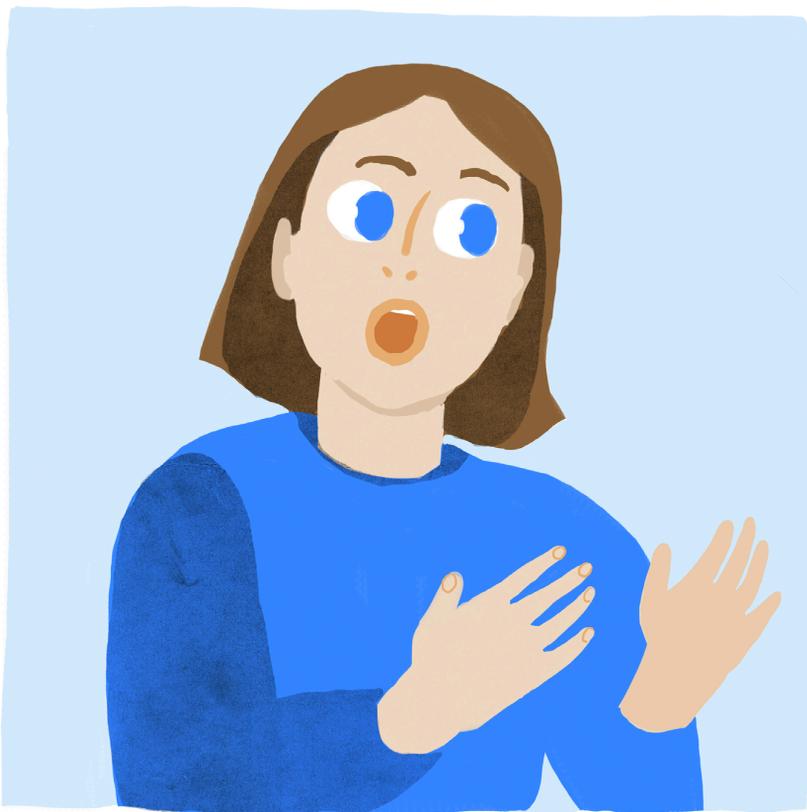
But how come you haven't freed yourselves. You are, after all, magic corks?



We are magic corks and we have to bounce around to be able to say the magic rhyme. Somebody shoved me into this bottle upside down, so now I can't bounce about, Quirky answered, angrily.



Somebody also found me and did the same to me. If I can't free myself then I can't perform my magic and I'll have to stay here forever, said Corky and started to cry his heart out.



Oh dear. Shall I help to set you free? asked the friendly woman.

No, thank you, said Quirky. We must do this ourselves.

Stop whimpering, dear Corky. Let's just try a little bit harder to free ourselves.



They struggled for a long time to set themselves free.

Oh, oh Corky said, and he started to cry and sob. We will never, ever free ourselves.



Suddenly there was a popping sound.

The two magic corks had freed themselves from the bottles and landed on the table.

The kind lady
gives the corks
a white bowl





Wow, that's better, said Quirky happily.

We are free from the bottles.

Let's try some bouncing about, saying our magic rhyme:

Bin, ban, bun. Life is so much fun.

Shorter and shorter we will become.



And all of a sudden, the corks became tiny,
like little flies.

Hey there, said the woman, this is a surprise.
You have become so very small I can hardly
see you.

Can you become bigger?



No problem, said Corky happily.
Bin, ban, bun. Life is so much fun.
Bigger, bigger, bigger we will become.
The corks grew bigger and bigger and
became as tall as the woman.
Oh, oh said the poor woman. Now I am
starting to be a little afraid of you two.



We don't want that, said the corks.

They hurried to make themselves small again.

Yes, this is better, said the woman relieved.

Where do you live?

Quirky and Corky looked at each other.

Well, that's the problem, said Quirky.

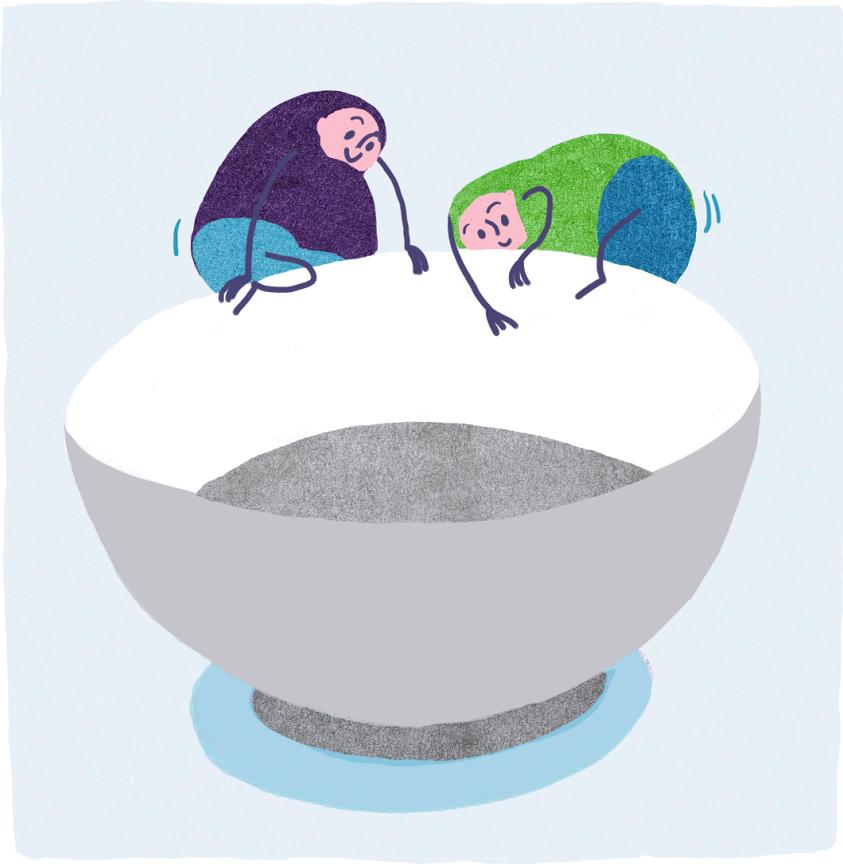
We don't know.



Do you maybe want to stay in my nice white bowl? said the woman.

Oh, yes, said Corky happily.

Thank you ever so much, kind lady.



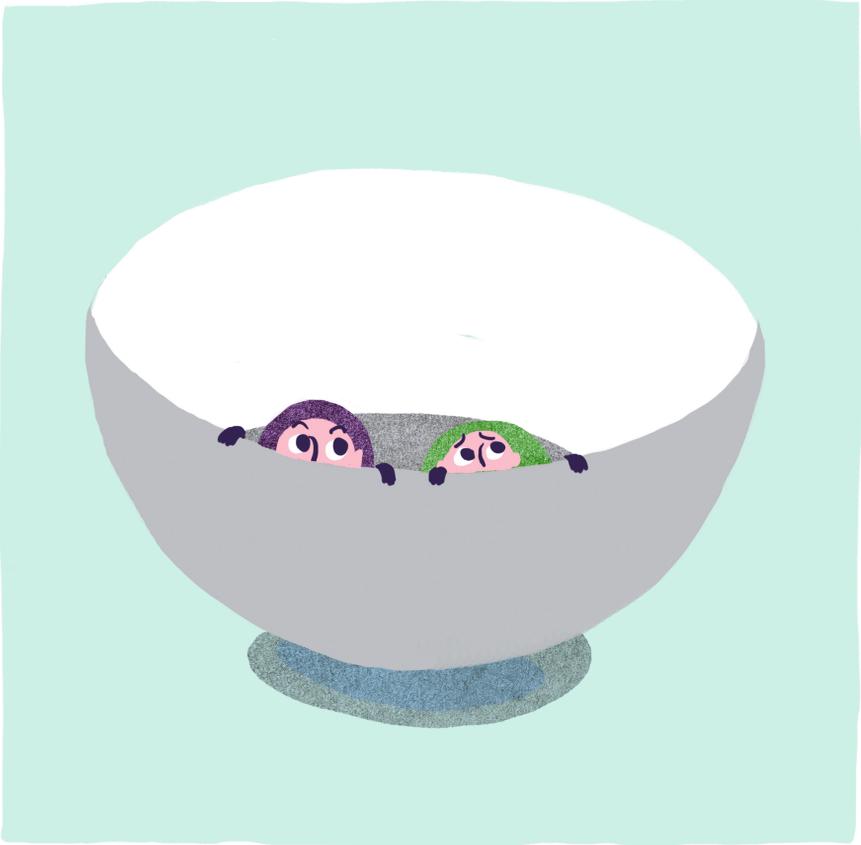
The little corks climbed into the bowl.
This is a lovely home, my dear Quirky, said
Corky happily. We shall stay here forever.



Yes, said Quirky sleepily. But now we shall get some sleep, as this has been so very tiring. And the little corks fell sound asleep in their new home and soon started to snore.

A naughty boy's voice





The next morning the little corks were woken up by a lot of noise.

They peeped over the brim of the bowl and saw a boy shouting and shouting.

Look at the boy
there. Can you hear
how hoarse he is,
and now he's
starting to shout and
shout.

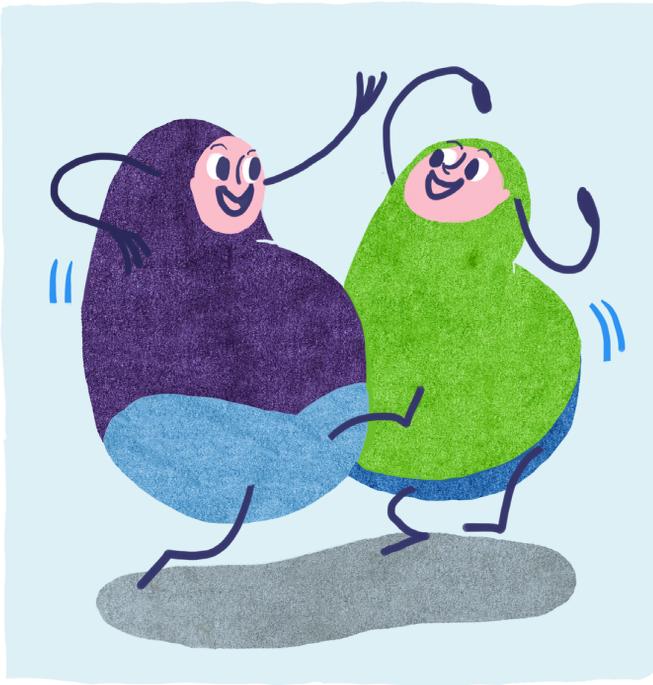
I wonder why he is doing
that, Quirky said.

I don't want to eat healthy food, I don't like
it, and I do NOT want to brush my teeth
either, I can't be bothered.

The boy kept on shouting and shouting.

That boy doesn't need to scream, nobody is
doing anything to him, said Corky.





Let's make ourselves small and climb up into his mouth, Quirky said, and see why he is so hoarse. There must be something wrong with his sound machine.

The little corks said their magic rhyme.

Bin, ban, bun. Life is so much fun. Smaller, smaller and smaller we will become.

The little corks became tiny like flies.



Look, the boy is missing a front tooth so it should be easy to get into his mouth, shouted Corky Cork.

And the little corks hurriedly climbed into the boy's mouth when he had finally quietened down.



Yuck, it smells horrible in here, Quirky said.

Do you know why that is? Corky said.

Quirky Cork nodded his little head.

Yes, I think I do know, This boy doesn't brush his teeth. Look, there's some food stuck between them. And that's not all, two of his molars are starting to rot!

That's awful. Corky only harrumphed.



You see, Corky, Quirky said. I know a lot about the Soundland because once I was a magic cork in a bottle in a dentist's clinic.

I often saw into open mouths, but I have never entered one to take a look at the noise machine inside.

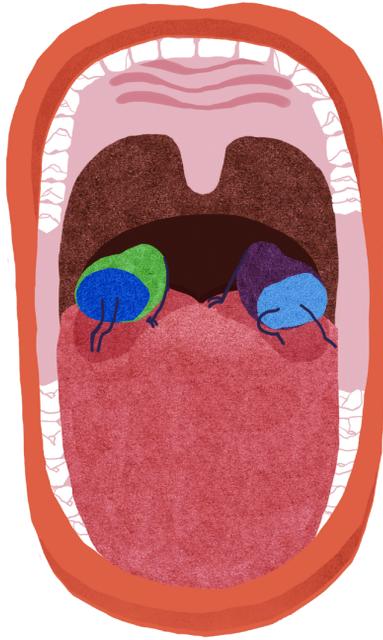
We have to find the noise machine that creates these screams. They clearly come from this boy's mouth.



The little corks sat down on the tongue and looked deep into the mouth.

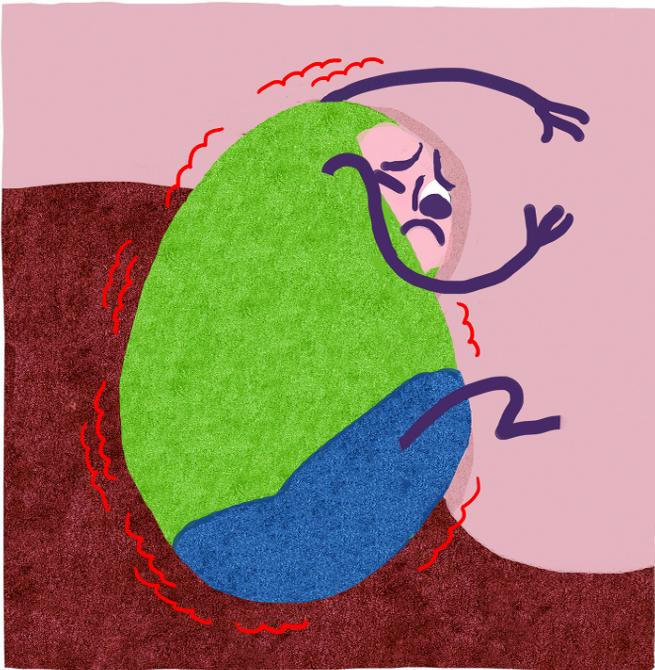
Look, Quirky, Corky said, deep in his mouth something is hanging down. Yes, that thing is called the uvula. Quirky Cork said,

Let's hang onto it.



The little corks hopped along the tongue until they reached the uvula.

Look out Quirky, don't fall! This is very dangerous, called Corky Cork. There's a very dark hole here behind the uvula and a tunnel going way down. The noise must be coming from this tunnel. Can you take a look, Corky? said Quirky curiously.

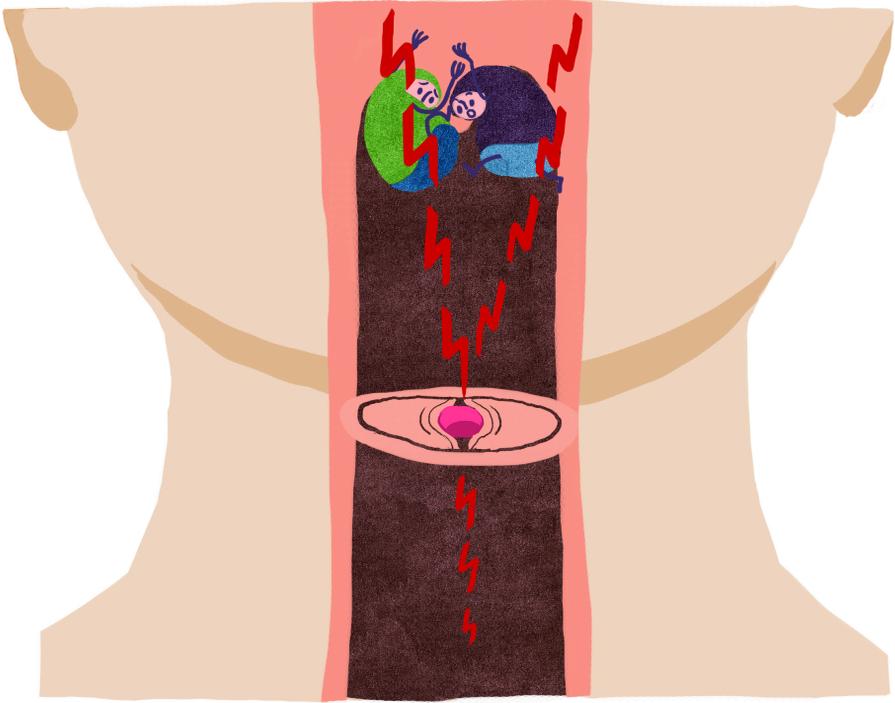


Corky grabbed the uvula and looked down. I can see a trampoline thing with a hole in the middle and air is coming through that hole.

Don't be afraid, dear Corky, said Quirky.

Those must be the vocal cords that create the sounds. What do they look like?

Soft and red, but there's a pimple on them so that the gap between them can't shut properly, Corky said.



Wait, called Quirky. I'm also going to grab the uvula and have a look inside with you. Quirky grabbed the uvula and peeped down. Look at all the air coming up through the gap, Quirky said.

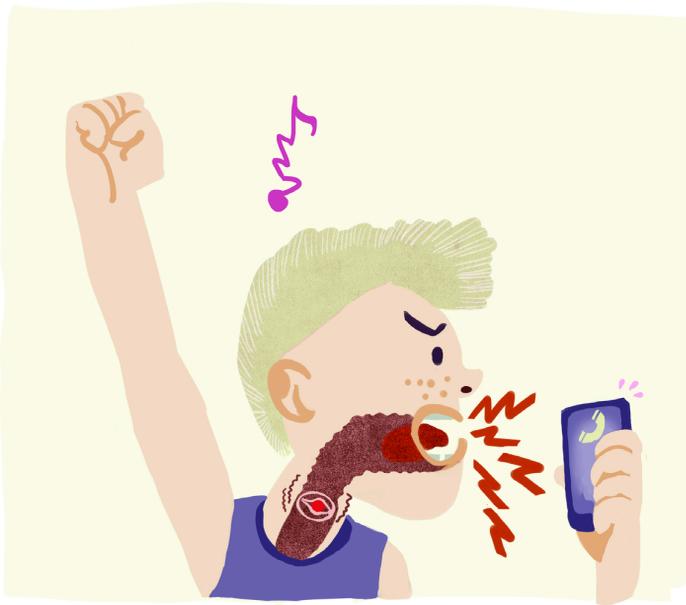


All of a sudden the boy started screaming.

The little corks got blown about.

Why is it so windy here? Corky said, his voice trembling.

I know, Quirky cried. The pimple on the vocal cords is to blame! It's stopping the vocal cords from shutting properly, so all this air is coming up when the boy uses his voice. I think this is what it means to be hoarse.



You know, Quirky said. I once heard that if you scream a lot, then you can damage your vocal cords. An awful thing to happen. When you get hoarse you get really tired speaking and singing.

Also people can't hear you properly. You can't even call someone. The voice explodes! Corky said.



Yes, that's true, Quirky said. The boy must stop shouting like this.

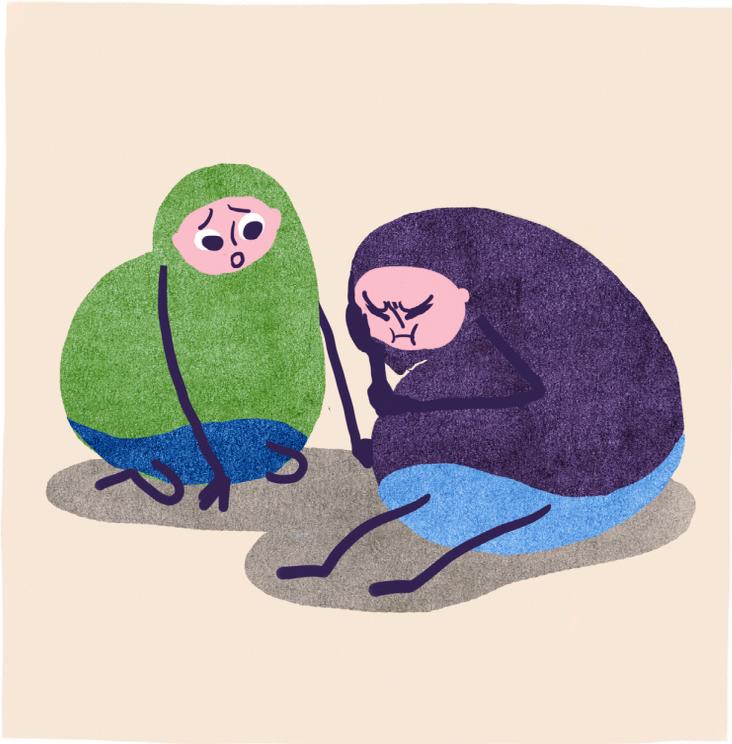
Let's get out of his mouth. I can't stand all this bad smell of rotten food.

It can't be good staying here in all this noise and wind. We've seen enough.

So the little corks made their way quickly out of the boy's mouth.

The corks speak about bad noise





The little corks sat down when they emerged from the boy's mouth.

Quirky, are you worried, dear? asked Corky.

Yes, answered Quirky, I'm worried about all this noise that we keep creating.



Some people have the TV or radio on too loudly.

Others scream without any reason or throw things on the floor or slam doors.



That's true, Quirky said and nodded.

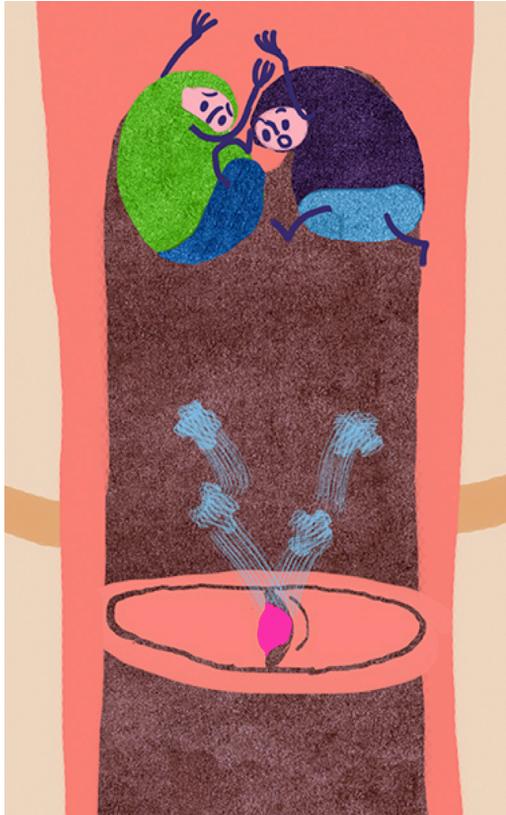
There's even a lot of noise out in the streets.



Yes, even when we are playing we create so much noise, that we get pain in our ears.

We can hardly hear what others are saying. Others need to shout so that we can hear them, said Corky.

Yes, and we need to shout so that others hear us, said Quirky.



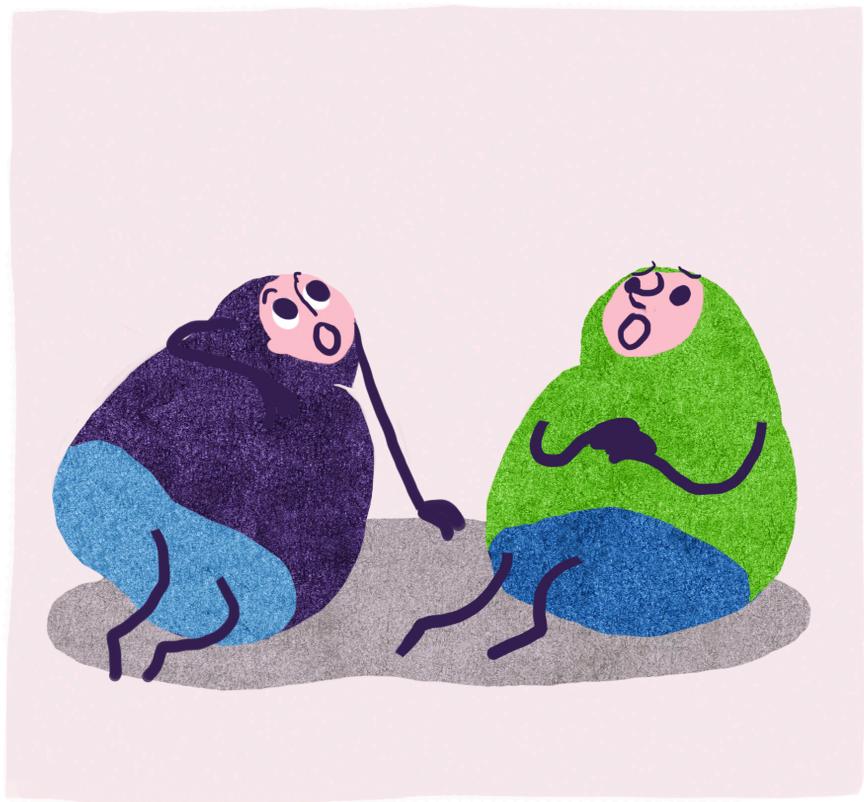
Noise is so bad both for our voices and our ears, Quirky said. You remember how the boy's vocal cords were?

They had grown a pimple because he was always shouting. That is why he became hoarse.



Also, other people don't like to hear shouting. Shouting is a very uncomfortable noise.

We cover our ears when someone is shouting close to us, Corky said firmly.



Why do we scream and shout? It's ridiculous,
Quirky said, and he sighed.

The poor little corks are in great
danger while exploring mouths.

The poor little
corks are in great
danger while
exploring mouths





The nice woman was looking at Quirky and Corky in her bowl.

She opened her mouth and said tenderly:
How cute they are, these little magic corks
in my bowl.



The little corks stared at this big mouth
which moved to and fro.

Quirky whispered to Corky: Let's take a
look at the woman's sound machine. Maybe
her vocal cords are different from the boys'
vocal cords. You remember how he had
damaged his vocal cords by shouting so much.

Let's do the magic rhyme:



Bin, ban, bun, life is so much fun. Small like flies we will become. All of sudden the little corks shrunk to the size of tiny flies and hurriedly crawled out of the bowl.

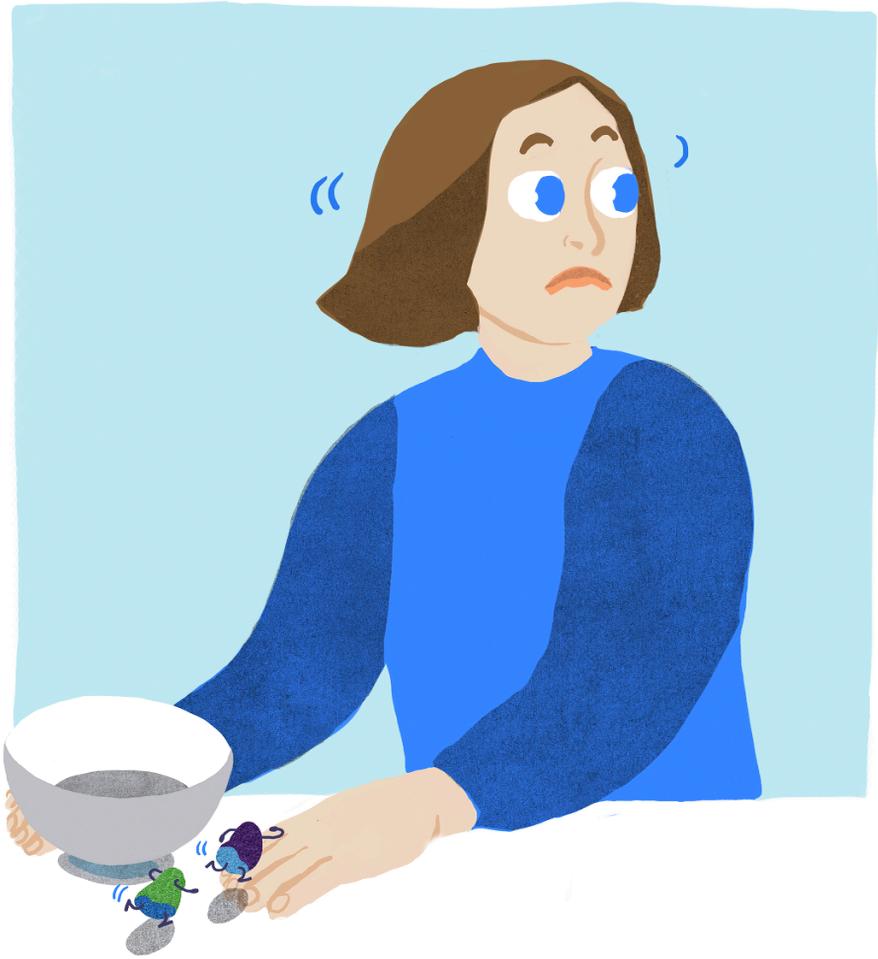


The nice woman's eyes widened in surprise and became as big as saucers.

Well, well, well, she said in amazement.

What has become of the corks?

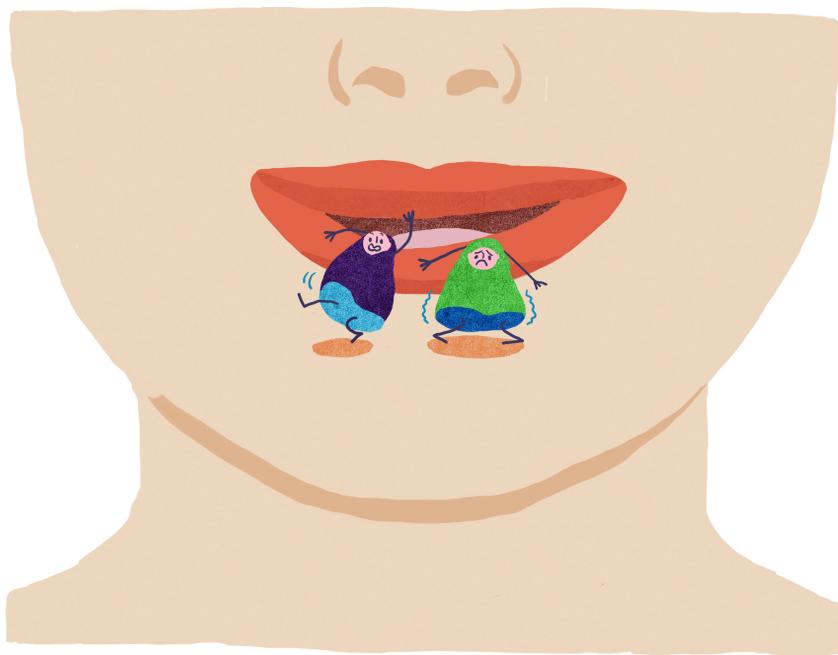
The woman had not noticed when the corks became small like flies.



Quirky and Corky had jumped down and onto the back of her hand.



They ran along her arm, up to her shoulder where they took a HUGE jump and



..... Bump! They landed on the woman's chin.

Careful, Corky, it is slippery here. You could fall, Quirky said afraid.

He gasped as he almost lost his balance and nearly fell off the woman's chin.

Whoa, that was close, Quirky said.



Listen, Corky, Quirky said in a low voice,
I think the sound machine is behind this
opening.

You know, where the words pop out.

Come on. Let's climb up to the lower lip and
see what's inside her mouth.

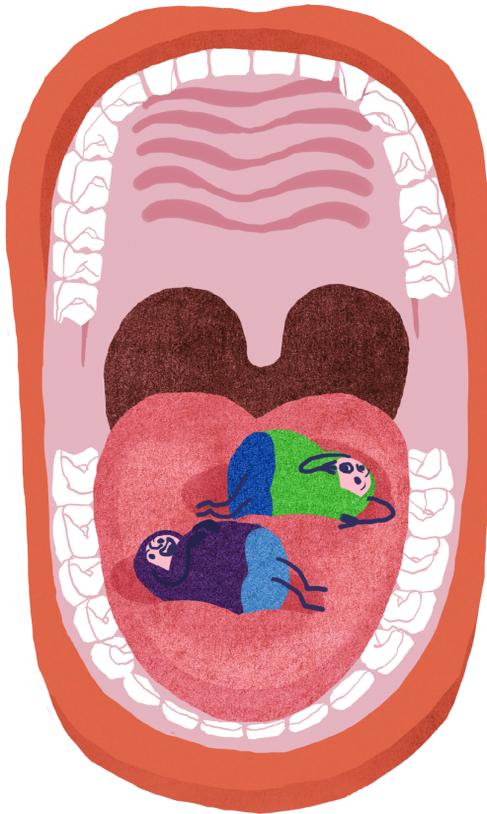


The little corks climbed up onto the teeth
and peeped inside.

Look, there's the tongue, Corky said.

Shall we go inside and lie down on it?

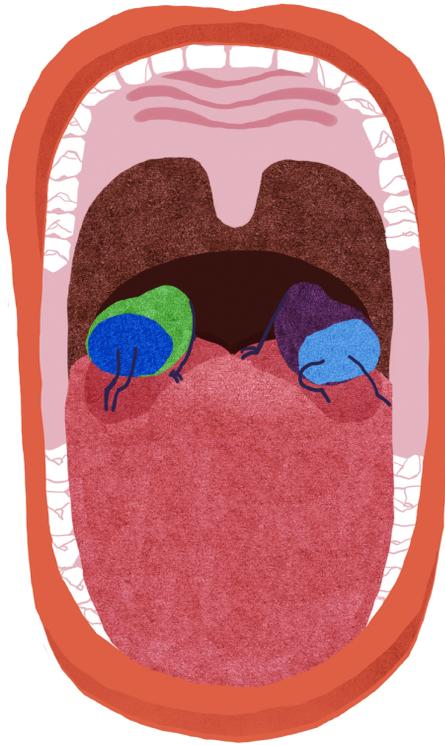
It looks like a comfy bed.



The little corks lay down on the tongue and looked up.

What we see there is called the roof of the mouth or palate, Quirky said wisely.

And look Corky, that's the uvula hanging down like a string back there.

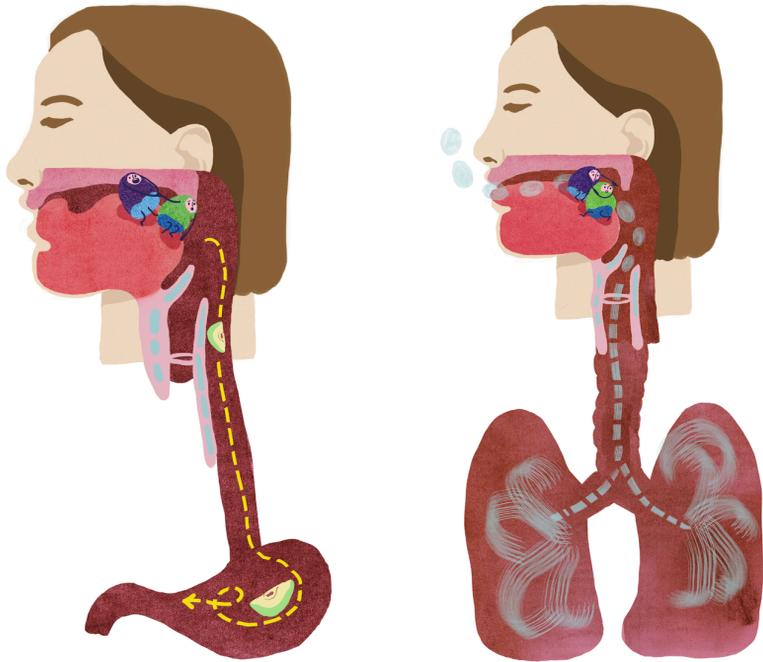


The little corks stood up and skipped along the tongue until they reached the uvula.

Watch out, Quirky, look here's a gap.

Don't fall.

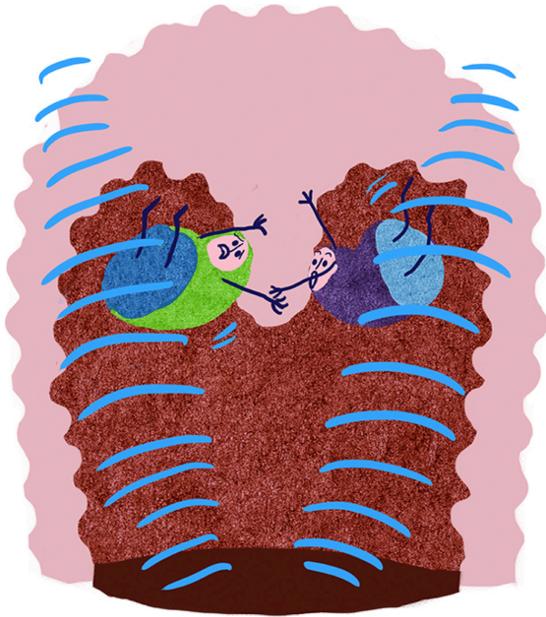
I will be careful, Quirky said. The gap is called the pharynx. And do you know, there are tunnels going down from the pharynx.



You know, there are two tunnels. Quirky said. One ends in the lungs which we are always filling with air. The other tunnel leads all the way down to the stomach where the food we swallow goes.

Be careful. We don't want to fall down into the stomach. We'd never get out again.

I will be careful, Corky said, his voice trembling.



All of a sudden, the vocal cords started moving so rapidly that the little corks jumped. They almost fell down into the pharynx. They just managed to grab the uvula and held on really tight.

What was that? Corky said, afraid.

That must be the vocal cords starting to vibrate. You remember that's what happens when we talk – the vocal cords vibrate, Quirky answered.

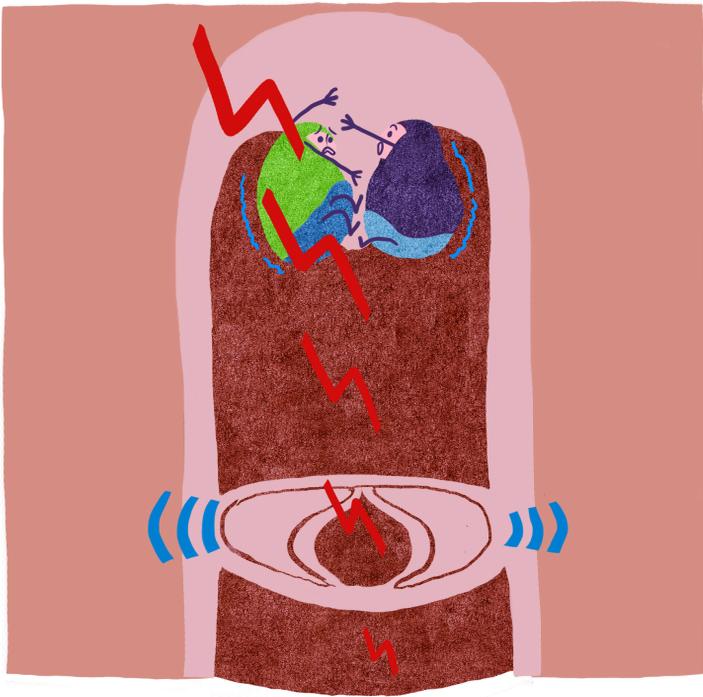


The woman became silent.

The corks held on tight to the uvula and peeped down.

Look. These vocal cords have no pimple like the hoarse boy's vocal cords had. He was always shouting and such pimples can grow, damaging the voice, Quirky said.

And listen, the woman is not hoarse at all, Corky said.

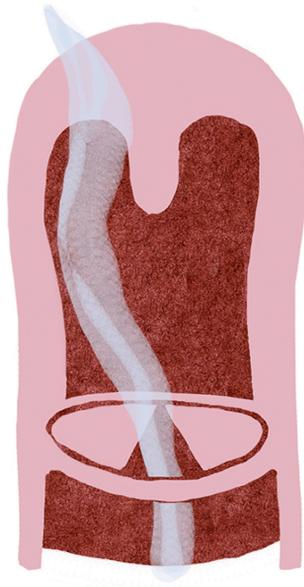


My throat is really tickling. I must have swallowed a fly, the woman said as she cleared her throat.

The vocal cords started moving vigorously for a short while and the little corks clutched the uvula.

I'm so scared Quirky, Corky whined.

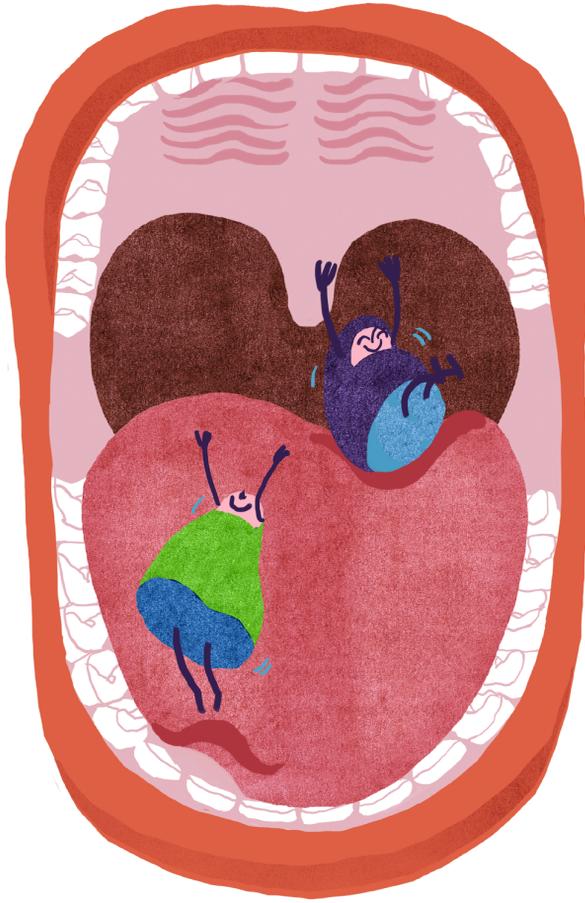
Don't be afraid, Quirky said comfortingly.



When the woman became silent, the little corks looked back down. Why is air coming up between the vocal cords? Corky asked with surprise.

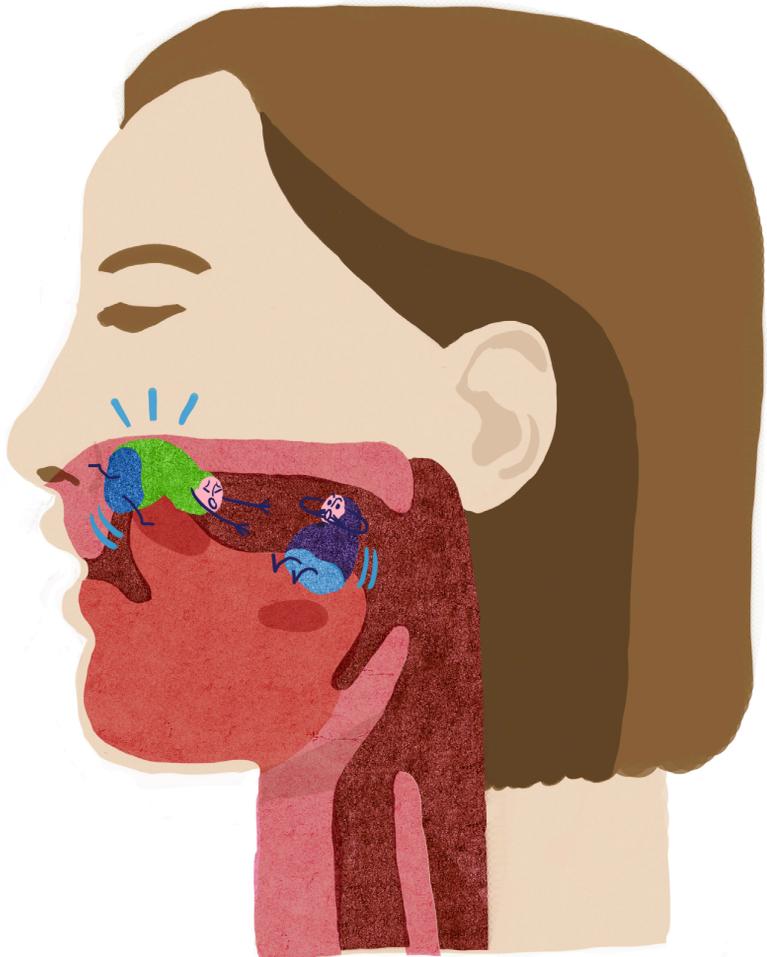
Corky! There has to be a gap between the vocal cords to allow air to travel through so that people can breathe, Quirky, said in a shocked voice.

Oh, I understand, said Corky, a little embarrassed.



The little corks let go of the uvula and jumped down onto the tongue.

Let's try jumping up and down on the tongue. It's just like a trampoline, Quirky said excited.



All of a sudden the tongue started moving up and down very fast because the woman started talking.

The poor little corks were thrown back and forth like balls.



Woah, this tongue is crazy! Let's hurry up and leave this mouth, said Corky terrified. Let's wait until the tongue stops moving. Otherwise we could end up between her teeth. Let's go, the woman has stopped talking, Quirky said.



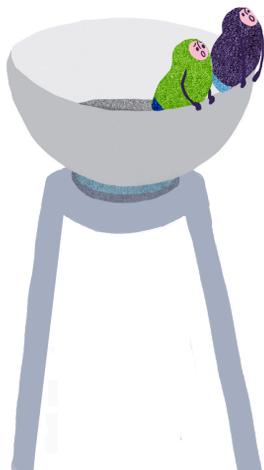
The little corks crawled quickly along the woman's tongue, clambered over the bottom lip, and jumped off onto the table.



That's odd, said the woman in surprise.
My tongue just tickled as if flies were
crawling along it.

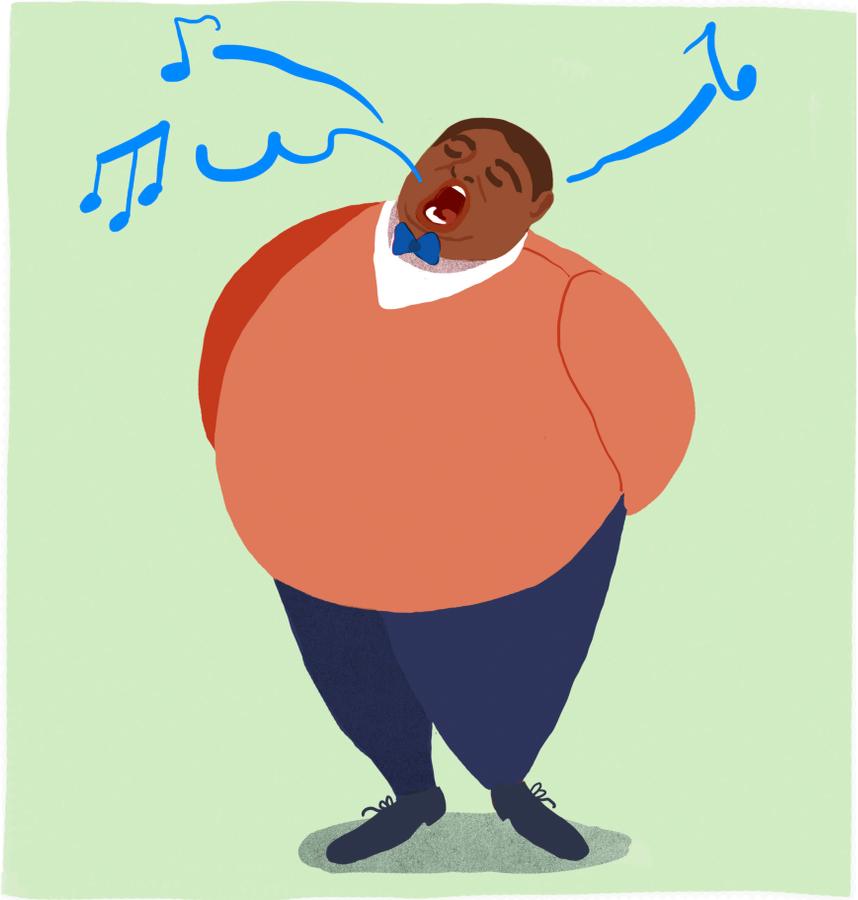
A huge man sings





An enormous man with a huge tummy was visiting the nice woman.

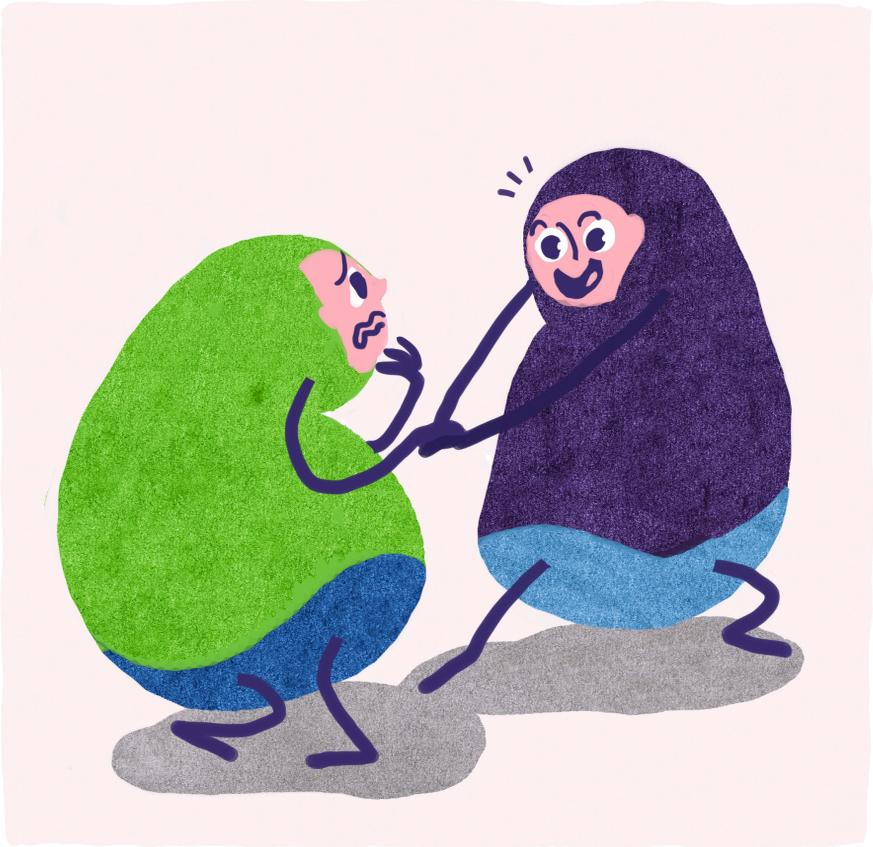
The corks stood up in their bowl and stared nervously at the man.



He was singing to the woman.

The man sang: boom boom boom.

Let's take a look at the vocal cords in this man, said Quirky. His vocal cords must be very very very big.



Are you nuts? Corky said shocked.

It's very dangerous. What are we supposed to do if the vocal cords start vibrating?



Just fall down into the lungs or the stomach, huh?

Don't be such a scaredy cat, Corky dear, Quirky said teasingly. We've looked at a boy's vocal cords, damaged by all the screaming he has done. Then we've looked at a woman's vocal cords, we didn't fall down then, did we?



No, but you need to look after me,
Corky whined.

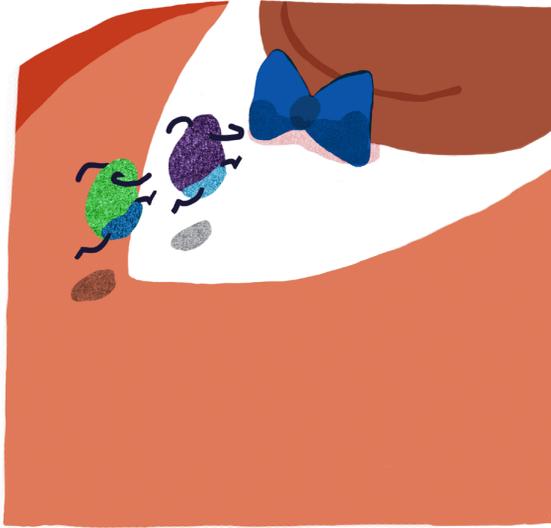
Of course, Quirky said comfortingly.



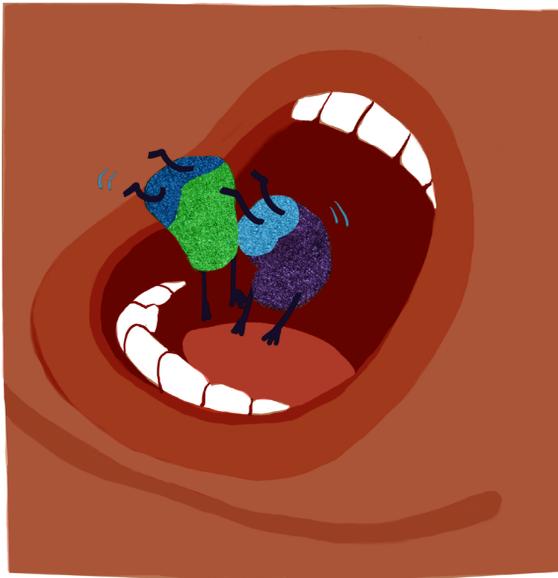
The two corks ran as fast as their little feet could carry them up the man's leg ...



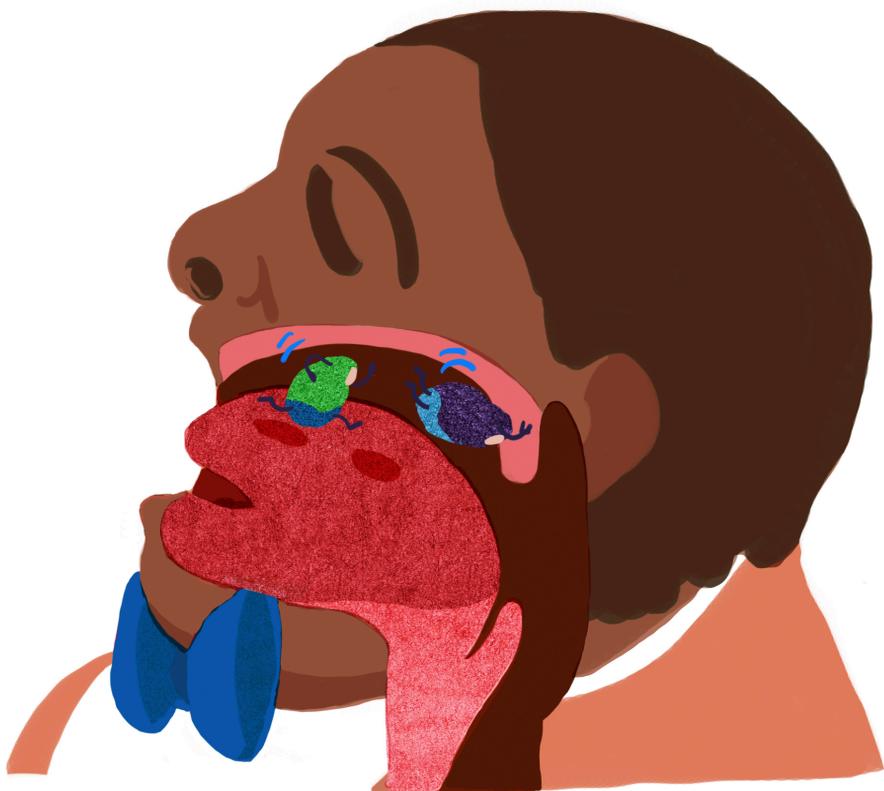
... up his tummy ...



... up his chest ...



... and jumped into his mouth.



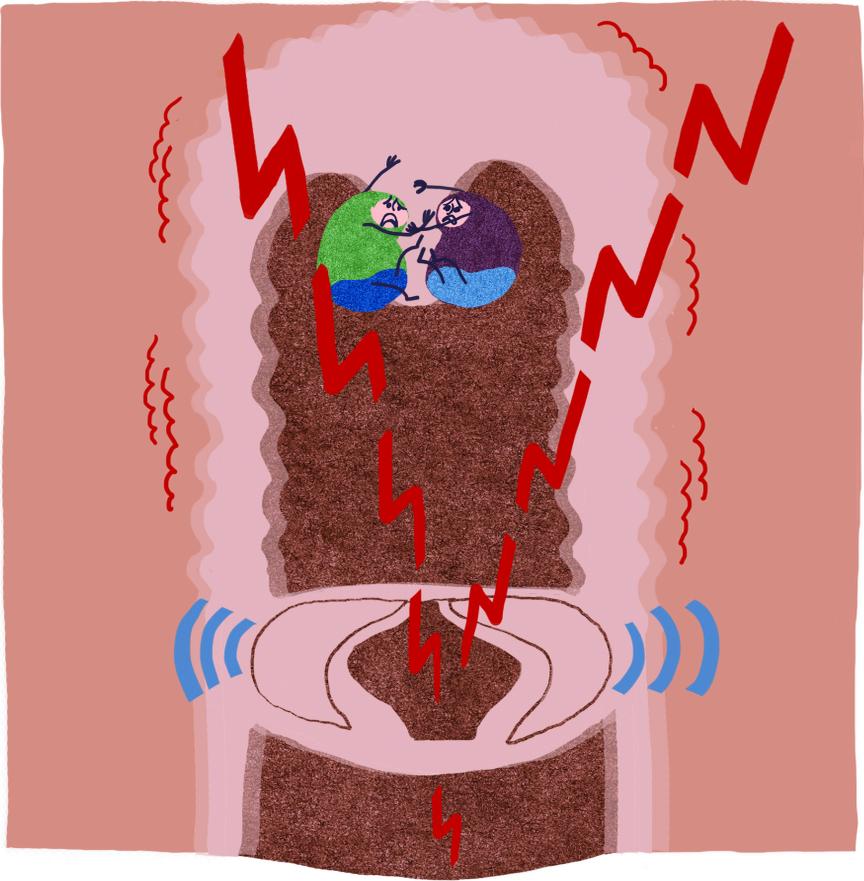
They ran as fast as they could along his tongue, grabbed the uvula and peeped down. Look, Corky, how long these vocal cords are, much longer than in the woman and much, much, MUCH longer than in the boy. It must be because the voice box is much bigger in the man, Quirky said excitedly.



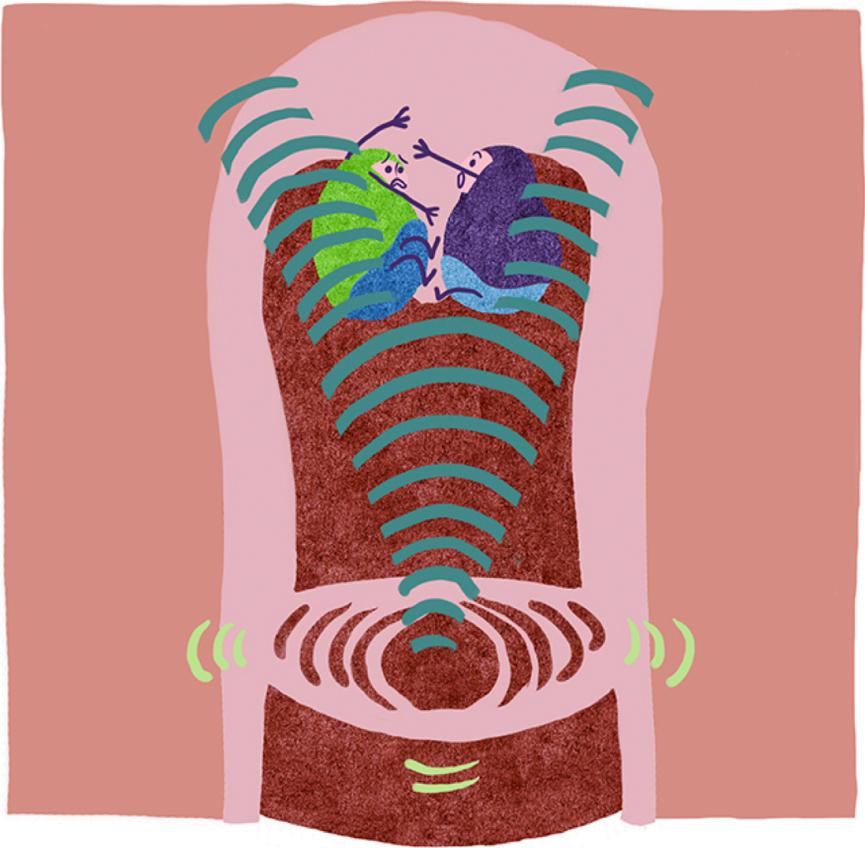
And there are no pimples on the vocal cords,
said Corky.

They started to sway on the uvula. Back and
forth, side to side, round and round.

The best swing ever! giggled the corks.



All of a sudden, the vocal cords started vibrating crazily and it was very loud inside his mouth. The little corks became terrified. Poor Corky started to cry his heart out.



I'm so scared, Quirky. There is so much noise
I am so afraid that I will fall into the lungs
and never get back out again.

My dearest Corky, hold on very tight.
This will stop soon and then we can escape,
Quirky said encouragingly.



Finally the man stopped singing.

The corks let go of the uvula and crawled carefully along the tongue.

Corky, look out. Those teeth, they are very, very frightening, Quirky called out in alarm.



The little corks just escaped out of the man's mouth before the man started singing again.

Wow, Corky said and sighed. That was close.

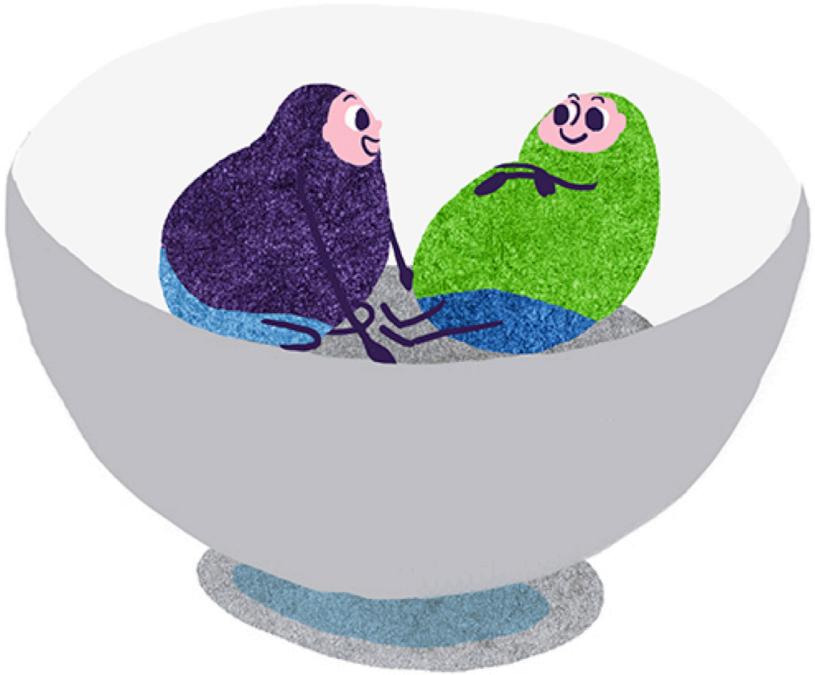


I want to go home now, Corky whimpered.
All right, Quirky said comfortingly. Let's say
the Magic Rhyme.
Bin, ban, bun. Life is so much fun. Bring us
some wings to fly away home.



The little corks flew up and landed in their bowl.

Nice to be home again, Corky said.



Look! I am so awfully clever, Quirky said,
Now I know why women, men and children
have such different voices.

Well, Corky said. Why is that?



You see. Men have such deep voices because their vocal cords are so very long and fat.

Women have shorter vocal cords, so their voices are higher.

Yes, Corky said. Now I know. Children must have very small vocal cords because their voices are very very high. We just have to be careful not to scream just for fun. If we are always screaming, pimples can grow on our vocal cords and we will become hoarse, Quirky said thoughtfully. But now we will go to sleep my dear Corky.



Oh, there you are my little darlings, the friendly woman said, I thought I had lost you.

No, no, but we have had such an adventurous day. We will tell you all about it tomorrow.

The little corks fell sound asleep in their bowl and started to snore and snore and snore.

To educators – teachers and parents

Voice culture

Suggested tasks:

Here we can talk about a good voice culture; how it is much better and more convenient to keep the voice at a normal level. We can test various vocal varieties with the children, such as how we say “Good morning” in a tender voice, a happy voice, an angry voice, an irritated voice, a frightened voice, a surprised voice and what feelings are aroused by those different voices.

Noise

What is noise? What is it in our environment that creates noise and what kinds of noise do we hear around us? How do we feel in noisy surroundings?

We should encourage discussions on loudness resulting from devices such as TVs being set at too high a volume. The noise in cinemas. Must there be so much noise? Why? Of course there does not have to be so much noise.

Many ways to reduce noise, for example by not slamming doors, not throwing wooden cubes or other toys on the floor, not hitting tables and walls with objects etc.

Teaching children about the voice and the speech organs

The contents of this book provide an opportunity to teach children about organs of speech such as lungs and vocal cords and how air from the lungs makes the vocal cords vibrate and produce the sounds coming from the mouth.

The book can also teach children about the organs of speech in the mouth, which parts of the mouth we use when we speak – lips, teeth and tongue. We can also discuss how a special kind of RR, characteristic of French, for example, is produced with the uvula.

Suggested tasks:

Do we need a tongue?

(Ask the children) Why? What can we do with our tongue (for example lick ice cream – make a clicking sound – stick it out at someone – extend it down to the chin or up to the nose).



Discuss this with the children and ask them to study their own tongue and those of other people.

What about the lips?

Are the lips necessary? Guide the children towards answering and let them do the following on their own:

kiss – smile – cry – suck –
whistle – sing – speak.

Move the lips to the positions
of /OO/ and /EE/. And feel how
the lips move. What is the

position of the lips when we cry

and say /OO/ or when we are happy and say /EE/.



What about the palate?

If we did not have a palate in
our mouth there would not be
any roof to stop our tongue
when we raise it. Then the
tongue might go right up inside

our nose and even come out the
end from the nose! It would be pretty awkward to have
a tongue dangling out from our nose.



What about the jaw?

Must we be able to open the
mouth? Why? When?

(Guide the children towards
answers and make them imitate
eating – drinking – breathing
with open mouth – vomiting –
spitting – chewing – singing – speaking)



What about our teeth?

We use our teeth for chewing food but can we make sounds with them?

How do we say **/SSSSSSSSSS/**?

We bite the teeth together and then blow the air through the almost closed teeth (let's try it)

Can we say **/SSSSSSSS/** with our mouth open?



This book is in Easy Reader format and serves specific purposes:

A significant amount of research has demonstrated the health-damaging effects of noise, such as increased stress, reduced concentration and attention.

Furthermore, noise can cause headaches and damage both your hearing and your voice. Preschools/schools can be quite noisy so it is important to teach children about noise.

Improved voice awareness:

Children should be made aware of their voices and helped to understand how shouting can seriously impair the vocal cords, make your voice tired and reduce its capacity for calling and singing, for instance.

Reducing vocal noise (e.g. shouting)

Children should be made aware of the potentially damaging effects of noise (harmful to hearing and voice) and the discomfort it causes (we feel uncomfortable in a noisy environment)

We should encourage children to think about what can be done to reduce noise. Where is the point, for example, in screaming, just to scream?

We might just as well kick a wall with our bare feet.

We hurt our vocal cords by screaming, even though we don't feel the pain immediately.

This easy reader

tells us the story of two small corks with magic powers who set out to explore the world of sounds inside people. They wonder where the voice comes from and how it can be changed in various ways. First they climb into the mouth of a boy who is constantly screaming and by looking at his speech organs they discover why his voice is so hoarse. Next they climb into the mouth of a woman, and then a man, because they would very much like to know why men's voices differ from those of women. But the mouth is a highly dangerous environment for small corks to explore. On their hazardous journeys they learn many new words for the organs involved in speech and how they function. They also learn that we have to take care of our voice so that it does not get damaged by screaming and shouting, for example.

Aims

The aim of the book is to teach the children about **voice health** and **noise** and to encourage them to think about what can be done to reduce noise and harmful voice habits.

The print layout

The type and size of font chosen for the book is well suited to those who are beginning to read or have reading problems. Punctuation is used in moderation, bearing in mind that young children have not yet learnt the relevant rules and may be confused by complex punctuation marks. Long word spaces are also maintained. In most cases the pictures are above the text and can be covered while the children read so that their attention is less likely to be distracted.