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Nasty People: An Illustrated Guide to Understanding Sex

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Project summary:

For my Honors Project, I set out to bring together my two majors of Gender and Women’s Studies and Biological Anthropology, as well as drawing from my various personal passions. Ultimately, this led me on a journey to create a book about human reproduction and why it matters in a context bigger than simply “making babies.” The book outlines sex in terms of actual conception to more social aspects like dating and communication. To accompany the research and opinion based written portion, I created a set of illustrations that compliment my research while telling a story of two twins and their development from conception to adulthood.

Because this project is ongoing and I am in the process of attempting to publish my book, I have refrained from posting a full PDF. However, the following is an excerpt from the book and a sample illustration:

Project Excerpt:

Introduction: “Manifesto”

The hardest part of this project has been the realization that my family is going to read this. While I am incredibly close with them, we have always operated on a strict understanding that sex is something we NEVER talk about. To be completely honest, the topic generally makes me uncomfortable, and yet I have been drawn to every aspect of the subject for many years. This is my first attempt at a truly immersive foray into the topic of sex. While the breadth of the subject and its inherent intricacies is hugely daunting and beyond exciting, I am confident that this journey will be deeply rewarding.

My work in sexual assault prevention has made me a deeply passionate advocate for effective sex education, however, I am deeply aware of the social, political and religious hurdles that comprehensive school programs face. At this point, I think the conversation should start at home. That being said, where does one begin? This is where I come in: my mission is to create a small guide to the topic, something to arm the intrepid educator for their journey into “the talk.” I want to make something that is both educational and humorous, informative, but brief, and above all: useful. I hope that this can be a tool for both nervous parents, and shy girlfriends, frustrated
husbands and curious youth because I am a strong believer in the notion that knowledge (and effective communication) is power.

Naturally, I do not have all the answers, but I will do my best to compile all I have learned while incorporating a variety of personal perspectives (i.e. the anthropologist, the feminist, the scientist, the literature lover, the artist and the educator). In a perfect world, I will inspire parents, lovers and friends alike to approach the subject with a renewed respect for its importance and a reverence for the power of sex. Before I begin I want to acknowledge a hard truth: I cannot fit every detail into this story. The best I can do is a brief generalization. I cannot tell every story and include every exception (and there are many), but I will do my best to present the facts and the fictions to the best of my ability. I can only hope that I am up to the task.