



NO MORE FAIRYTALES



EXPLODING MYTHS AND BUSTING STIGMA AROUND CONTRACEPTION





NO MORE FAIRY TALES

Once upon a time there lived three young women, each bursting with potential and brimming with hopes and dreams for the future. From the mountains of Nepal to the bustling capital of Zambia, they courageously took their first steps on their chosen paths.

But they would soon discover the road ahead was lined with pitfalls and that handsome princes are not always all they're cracked up to be. Faced with unintended pregnancies, their hopes for a fairy tale ending were shattered, but our three brave heroines decided to pick up the pieces and write their own stories to help others avoid the same fate.

They are not alone. All over the world, exceptional young people are defying society's myths and misconceptions and championing the truth: that contraception transforms lives. Instead of passively assuming the role society expects of them, they are fighting for a world in which everyone has the chance to be the hero of their own tale. Now is the time to bid farewell to the fairy tales about contraception. It's time to choose fact over fiction.

It's time to get real.

ESTHER



ZAMBIA

THIS IS ESTHER.
AT THE AGE OF 16, SHE
WAS A HIGH-FLYING
STUDENT AND TALENTED
HOCKEY PLAYER, HER
HEART SET ON COMPETING
AROUND THE WORLD.



YET DESPITE BEING
BRIGHT AND EDUCATED,
THERE WAS ONE SUBJECT
SHE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT.

COME ON ESTHER,
YOU CAN'T GET PREGNANT
FROM YOUR FIRST TIME.

FIVE MONTHS LATER

ESTHER SENSED
SOMETHING WAS
WRONG, BUT WHEN
THE TEST RESULTS
CAME IN, SHE
COULDN'T BELIEVE
HER EYES.

FAMILY PLANNING IS
FOR MARRIED PEOPLE.
BESIDES, IT CAN GIVE
YOU CANCER.



SHE WAS PREGNANT.

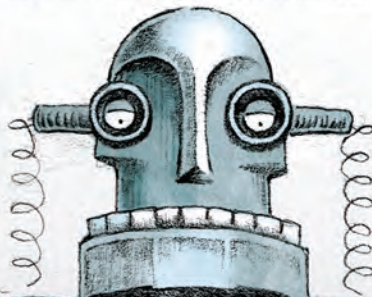


ESTHER CRIED THE WHOLE DAY, NOT KNOWING WHAT THE FUTURE HELD.

HOW AM I GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL?
HOW AM I GOING TO CONTINUE PLAYING HOCKEY WITH A CHILD ON THE WAY?



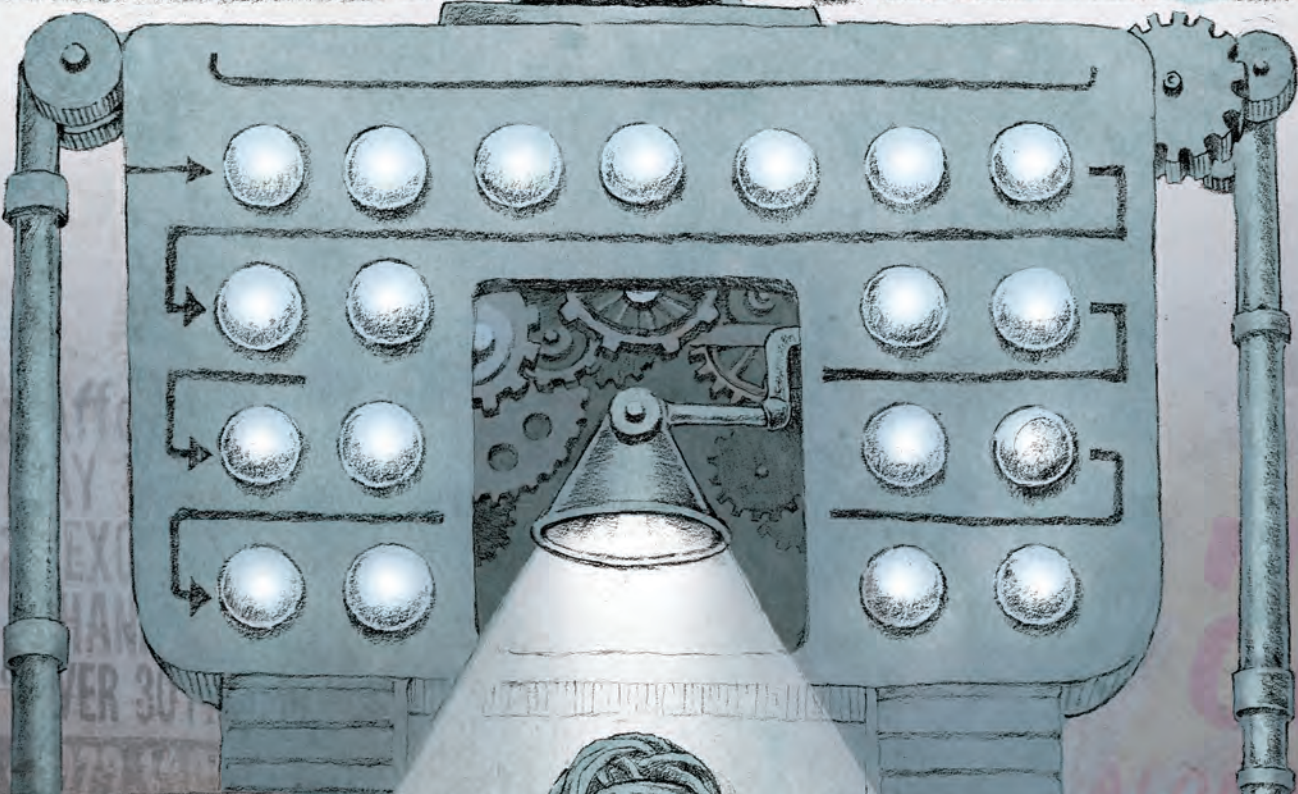
BY THE END OF THE TERM ESTHER'S GRADES PLUMMETED.



EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT HER.



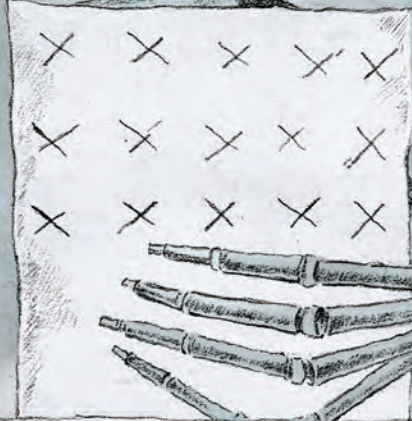
ESTHER'S NOT EVEN IN THE TOP 10!



HER DAD CONFRONTED HER.



OKAY, SO YOU'RE PREGNANT. WHAT'S YOUR PLAN NOW?



I'M NOT READY FOR MARRIAGE. I WANT TO CONTINUE SCHOOL.



ESTHER GAVE BIRTH TO HER DAUGHTER AND SACRIFICED EVERYTHING TO TAKE CARE OF HER.



BUT SHE WASN'T ALONE.

ESTHER WAS LUCKY TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF HER FAMILY. HER MUM EVEN WENT WITH HER TO HAVE AN IUD FITTED, PROTECTING HER FROM PREGNANCY FOR UP TO TEN YEARS.



OVER TIME SHE WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AND REGAIN HER PLACE IN THE HOCKEY TEAM, BUT ESTHER KNEW NOT EVERYONE WAS AS FORTUNATE.

PASSIONATE ABOUT SHARING HER NEW-FOUND KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE, SHE IS NOW WORKING FOR MARIE STOPES ZAMBIA TO ENSURE OTHER YOUNG WOMEN CAN ALSO USE CONTRACEPTION TO ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS.


FORCED TO LEAVE SCHOOL, HER DREAMS FADED INTO DARKNESS.



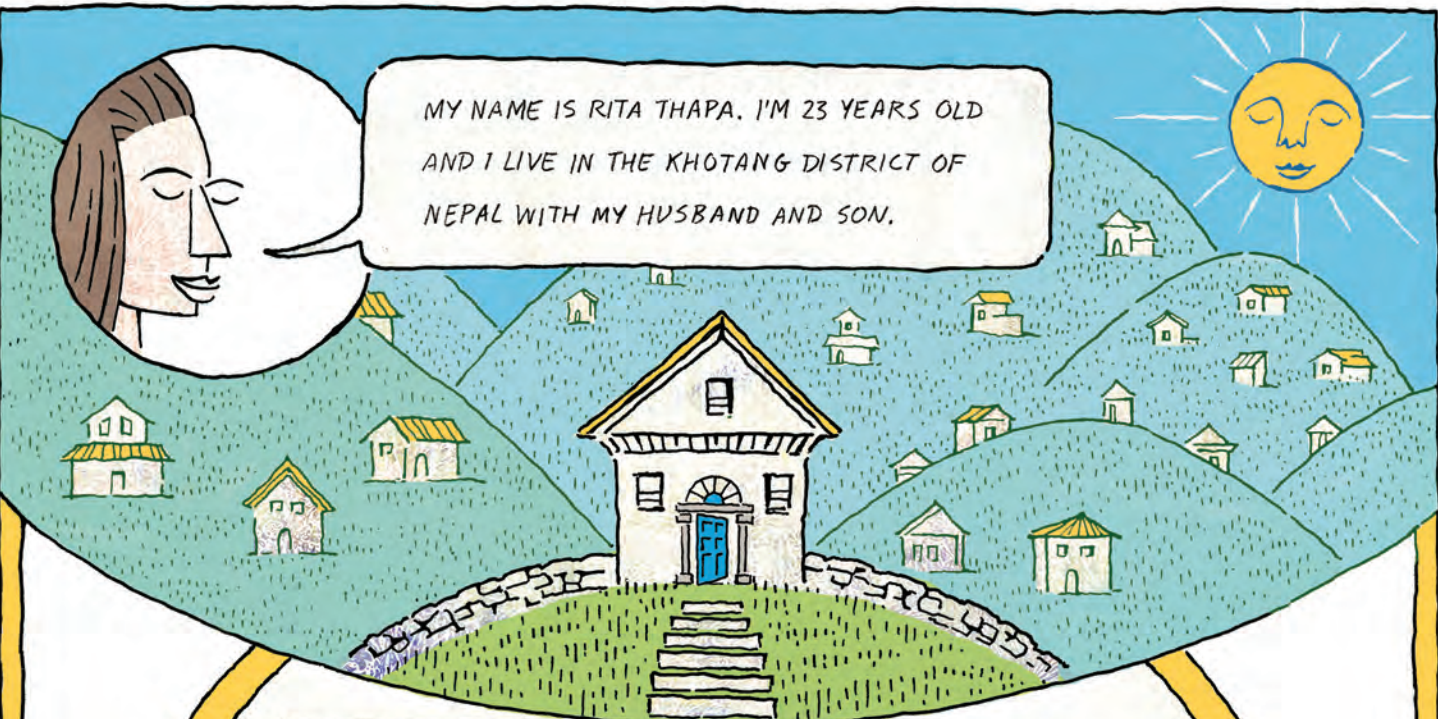
RITA





NEPAL




MY NAME IS RITA THAPA. I'M 23 YEARS OLD
AND I LIVE IN THE KHOTANG DISTRICT OF
NEPAL WITH MY HUSBAND AND SON.



GIRLS IN MY COMMUNITY ARE NOT
EDUCATED LIKE BOYS. DEPRIVED OF
INFORMATION, THEY ARE NOT LET OUT OF
THE HOUSE EXCEPT TO WORK IN THE FIELDS.



OFTEN THEY ARE MARRIED YOUNG AND HAVE
CHILDREN AT AN EARLY AGE DUE TO LACK
OF ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION.



PEOPLE BELIEVE
MANY MYTHS ABOUT
CONTRACEPTION. I ONCE
HEARD THAT THE IUD CAUSES
DEATH BY LIGHTNING.



MY STORY BEGINS
LIKE MANY OTHERS.
MARRIED AT SIXTEEN
WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF
FAMILY PLANNING, I SOON
BECAME PREGNANT.



WANTING CHANGE
FOR MYSELF AND
MY COMMUNITY,
I JOINED MARIE
STOPES NEPAL.




AT FIRST MY
HUSBAND WAS NOT
SUPPORTIVE, AFTER
MANY CONVERSATIONS,
HE CAME TO LEARN
THE IMPORTANCE OF
MY WORK.



I TRAVEL TO SCHOOLS
AND YOUTH GROUPS
ALL OVER THE DISTRICT
AND TALK TO YOUNG
PEOPLE, TEACHERS
AND PARENTS ABOUT
FAMILY PLANNING.





I WALK FOR DAYS AND DAYS, OVER
HILLS COVERED WITH LEECHES.

BUT MY JOURNEY IS
EASIER THAN OTHERS...

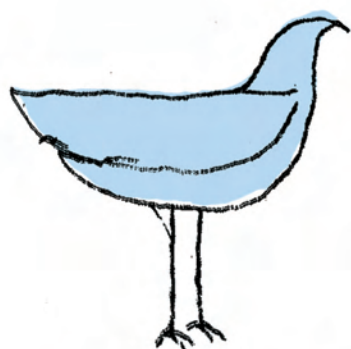
I REMEMBER A TEENAGE
GIRL WHO GOT
PREGNANT. WHEN HER
PARENTS FOUND OUT,
SHE WAS BEATEN AND
ALIENATED BY HER
COMMUNITY.

WHEN I'M FAR
FROM HOME, I ASK
FOR SHELTER FROM
SOMEONE I KNOW.

FILLED WITH SHAME AND GUILT,
SHE TOOK HER OWN LIFE.

ONE LIFE LOST THROUGH IGNORANCE IS TOO MANY.
THAT IS WHY I KEEP GOING, RAIN OR SHINE, TO
SPREAD UNDERSTANDING TO MY COMMUNITY.

MOUSSOUBA
&
MALANG



SENEGAL

MOUSSOUBA
FIRST MET
LOCAL MUSICIAN
MALANG AT
A PARTY.

I LOVE THE WAY
YOU DANCE.




THEIR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER
DEEPENED AS TIME WENT ON...

DESPITE MOUSSOUBA'S
FAMILY LOOKING DOWN ON
THEIR RELATIONSHIP, THEIR
LOVE ONLY GREW STRONGER.



MY MOTHER REFUSES TO TALK TO
ME MALANG, BUT I LOVE ONLY YOU.

SOON INTO THEIR RELATIONSHIP,
MOUSSOUBA FELT SOMETHING
WAS DIFFERENT IN HER BODY.




WHEN A NURSE AT THE
HOSPITAL TOLD MOUSSOUBA
THAT SHE WAS PREGNANT,
SHE CRIED AND CRIED.

FORCED TO LEAVE SCHOOL, ALL HER
DREAMS WERE DESTROYED, HER WORLD WAS
CRUMBLING AROUND HER.

AS A YOUNG UNMARRIED WOMAN,
SHE WAS MARGINALISED AND INSULTED
BY HER COMMUNITY.

MALANG COULDN'T
FOCUS ON HIS
STUDIES AND DROPPED
OUT OF UNIVERSITY
IN ORDER TO TAKE
CARE OF HER.



MOUSSOUBA!
WAIT!!

MOUSSOUBA PACKED HER BAGS TO
ESCAPE THE COMMUNITY'S JUDGEMENT,
BUT MALANG CONVINCED HER TO STAY.

AFTER MOUSSOUBA HAD GIVEN BIRTH,
SHE VISITED MARIE STOPES SENEGAL,
TO PROTECT HERSELF FROM ANOTHER
UNINTENDED PREGNANCY.

THE COUPLE'S EXPERIENCE
HAS MADE THEM PASSIONATE
ABOUT TEACHING OTHER YOUNG
PEOPLE ABOUT THE BENEFITS
OF CONTRACEPTION.

MALANG HAS EVEN WRITTEN
A SONG ABOUT CONTRACEPTION
THAT THEY PERFORM TO
YOUNG AUDIENCES.

I DON'T WANT TO GET
PREGNANT AGAIN. I WANT
TO GET A JOB.

WE ARE NOT
ASHAMED TO TALK
ABOUT THESE
THINGS. IF WE USE
CONTRACEPTION, WE
CAN HAVE WHATEVER
WE WANT IN LIFE.



Unspinning the fairy tale

Nearly two thirds of adolescents who want to use contraception are not able to access it. Let that sink in. That's 23 million young people whose futures are hanging in the balance. The impact is devastating. Each year, 5,600 teenage girls –15 every day – die as a result of unintended pregnancy, childbirth, or in many cases, unsafe abortion.

For those who survive, life as a young mother can often mean an end to their education, a lifetime with fewer opportunities and significantly less control over their future. At the heart of the problem are the fairy tales that societies tell themselves about young people and sex. Too many politicians, parents and teachers wrongly believe that young people will delay sex until after they are married, and withhold the resources they need to prevent unintended pregnancies. Adolescents are told sex outside marriage is wrong, or pressured to have children soon after marrying, imposing additional costs on society through greater population growth and lower wages for women.

At Marie Stopes International, we know this situation has to change if we are to see a world in which girls have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Young people like Esther, Rita, Moussouba and Malang are already bringing about this change: raising their voices, fighting stigma and courageously breaking down barriers, not just for themselves but to open the door and give other young people the chance they deserve. They need our support to dispel the myths about contraception and promote the right of women and girls around the world to make free and informed choices.

To find out more, and see how you can get involved, visit www.mariestopes.org/nomorefairytales.



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