

The Jellyfish Garden

Explore their Curious World

Paola Vitale & Rossana Bossù

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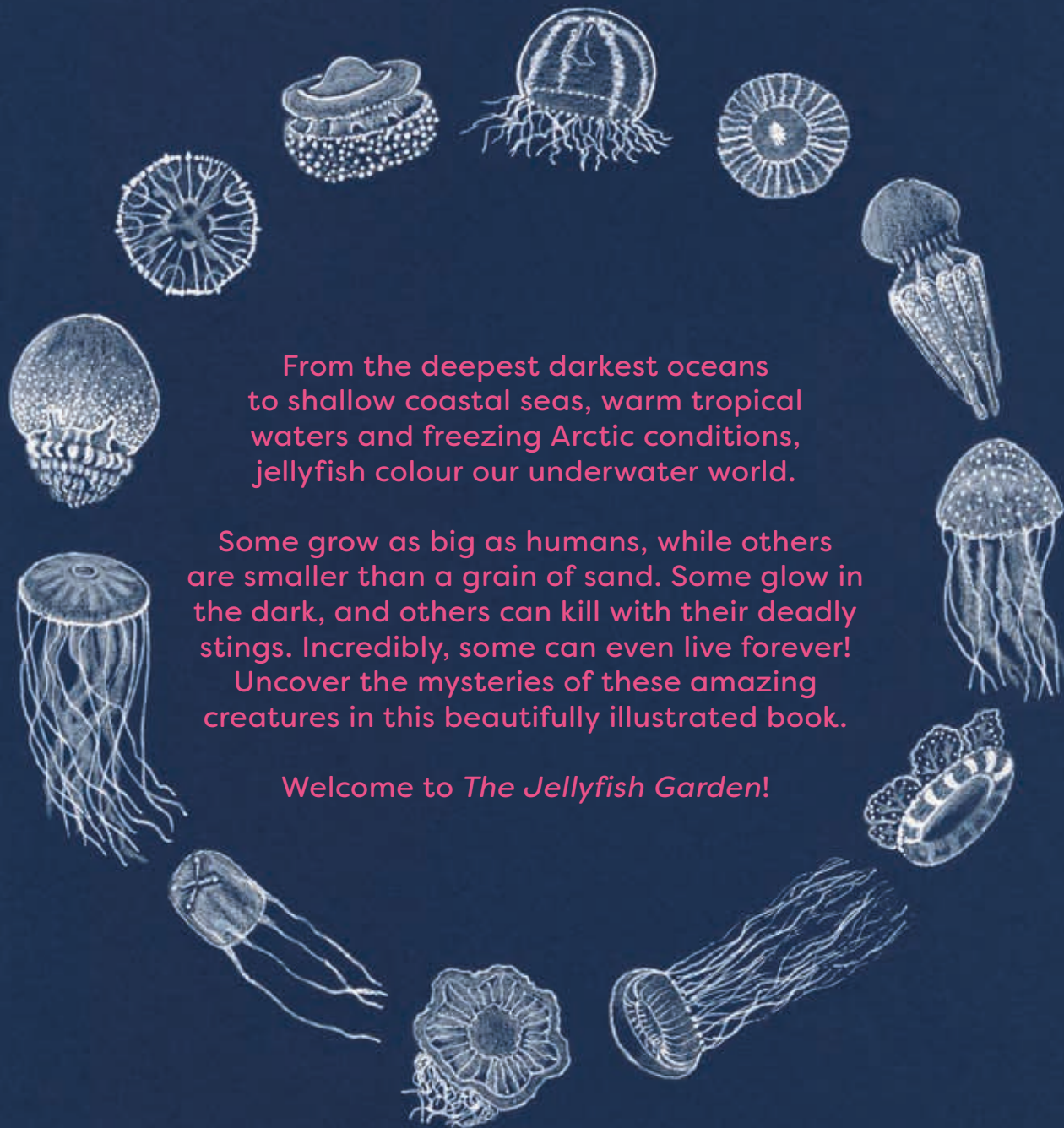
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From the deepest darkest oceans to shallow coastal seas, warm tropical waters and freezing Arctic conditions, jellyfish colour our underwater world.

Some grow as big as humans, while others are smaller than a grain of sand. Some glow in the dark, and others can kill with their deadly stings. Incredibly, some can even live forever! Uncover the mysteries of these amazing creatures in this beautifully illustrated book.

Welcome to *The Jellyfish Garden*!



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To Tommaso, Anna and Giuseppe.
And to the sea, who often welcomes me into it like the hug of a child.
Paola

To Giacomo, who knows how to dive into wonder.
Rossana



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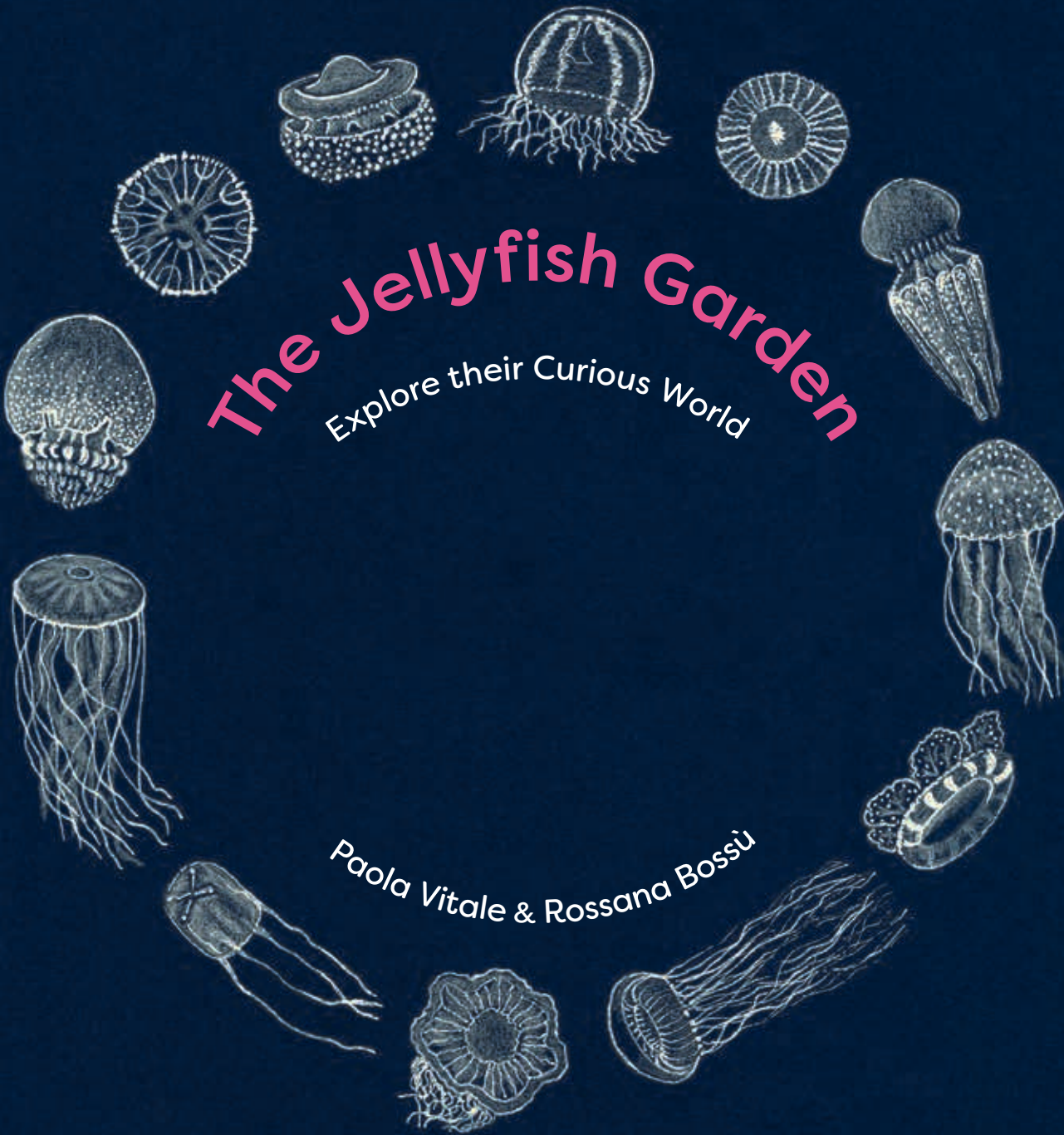
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They fill the waters of the deepest oceans, ports and beaches.

They have transparent bodies full of bright, vibrant colours.

Some are bigger than humans, and some are so small they blend into the salty drops of the sea.

They live everywhere, from the Arctic Ocean to the Great Barrier Reef, in shallow coastal waters and the dark depths of the oceans.

And when they bloom, they look like gardens floating on top of the water...

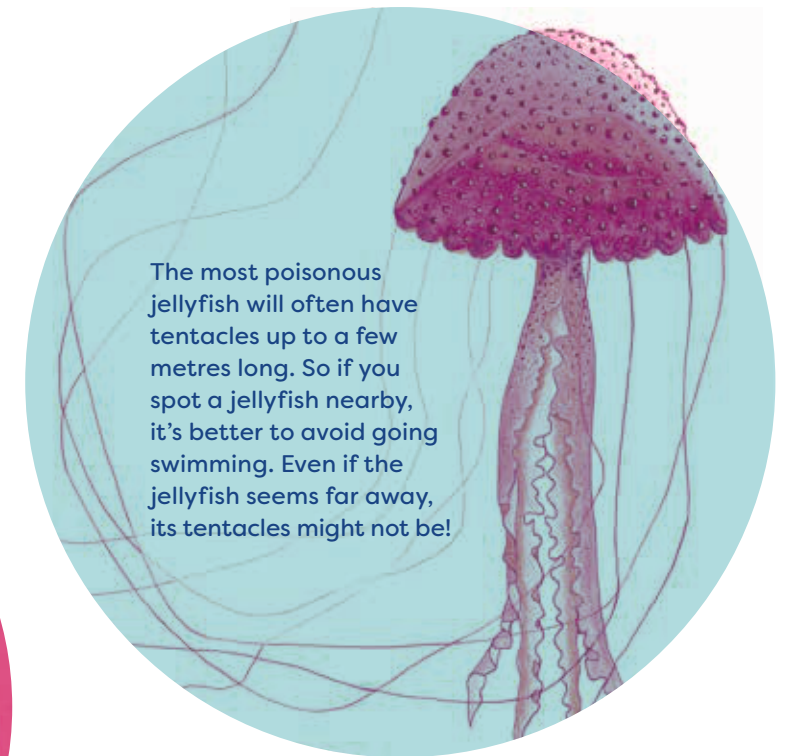
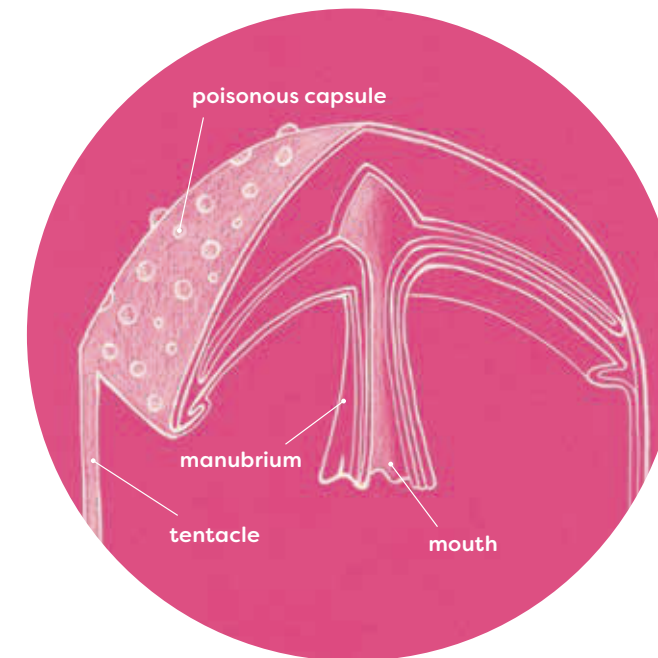
THEY ARE JELLYFISH.



AN UMBRELLA THAT FLOATS

Jellyfish will often emerge at the water's surface so suddenly and in such big numbers, it seems as if they simply fell from the sky. But a rain made of jellyfish would be a very *strange* kind of rain! Instead, they charge quickly to the surface using their bodies to propel them. The curved part at the top of their bodies (the bell) gives them an umbrella-like shape. Once they break above the waves, they look a bit like colourful floating umbrellas, and sometimes plates or helmets.

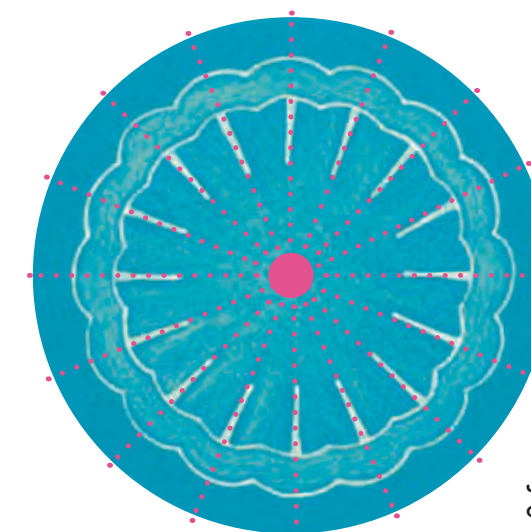
Jellyfish have four or more tentacles that hang from their body. The length of these tentacles depends on the species. A jellyfish's mouth sits under its umbrella-shaped bell, on a tube-like structure called the manubrium. Jellyfish often have capsules containing poison among their tentacles, manubrium and the entire surface of their bell. Most jellyfish are carnivores so they use the poison to paralyse their prey and capture them.



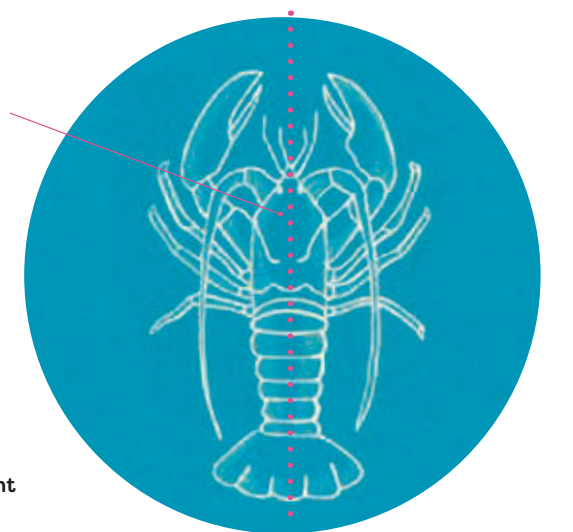
The most poisonous jellyfish will often have tentacles up to a few metres long. So if you spot a jellyfish nearby, it's better to avoid going swimming. Even if the jellyfish seems far away, its tentacles might not be!

A SPECIAL SYMMETRY

Jellyfish have a rare shape that few other animals share. Though having a head positioned at the front of the body is more useful for looking around and going faster, jellyfish don't actually *need* to go fast. Instead, they spend most of their lives anchored to the seabed. And they've barely changed for millions of years, so perhaps they are perfect just the way they are!



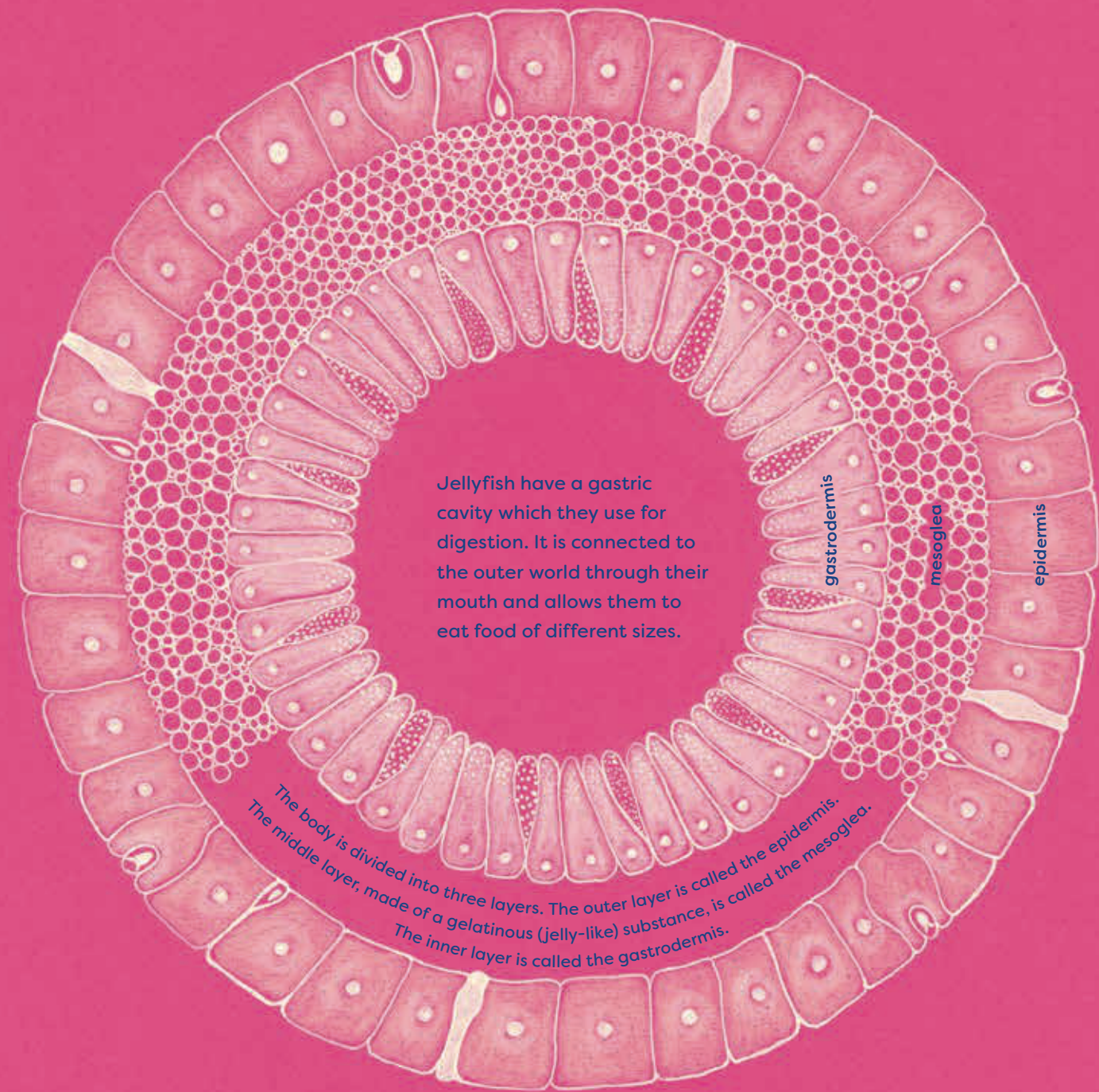
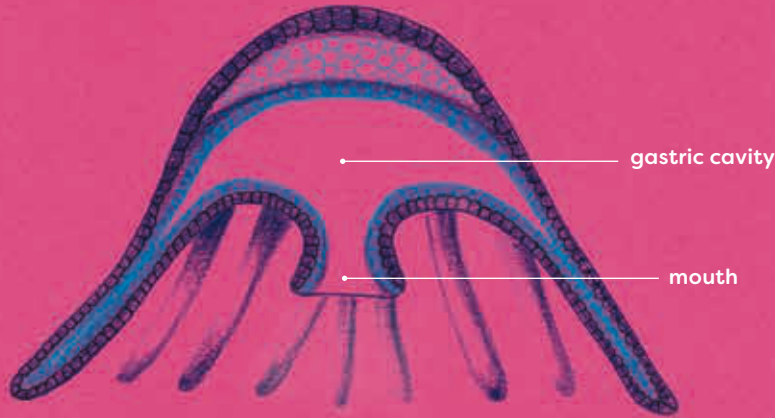
Jellyfish do not have heads in front of their bodies like other animals.



Head in front of body

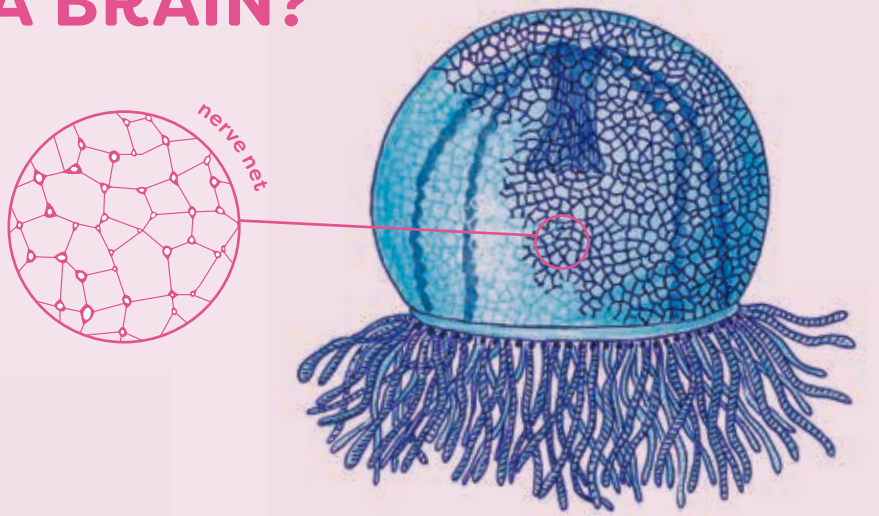
ARE JELLYFISH ANIMALS?

Jellyfish are invertebrates, meaning they have no backbone. They are also metazoans, which means that their bodies are made of multiple cells that form tissues and organs. Invertebrates and metazoans are animals.



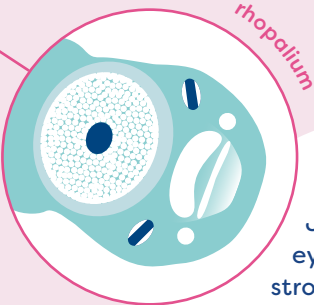
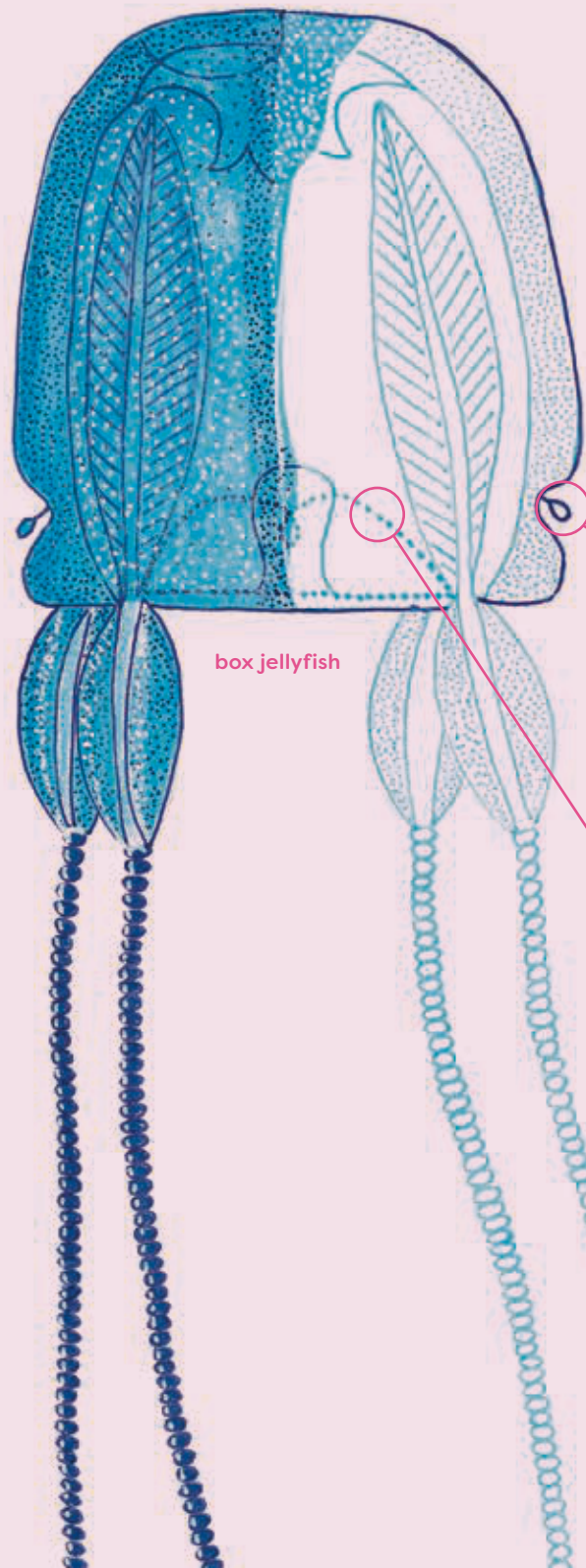
DO THEY HAVE A BRAIN?

Jellyfish don't have a proper brain – they have some nerve cells connected together by a web called a nerve net. This helps them to detect changes in their environment, including temperature, oxygen levels, vibrations and currents.

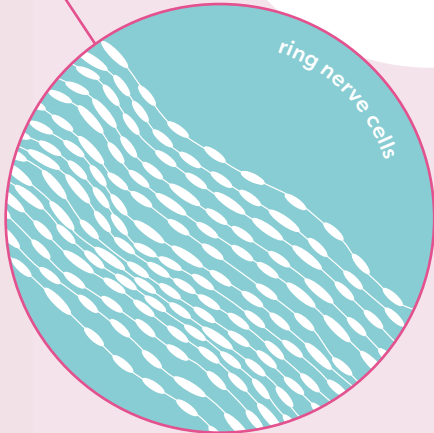


They also have clusters of nerve endings along their bells, called rhopalia. These enable jellyfish to sense light.

Only **box jellyfish**, so named because of their box-shaped bell, are a little more complex. Their nerve cells are organised into rings, and their eyes, located in the rhopalia, steer towards light sources. One rhopalium can hold up to six eyes.



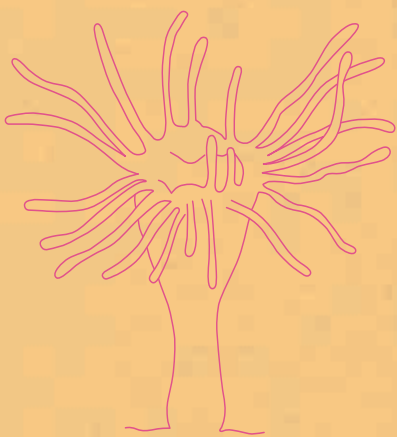
Jellyfish have simple eyes which don't like strong lights. During the day, they will normally come to the surface only when it is cloudy, or at dusk. At nighttime or when the sun is bright, they'll swim to the seabed to rest.



JELLYFISH AND OTHER JELLIES

Jellyfish belong to a group of animals called Cnidaria, and almost all of them belong to its subgroup called Scyphozoa.

The Cnidarian group includes the subgroups: Scyphozoa also known as ‘true jellyfish’ (such as the **lion’s mane jellyfish**) and Cubozoa (such as the **box jellyfish**). **Comb jellies**, though they look like jellyfish, aren’t actually jellyfish at all and are part of the Ctenophora group.

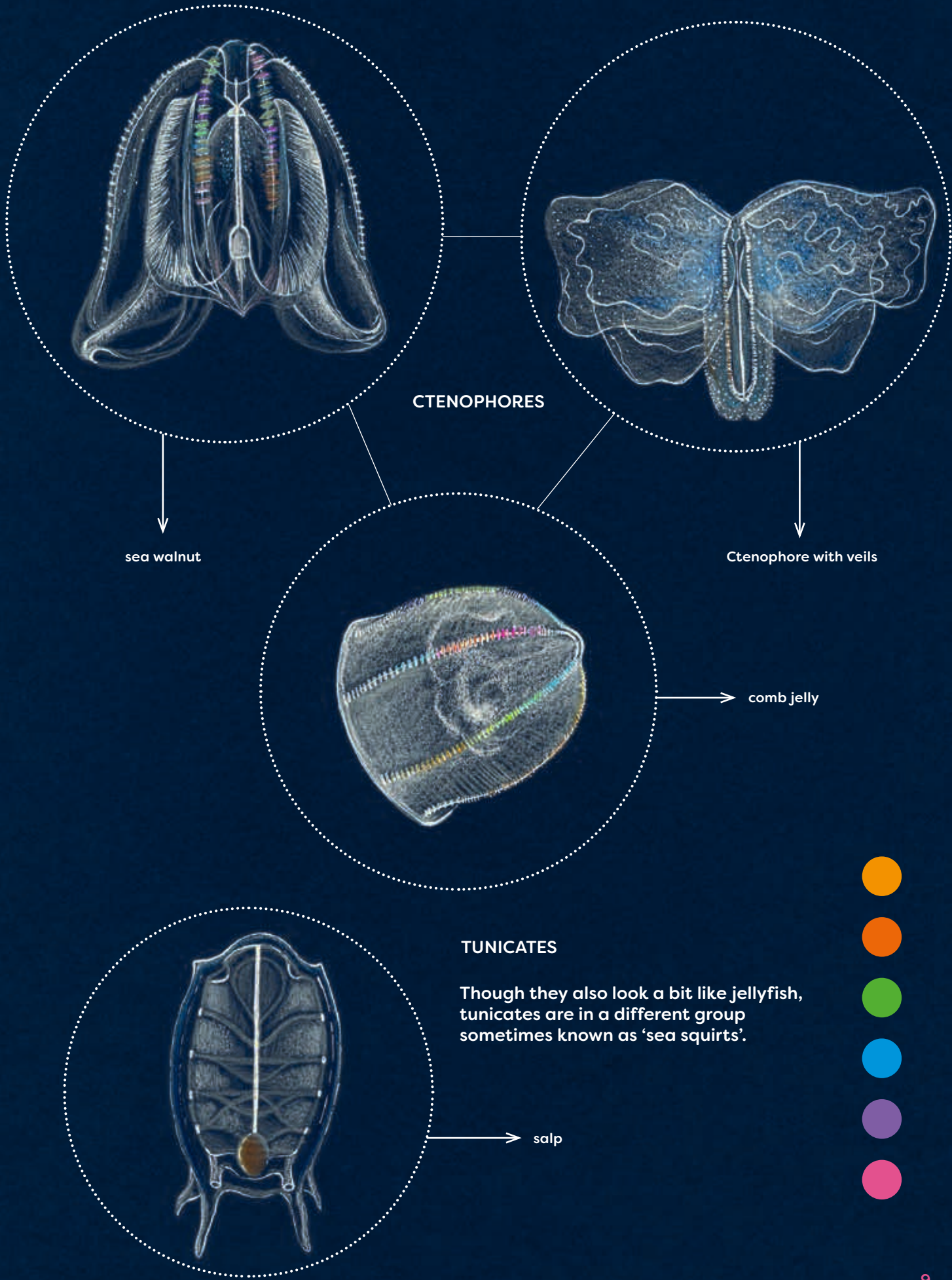


polyp



mature jellyfish

When jellyfish are still larvae (the early form of these animals after they’re born), they live as polyps. At this stage they look like corals: little stems anchored to the seabed. On top of the polyp is a mouth surrounded by tentacles to capture and swallow its prey. It is only when they are adults that jellyfish float around freely, dragged along by the current in their umbrella-shaped bodies.



Though they also look a bit like jellyfish, tunicates are in a different group sometimes known as ‘sea squirts’.