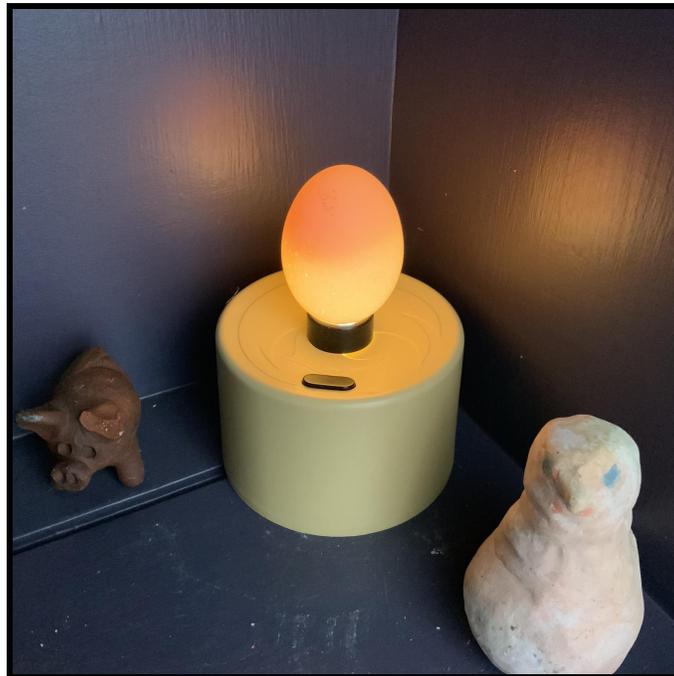


## **Meka Farm Hatch-Your-Flock Project**

Welcome to the Meka Farm Hatch-Your-Flock Project! We hope you enjoy this experience as much as we did.

A few things to know going in:

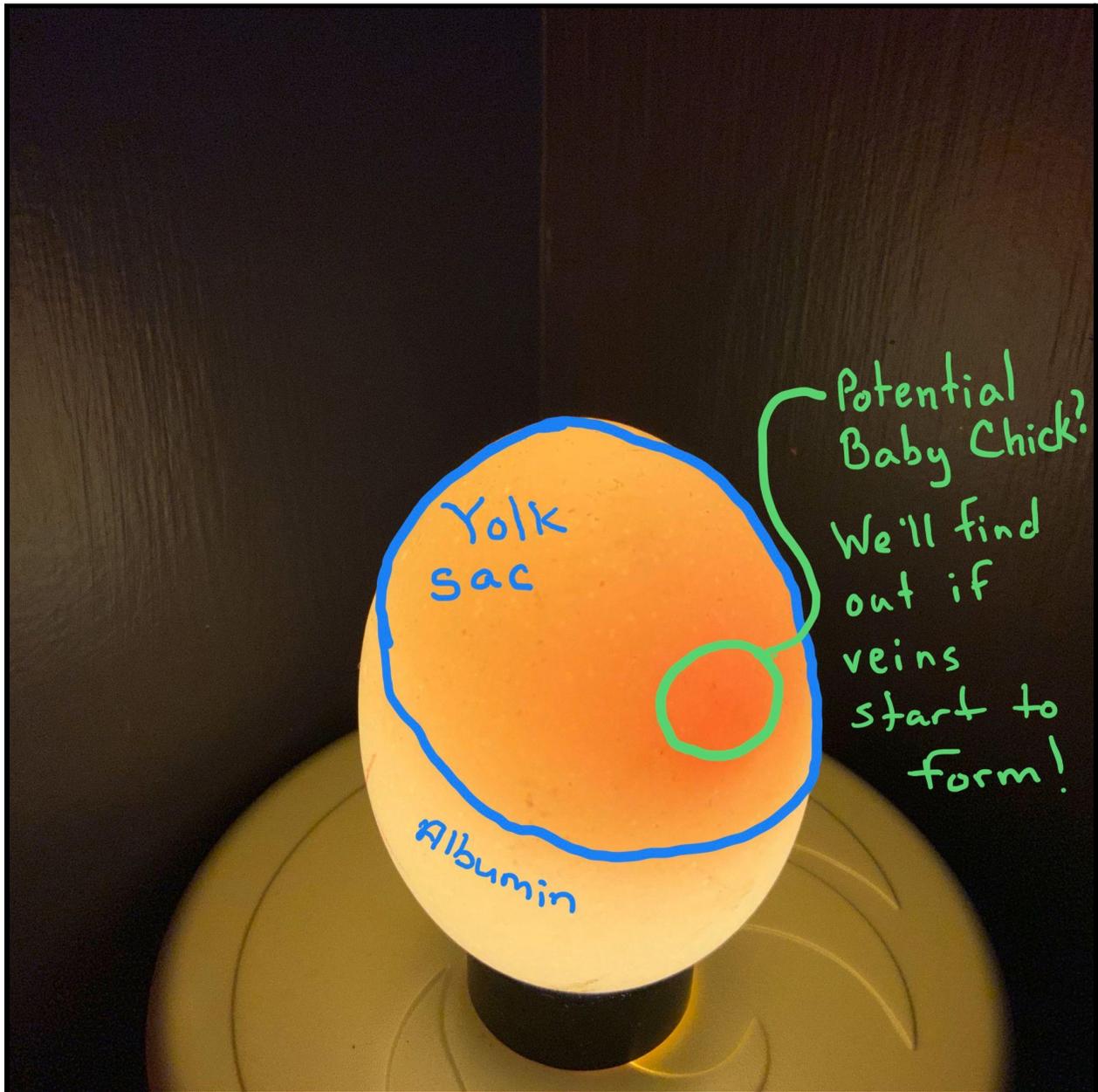
1. It's possible not all of the eggs are fertilized and therefore will not hatch.
2. We cannot guarantee the genders of the chicks that will hatch.
3. Some of the chicks may die after hatching - this isn't common but it does happen occasionally.
4. **IMPORTANT!!** Do NOT help the chicks hatch! They need the experience to build up their muscles.
5. Hatching could take hours ... the eggs will not all hatch at the same time. Be patient.



“The Egg Candler”

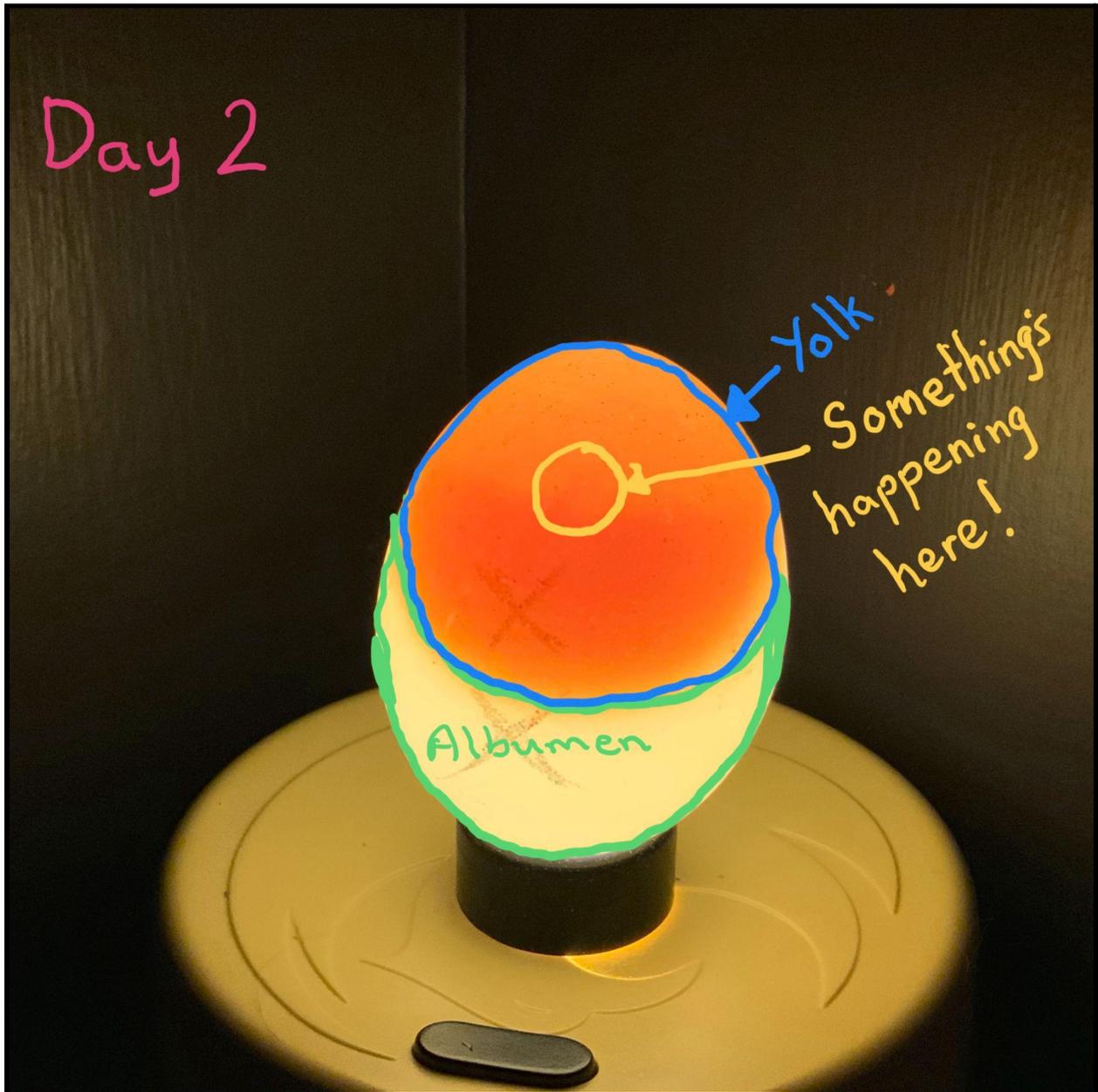
illuminating  
The Developing Young Chicks  
That Go Peep Peep Peep

## Day One



It can be hard to tell if the egg is fertilized because the egg has not yet started to develop into an embryo. In order to develop, the incubator simulates the warmth, moisture and turning that would be provided by a mother hen.

## Day Two

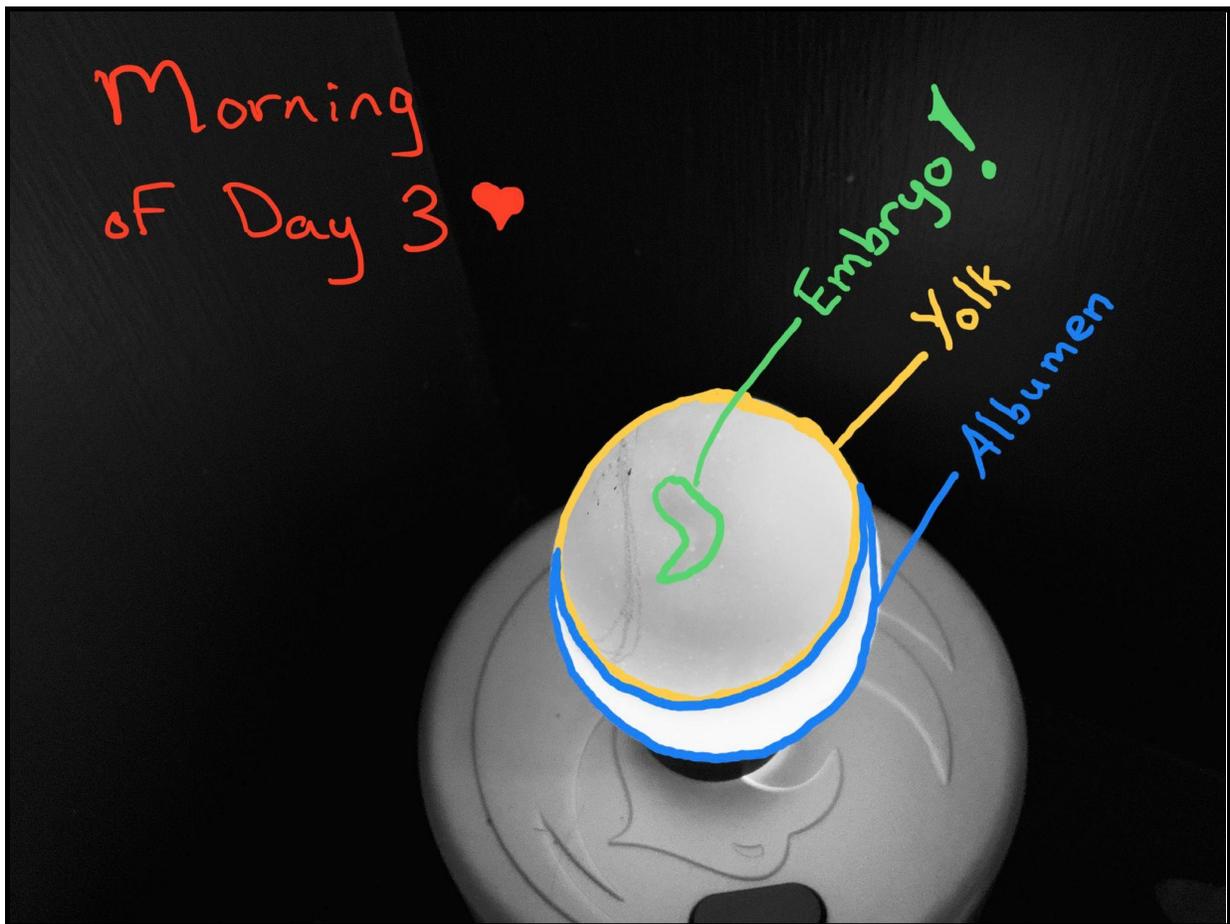
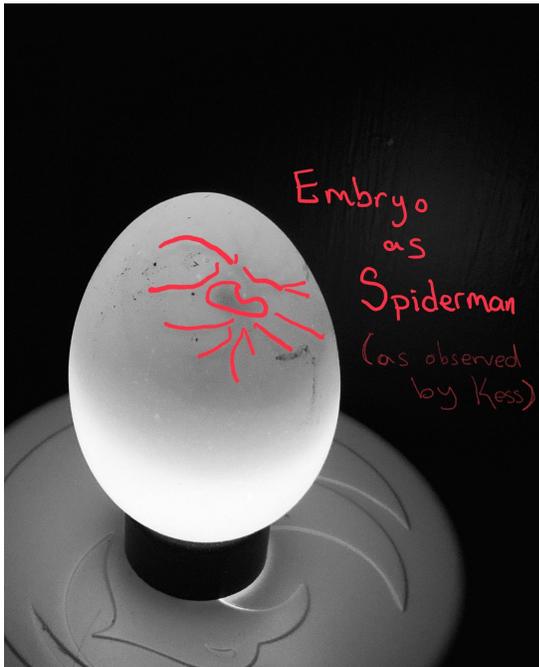


The yolk contains the nutrients that will help the embryo develop into a baby chick.

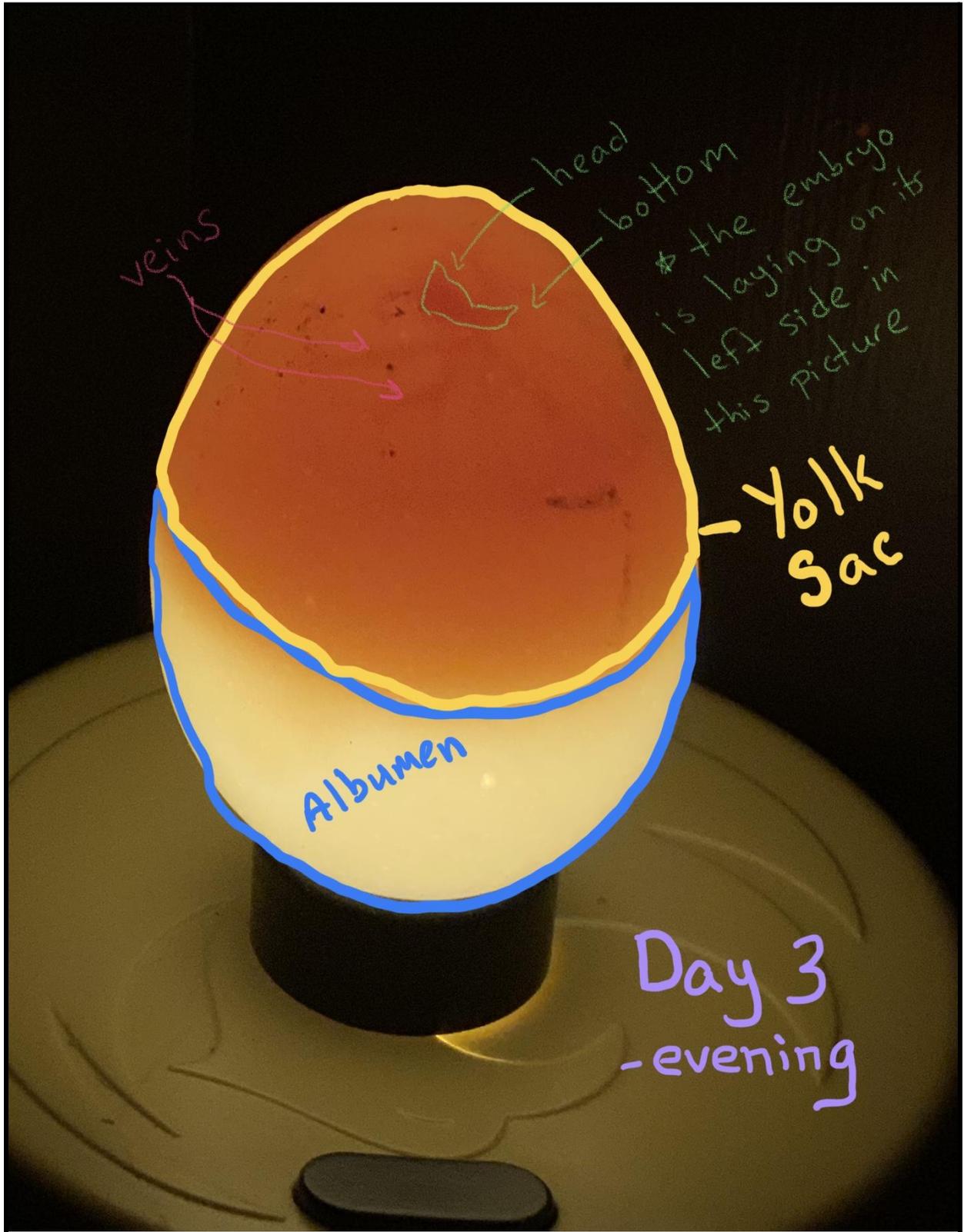
The albumen is primarily made up of water and has around forty different types of proteins.

It is sometimes possible to see the initial formation of what will become the “primitive streak” - the beginnings of the head and backbone of the embryo.

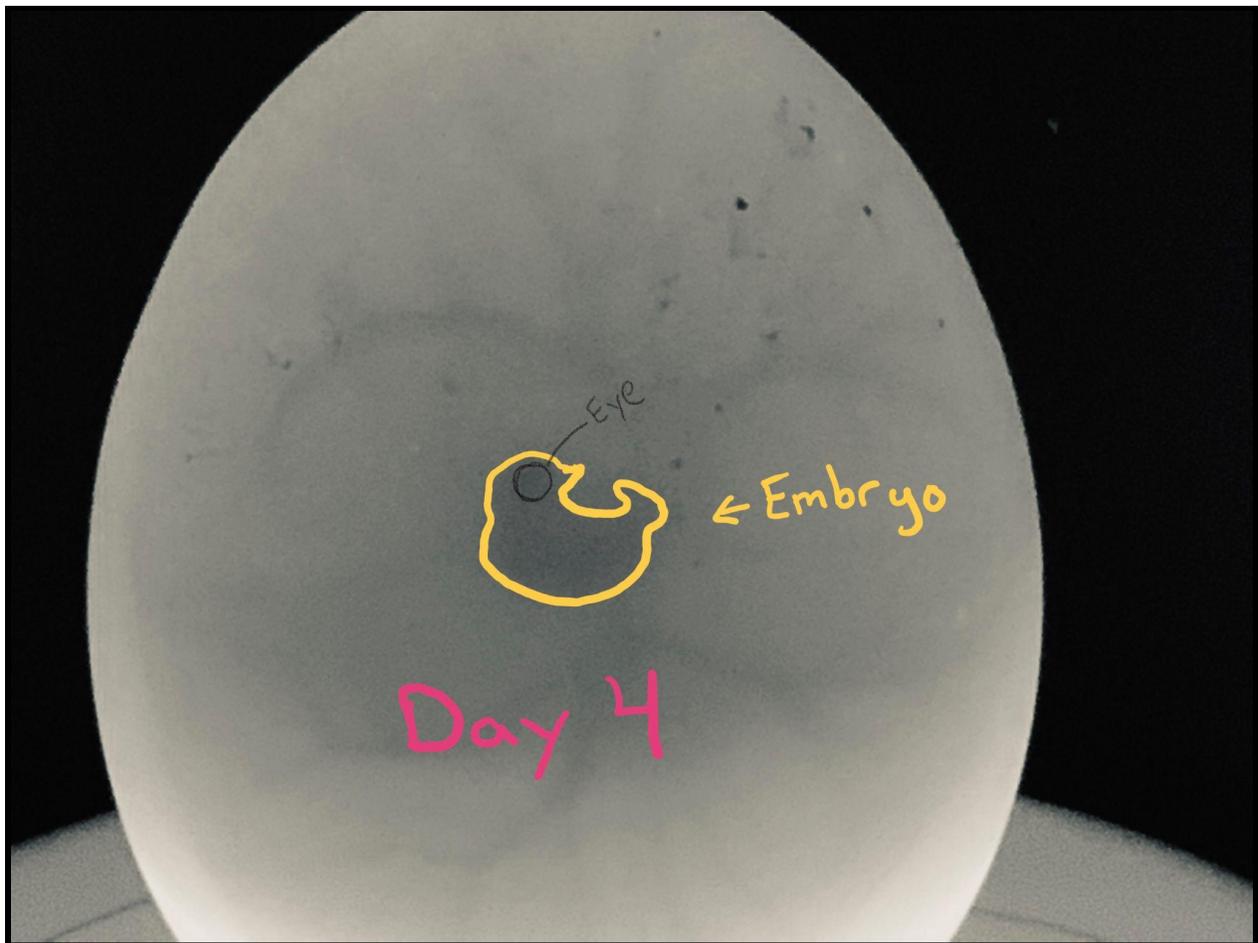
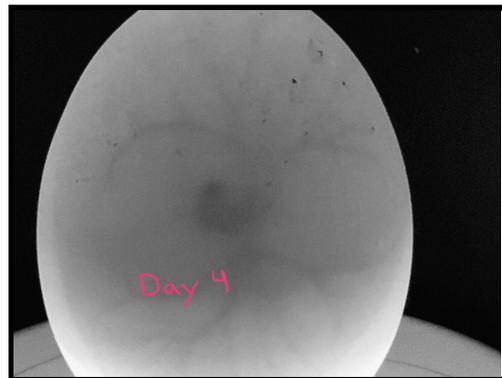
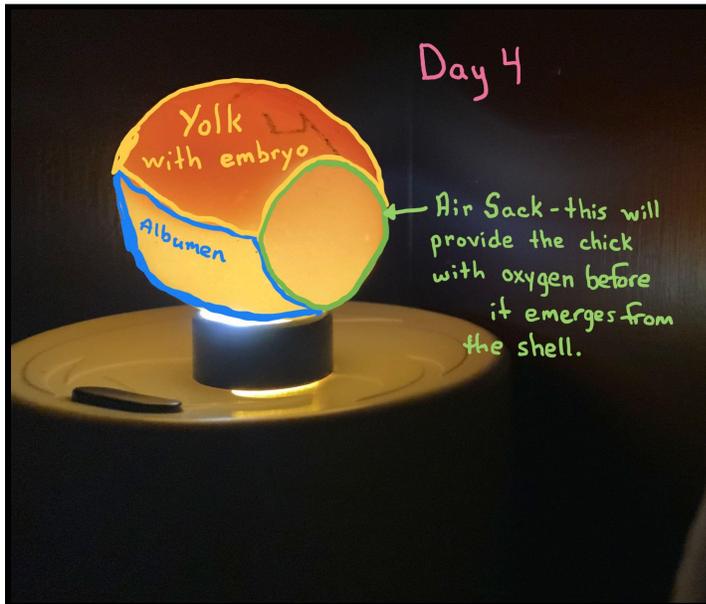
Day Three Lots can happen over night!



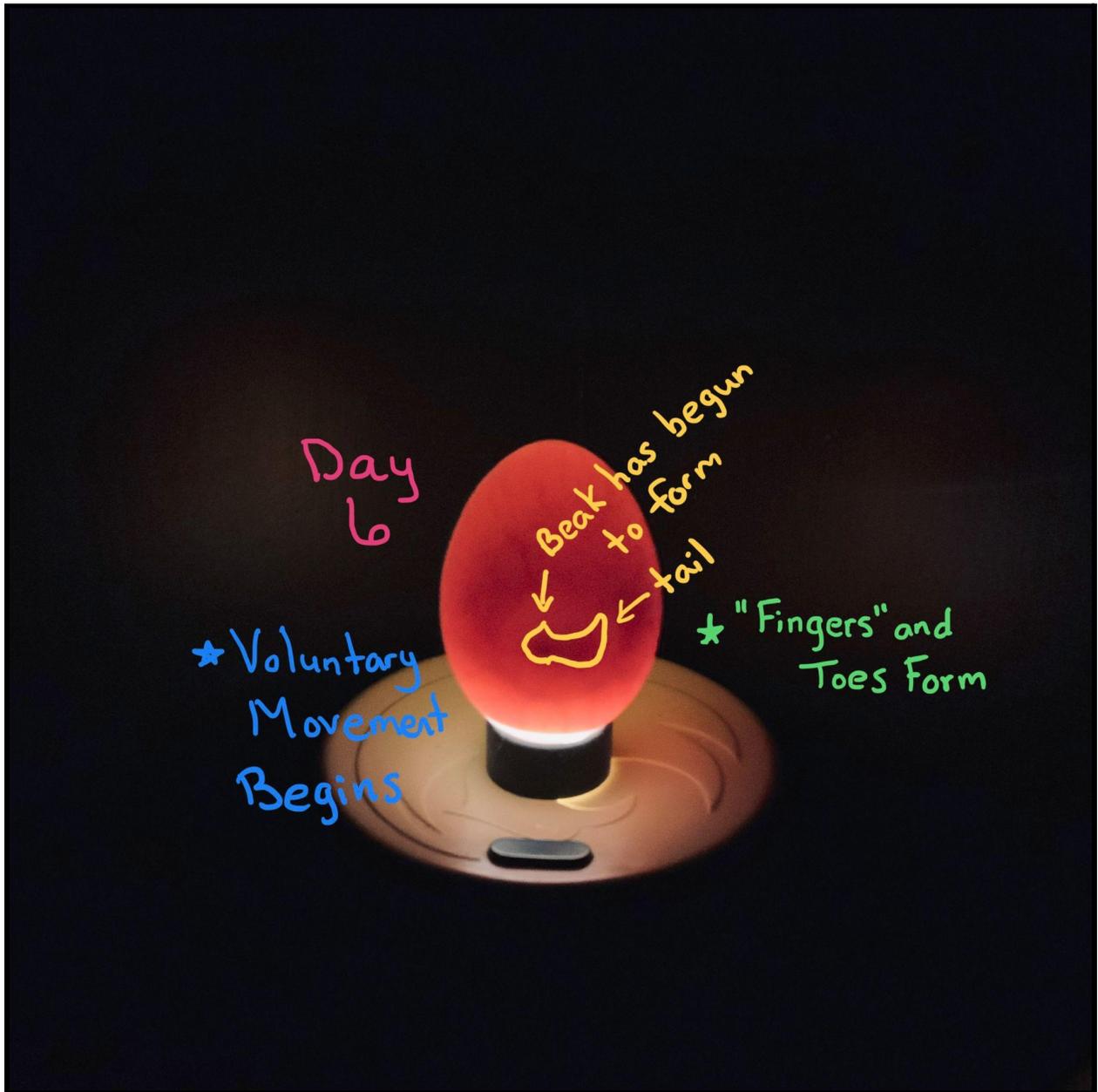
And even over the course of a day!



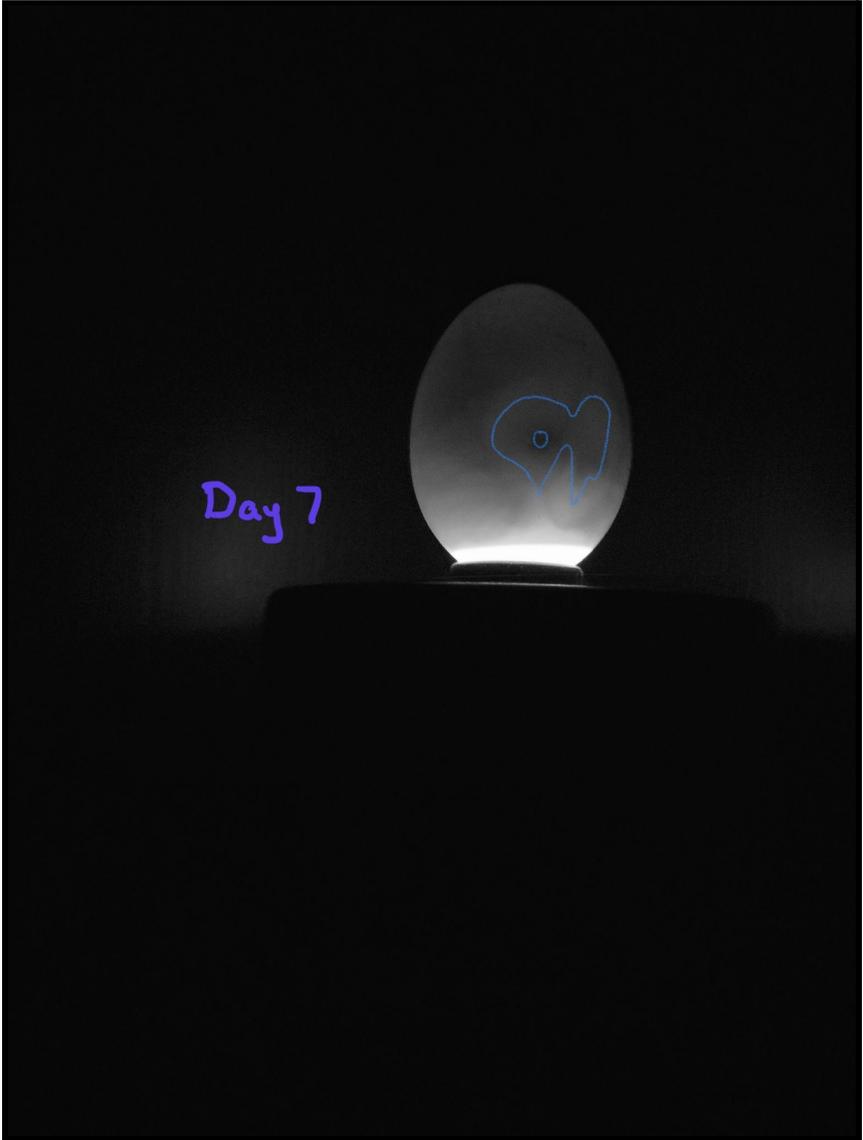
**Day Four** By the end of Day 4, the embryo has developed all of its necessary organs.



Day Six



Day Seven - One week in! Two weeks to go!

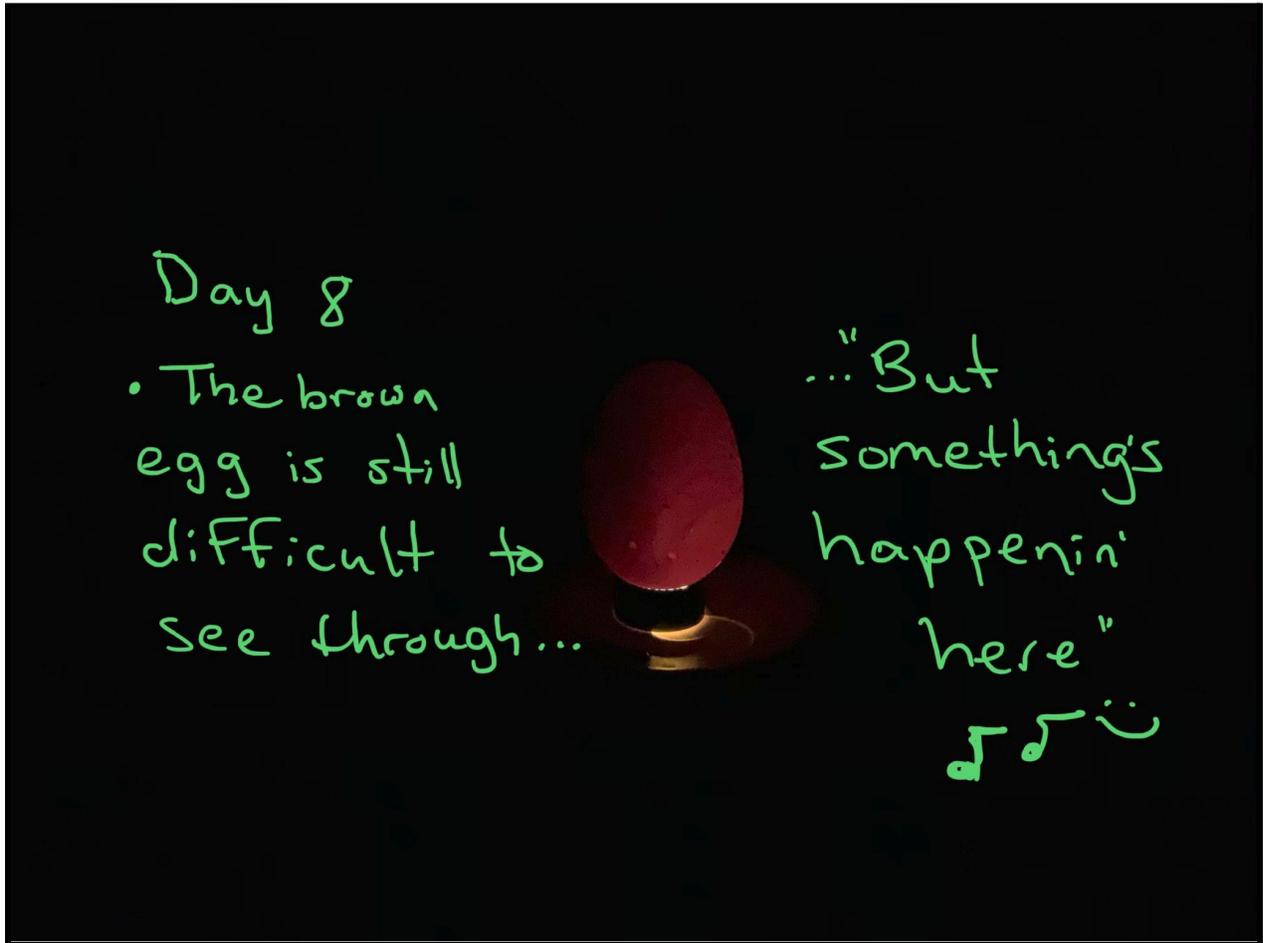


## Day 7



- The beak becomes larger
- The comb starts to form
- The neck thins and the chick is noticeably larger
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of the incubation period has passed

## Day Eight



It can be difficult to see through darker colored egg shells. However, sometimes it is possible to see the veins and arteries as the embryo becomes larger.

## Day 8

- The upper and lower beak, the wings and the legs are all completely differentiated; the brain is settled in its place.

- The outer ear begins to form

- The embryo is **NOTICEABLY LARGER** than yesterday



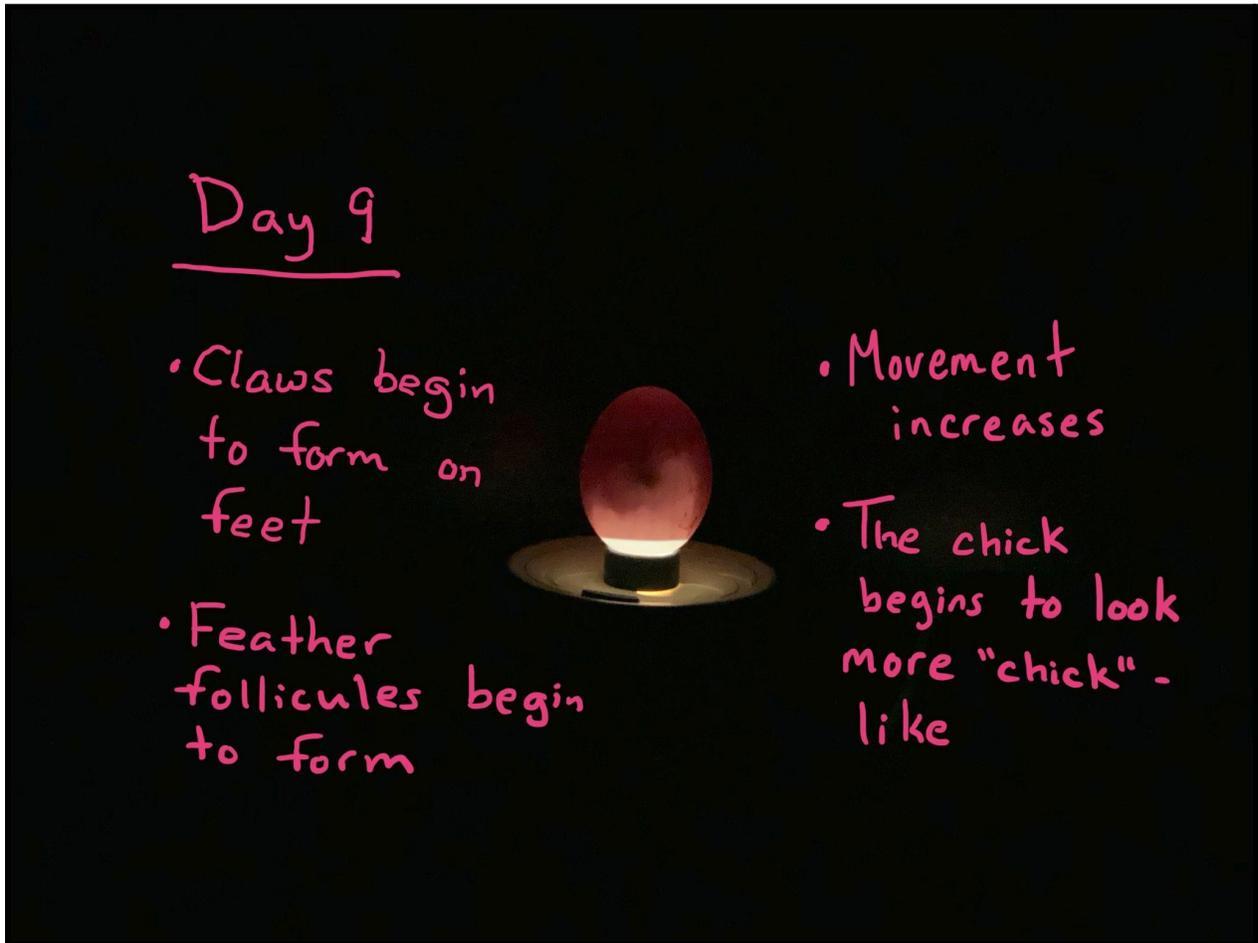
**BIG** embryo!

Day 8 = Full of Shenanigans!

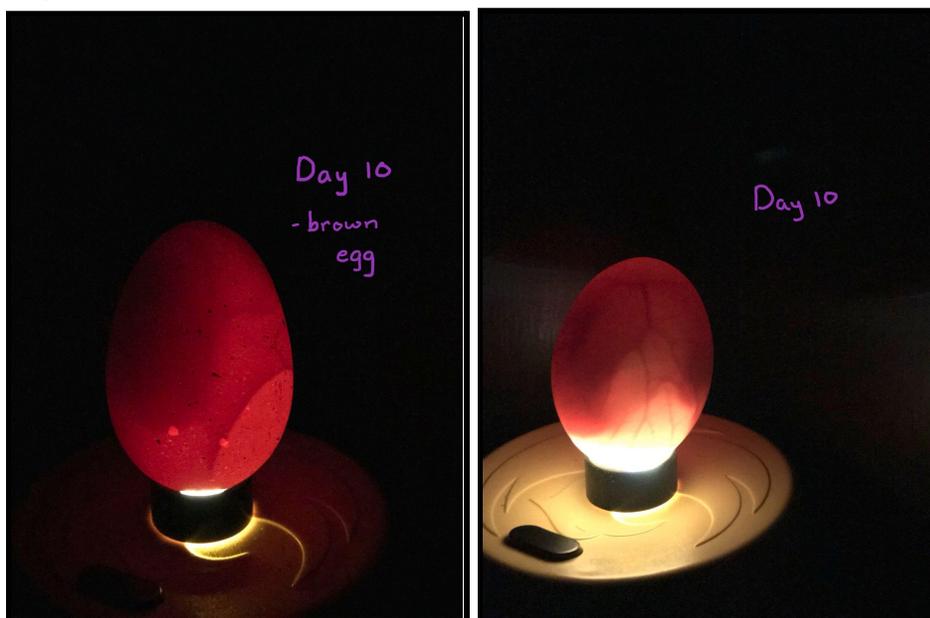
Eye

In this pic, the chick is laying on its left, beak-side down

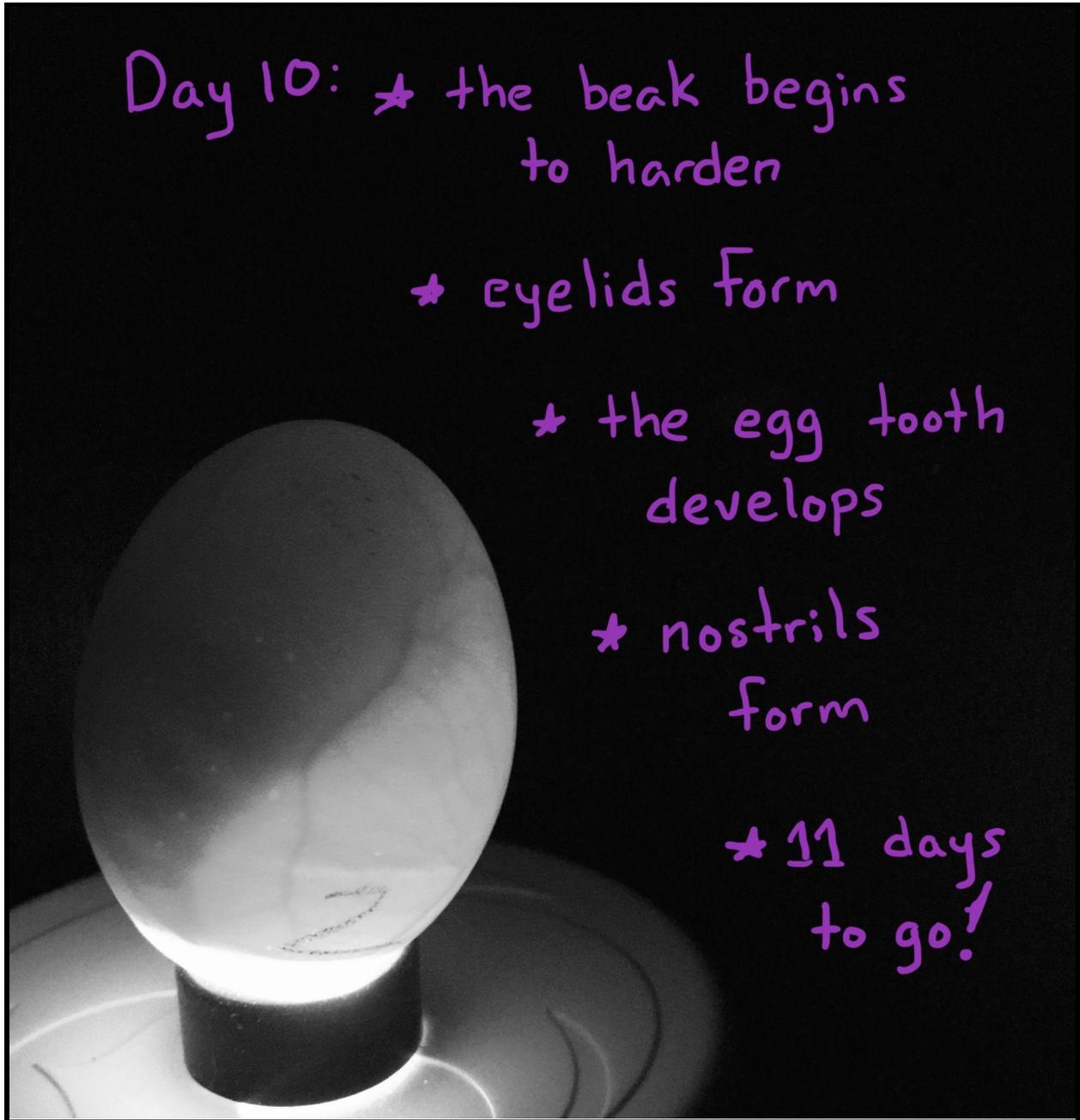
## Day Nine



## Day Ten



Views of two eggs



While chickens don't have teeth, an "egg-" or "pipping tooth" is a hard bump at the end of the young chick's beak. This "tooth" is what will allow the chick to break the shell once it is ready to hatch.

## Day Eleven

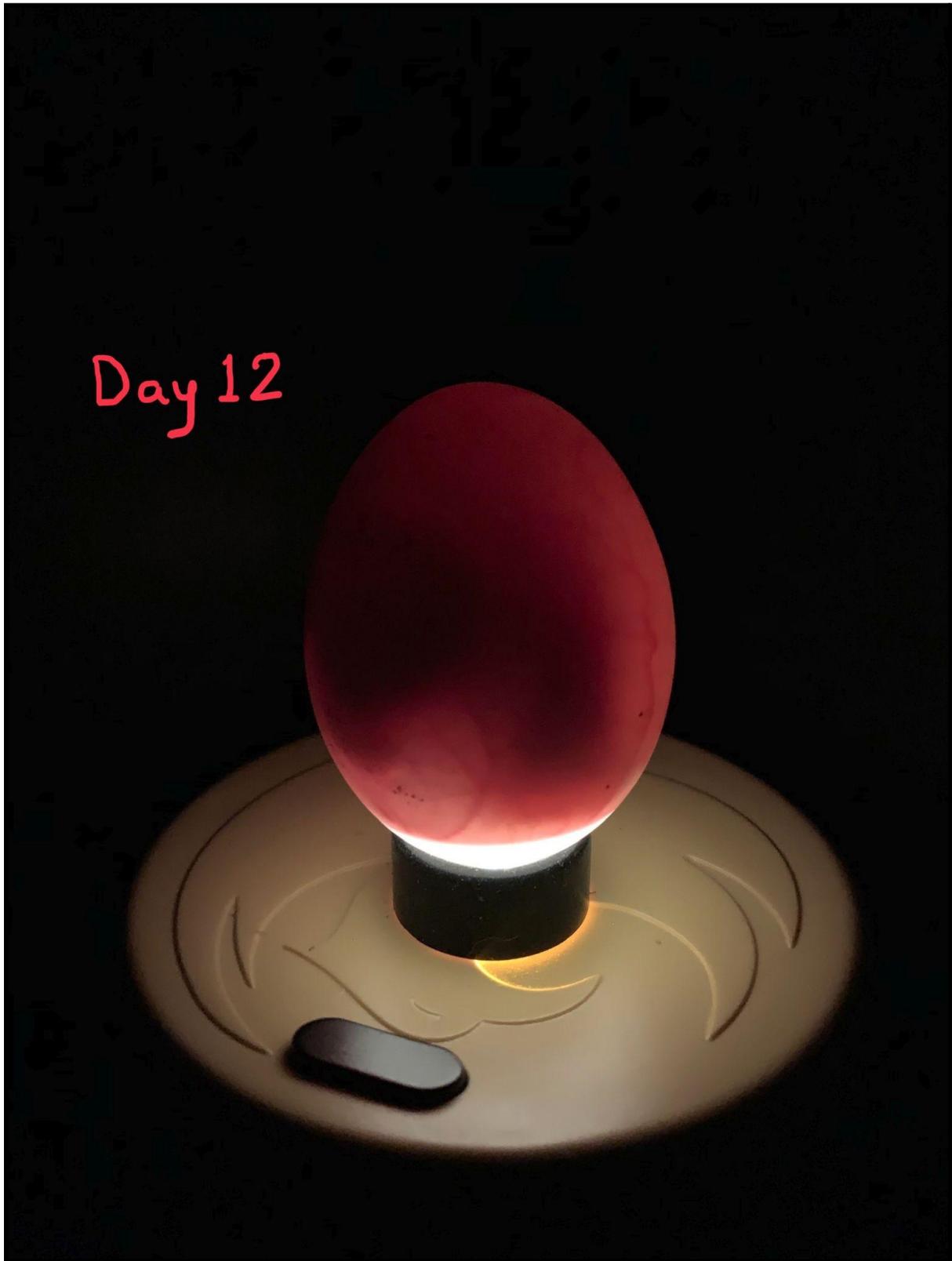
Day 11 - It's a tail feather  
kind of day!

\* The comb is  
larger and more  
defined

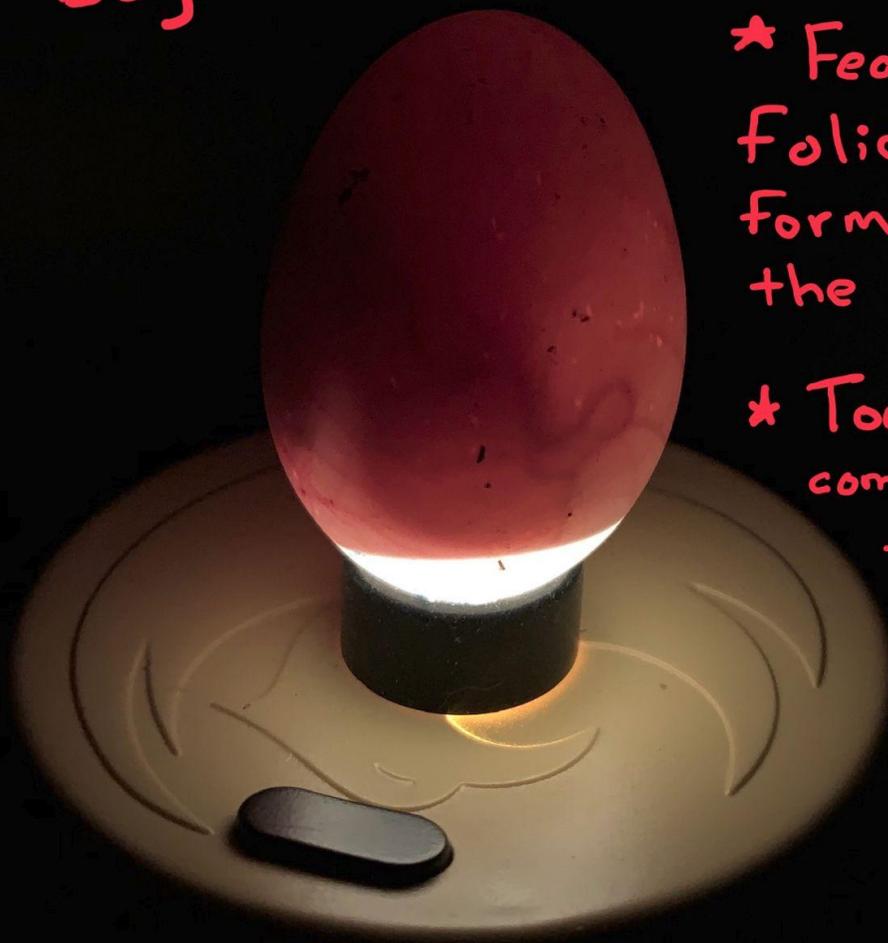
\* Eyelids cover nearly  
the entire eye



Day Twelve



Day 12



\* Feather  
Follicles  
form around  
the ears

\* Toes are  
completely  
formed

Day Thirteen - It's time for toe nails!

Day 13

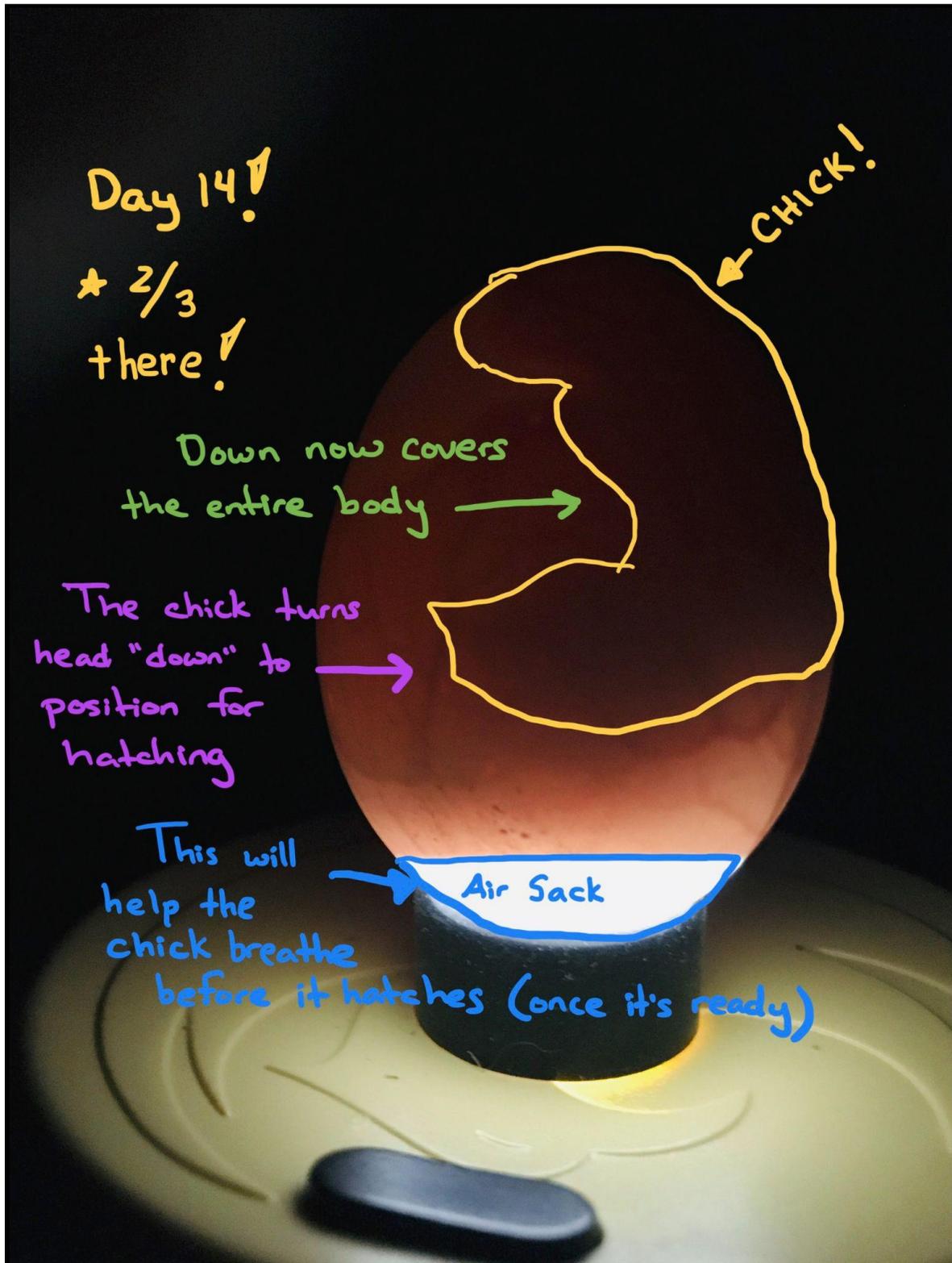
\* Approximately  
8 days left



\* Space  
becomes  
tighter

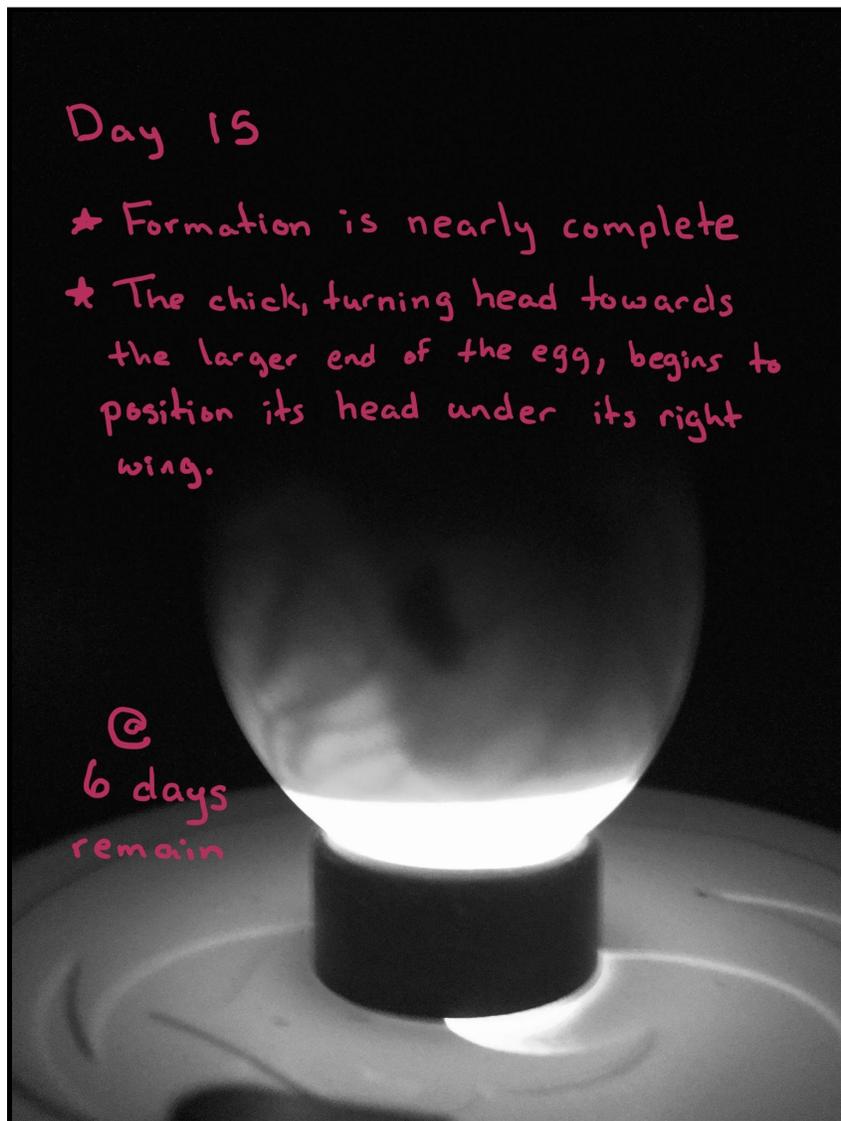
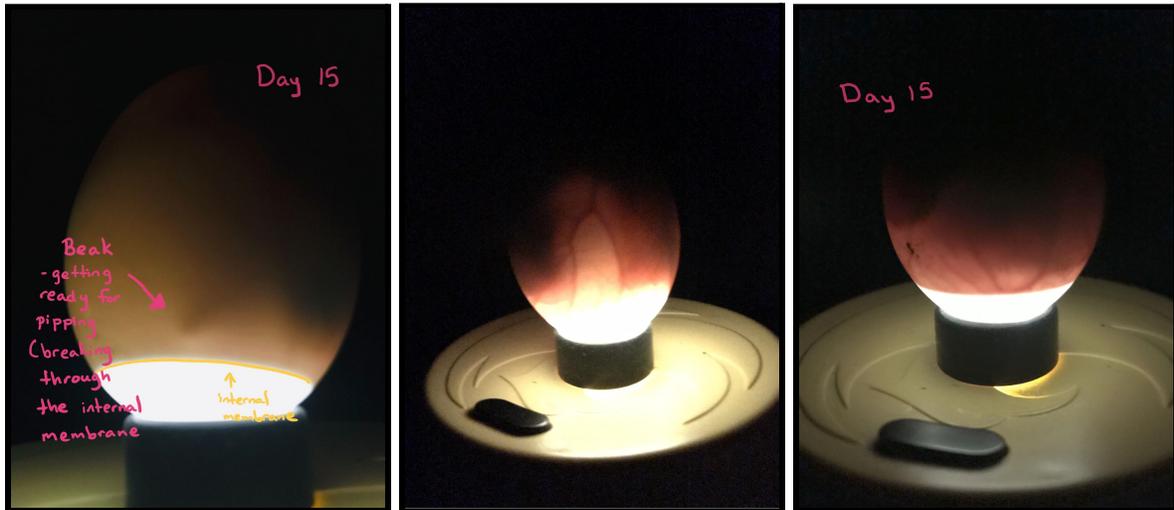
\* The toes  
now have  
toenails

Day Fourteen



Wow! So much has happened in two weeks! And there is just one more week to go!

## Day Fifteen

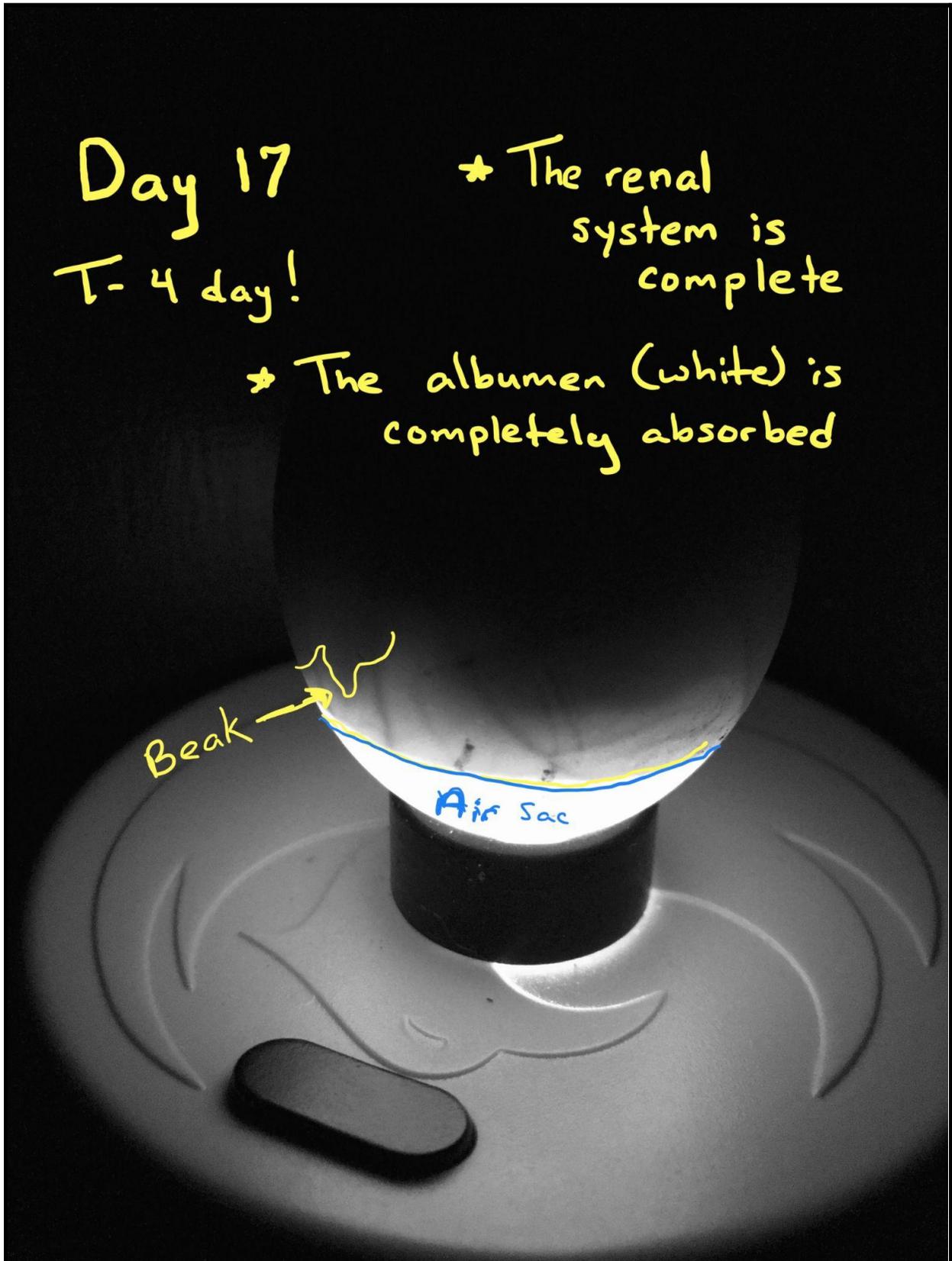


Days Seventeen through Nineteen

Day 17  
T-4 day!

\* The renal system is complete

\* The albumen (white) is completely absorbed





Did you hear that? During these last few days before the hatch, the chick will begin to break through the final barrier into the air sac and you may even hear it beginning to peep!

- Carefully hold the egg up to your ear. What do you hear?

It is possible to hear the chick peeping and moving around inside its cramped quarters as it tries to position itself for hatching. **BE SURE TO PUT THE EGG DOWN IN THE SAME POSITION AND ON THE SAME SIDE AS YOU PICKED IT UP.**

**Days Twenty through Twenty-Two(ish)** - Be extra patient. Not all chicks hatch at exactly 21 days. It could be on Day 20 or even Day 22. Be patient, but also be vigilant.





You may notice that the chick is breaking the shell in more than one spot. Often, the chicks will break a circle around the end of the egg that they will then be able to push away from themselves as they prepare for hatching..

- Remember - As hard as it may be to watch a chick struggle to free itself from the egg, it is through this process that it develops the muscles it is going to need later on as it grows.



Here you can see how the chick has broken open the egg using the circular “line” it made.



Hatching can be an exhausting process!



You'll want to make sure the chick is fully dry and fluffy before opening the incubator.



A good nap can be just the thing! That pipping tooth will eventually wear away and will not be on the chick as it grows bigger.

- Once the chick(s) is dry, you can open the incubator and remove the now empty shell(s). Take a moment to check it out! What do you see?
- It's ok for the chick(s) to spend the first 24 hours or so in the incubator. They have all the nutrition they need stored in their bodies to provide for them for their first 48 hours of life on the other side of the egg shell.
- This is a good time to make sure your hutch is ready for the chicks. Is there clean water? Is the water accessible but not too deep? How about the food? Is the heat lamp or heat pad working? Is the hutch situated away from drafts and curious cats?

- When introducing a chick to the hutch, first gently dip its beak into the water and into the chick food. It may seem confused at first, but that chick will remember where to find food and water once it's ready for them.



*ENJOY YOUR NEW CHICKS!!!*