



# Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation

By Elissa Stein, Susan Kim

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In this hip, hilarious and truly eye-opening cultural history, menstruation is talked about as never before. Flow spans its fascinating, occasionally wacky and sometimes downright scary story: from *mikvahs* (ritual cleansing baths) to menopause, hysteria to hysterectomies—not to mention the Pill, cramps, the history of underwear, and the movie about puberty they showed you in 5th grade.

Flow answers such questions as: What's the *point* of getting a period? What did women do before pads and tampons? What about new drugs that promise to end periods—a hot idea or not? Sex during your period: gross or a turn-on? And what's *normal*, anyway? With color reproductions of (campy) historical ads and early (excruciating) femcare devices, it also provides a fascinating (and mind-boggling) gallery of this complex, personal and uniquely female process.

As irreverent as it is informative, Flow gives an everyday occurrence its true props – and eradicates the stigma placed on it for centuries.

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## Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation By Elissa Stein, Susan Kim Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Written like a sassy young women's magazine with first-person narrative and the occasional astonished exclamation point, a normally taboo topic claims attention with the surprising-and sometimes horrifying-history of cultural reactions to menstruation (Pliny believed menstrual blood was toxic to flora and fauna), feminine "hygiene," and the enticing yet under-researched future of period-free birth control methods. Sprinkled throughout with entertainingly naïve ads from each era of the 20th-century as well as many references to scientific findings, author and graphic designer Stein and Kim, a graphic novelist (Circle of Spies) and writer of the play adaptation of *The Joy Luck Club*, evoke a light-hearted tone about their serious subject. They cover everything from menarche to menopause, including what menstruation is (which receives an outstandingly clear explanation) plus an enlightening discussion of the pad v. tampon debate, which at bottom was a sophisticated marketing strategy. Perfect for a preteen's introduction to adulthood and for women of all ages, this is guaranteed to spark conversation about old early sanitary technology (belts and pins), the pad's evolution, during WWI, when nurses found cellulose bandages more absorbent than plain cotton, and whether this universal female experience is a blessing, a curse-or just part of life. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Stein and Kim wonder whether, in all of human history, anything else has been so reviled, so honored, so fear-inspiring, so mysterious (even to its hostesses), or so marketable as menstruation. Throughout millennia, the monthly act of shedding blood has stymied everyone from religious leaders to philosophers to physicians and scientists. Until the Industrial Revolution, that is, when feminine-care marketers began hauling in carloads of profits on the strength of proving to women that their monthly body function needed this gizmo or that potion, all the while referring to menstruation only in the most oblique terms—all that even a sumptuary society allowed. But at long last, along have come these two women to give us as plain-speaking, comprehensive, and witty a compendium of menarcheal information and reference as we've ever had. There is probably no better book for moms who want their daughters to respect themselves in every aspect, and for female preteens and teens who would never say a word about their moms reading a book about menses but surely would like several sneak peeks into its pages. One can only ask Stein and Kim, What took you so long? --Donna Chavez

Review

"Its contents, I found, are plainspoken—perhaps it will start chipping away at the taboo...the style is important and groundbreaking." —*The New Yorker*

"There is probably no better book for moms who want their daughters to respect themselves in every aspect...One can only ask Stein and Kim, 'What took you so long?'" —*Booklist*

"Perfect for a preteen's introduction to adulthood and for women of all ages, this is guaranteed to spark conversation about...whether this universal female experience is a blessing, a curse—or just part of life."

–*Publishers Weekly*

“In many ways, *Flow* is a breakthrough.” –*Daily Beast*

“*Flow* isn’t just a book; it’s a movement.” –*January Magazine*

“With wit, sarcasm, and common sense...the authors convey a great deal of information in an approachable and straightforward way...An entertaining and insightful book for women of all ages.” –*Library Journal*

“A witty look at the history of 'the nuisance'...for women of all ages. Who hasn’t wondered why we get a period, what women did before the invention of the tampon—let alone the pad. *Flow* explains all.” –*Body And Soul Magazine*

“*Flow* is a beautiful book (coffee table worthy!) and quite educational, while keeping you laughing. There are some amazing factoids in here! (psst...There should be a trivia board game that goes along with this baby.) And the vintage ads are fab. Courteney Cox Arquette was the first person to say period in a commercial. I believe that Cybil Sheppard and Laurie Laughlin are in a few ads too. Did you know that the Hite Report didn't say anything about our periods? Lots of fun facts to wow your friends during the next girls night out!” –*Viva La Feminista*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Edward Capps:**

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for us. The book *Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation* was making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The book *Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation* is not only giving you considerably more new information but also for being your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship together with the book *Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation*. You never truly feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

#### **Kathryn Sheffield:**

Do you considered one of people who can't read enjoyable if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this aren't like that. This *Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation* book is readable by simply you who hate the perfect word style. You will find the data here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without

leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to supply to you. The writer connected with Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation content conveys the idea easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different in the form of it. So , do you still thinking Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

**Joe Bell:**

Hey guys, do you wishes to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the subject Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation suitable to you? Typically the book was written by famous writer in this era. Typically the book untitled Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation is the main of several books that everyone read now. This book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new age that you ever know previous to. The author explained their idea in the simple way, and so all of people can easily to be aware of the core of this guide. This book will give you a lots of information about this world now. So you can see the represented of the world on this book.

**Daniel Gordon:**

Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to set every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation yet doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource data that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial contemplating.

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