

# People, Periods, and the Patriarchy; Stories from the Field.

---









# A Special Journey

---

Written by: Rachel Barr

Illustrated by: Kadam Badhate Chalo Youth





Hello, My name is Pooja, I have an elder sister and a younger brother. I attend school. After school I help my family with all the chores that need to be done around our home. My favorite games to play are carom and cricket.





One day after dinner my grandmother calls me over and tells me she needs to tell me something. She tells me that right now I am a girl but I am starting a special journey soon. This journey is how I will change from a girl to a woman.





She calls this journey puberty.

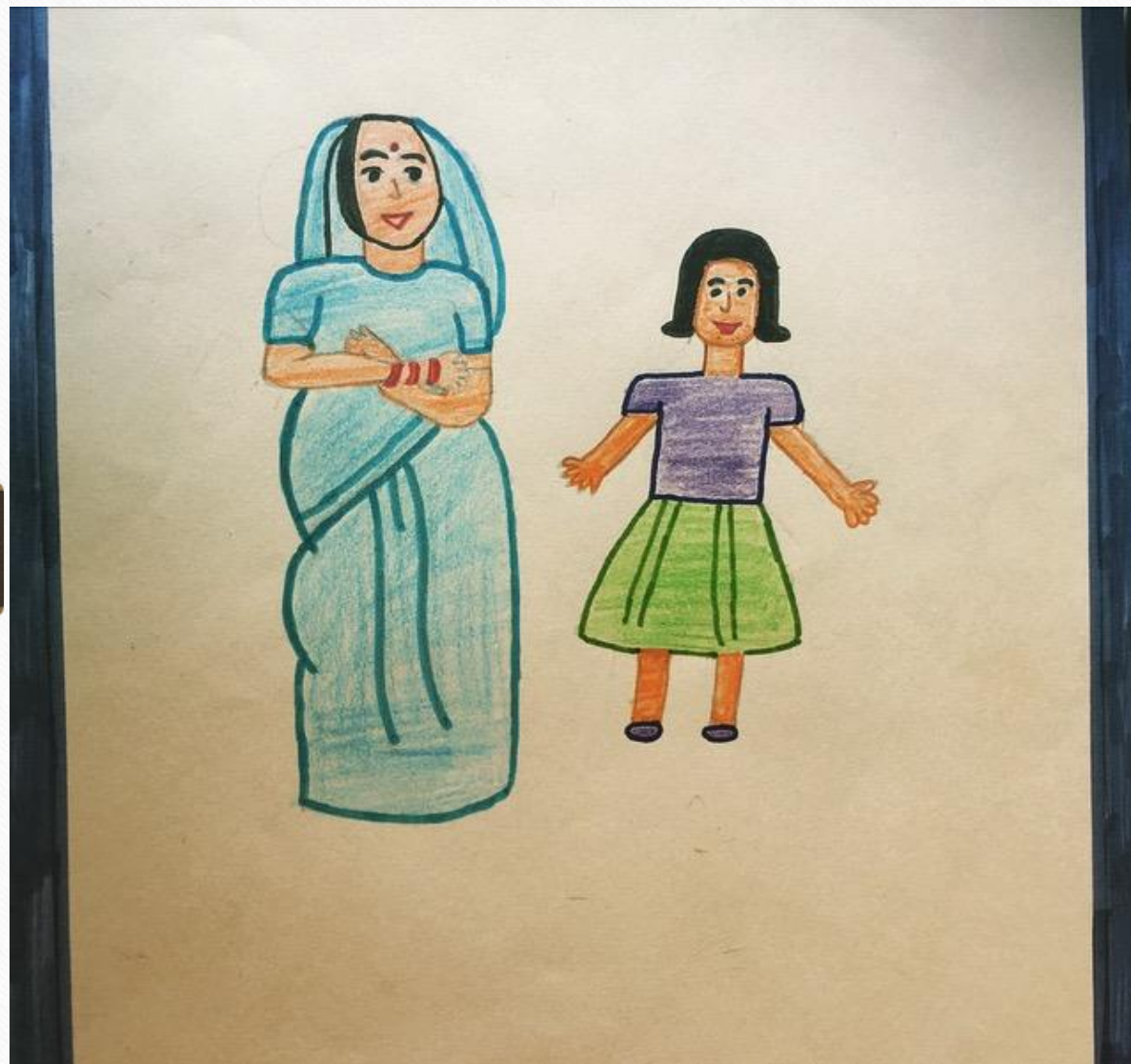
“I went through this journey many years ago, it is something that happens to everyone in the world, girls and boys. It means that your body will go through changes so you can be physically mature.” She tells me.





Grandmother leans in, and in a soft voice whispers, “You are extra special my dear, because you are a girl and your journey will include menstruation”





**“Stand up tall my love”**  
Grandmother insists. “This is what you must do when people tell you menstruation is dirty, impure, or that it makes you weaker than men, you must stand tall”





**“But Grandmother what does menstruation mean?”**

**I have heard the word at school before but I was too embarrassed to ask questions.**





“Women have a menstrual cycle that comes once a month. Blood comes from your vagina. This is so grown up women will be able to have a baby, if she wants.”





“Blood, that sounds scary” I shriek,  
My grandmother kindly explains to  
me that

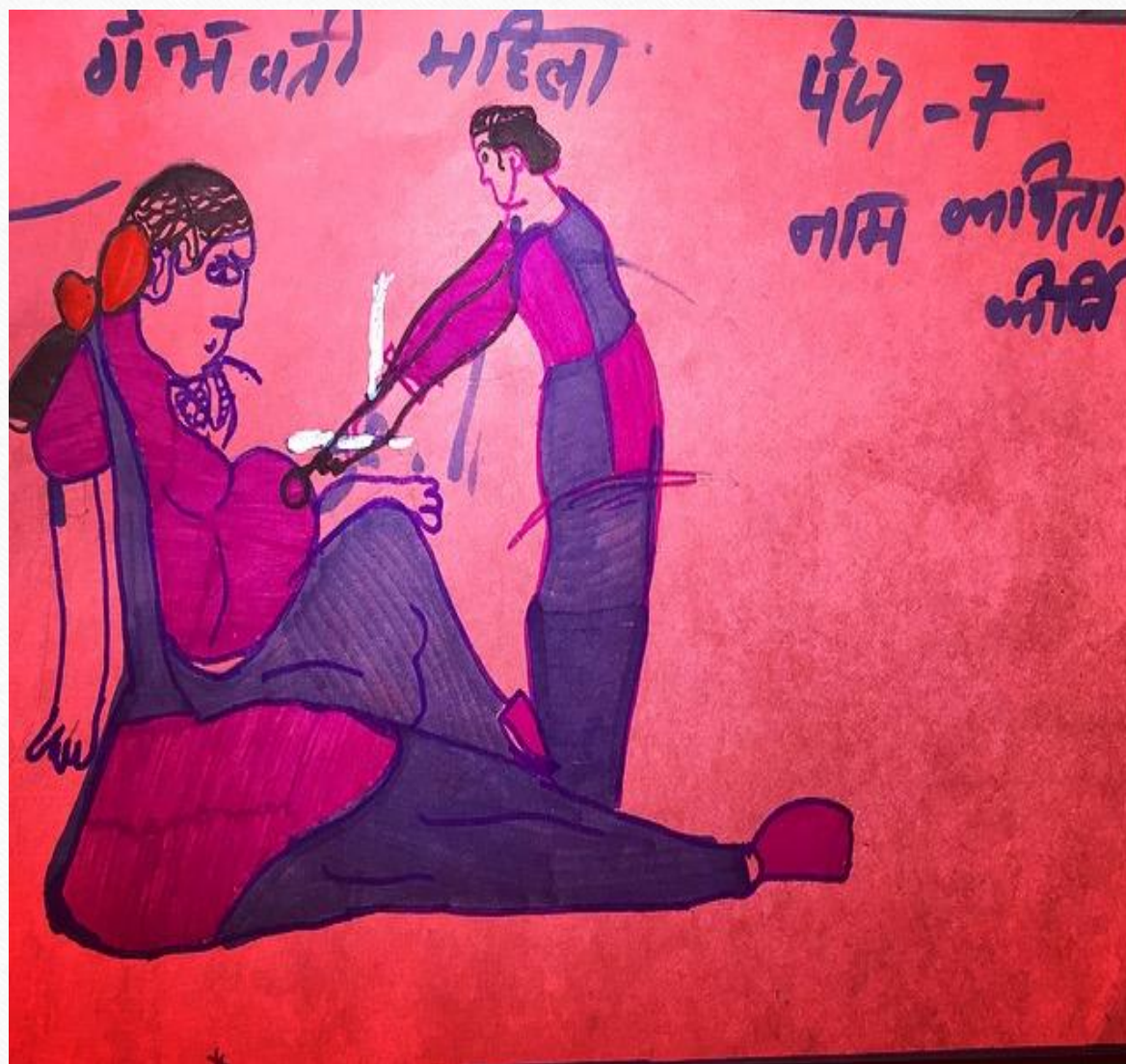
“Women have uteruses and that is  
what holds and keep a baby safe  
during pregnancy, there is a lining, it’s  
kind of like a pillow that is created  
every month in order to keep the  
baby safe and protected but if there is  
no pregnancy the lining is shed and  
that is what a period is.”





“Wow that kind of cool” I say.  
“ My dear, consider yourself very special, in the animal kingdom only humans, monkeys, apes, and bats get their period. Now off to bed you go, you have school tomorrow”





As I prepared for bed that night, I couldn't stop thinking about the exciting journey I had ahead. I couldn't wait. I was happy to be a girl.



