

Susmita

SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

KIKI MAREE

These children's books have been created to help our children and tweens become educated on their bodies, their boundaries, their sexuality and their blood.

They are an offshoot of a series of adventure books written about a girl called Susmita who travelled the world. Susmita as a child wears gender neutral clothes and has brown skin and red hair so as to not exclude any one culture in particular.

Join Susmita in one of her biggest adventures yet—her first moon. In this educative book Susmita shares her experience of Menarche, her first blood rite of passage. She also shares what she learns from the women in the Red Tent on the menstrual cycle, emotions, the body and pleasure.

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WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
KIKI MAREE

Designed AND EDITED BY
JESSE SOHN

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TO ALL OUR YOUNG WOMB HOLDERS
YOU ARE PERFECT,
JUST AS YOU ARE.

SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

Susmita is about to embark on her most profound journey yet— her first moon. To begin this journey Susmita is going to meet with all of the grandmothers of her village to learn the wisdom that they hold around menstruation.

The reason Susmita knows that it is time for her to meet with the grandmothers is because today she found some brown blood in her underwear. This occurrence is called a “period”, “menstruation”, or “moontime”, and the first occurrence symbolises menarche.



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When the very first uterine lining is shed, it is usually found in our underpants, and can be brown, dark red or light red. The uterine lining is made up of blood, endometrial tissue and cervical mucus. It is a normal part of becoming an adult and the first blood rite of passage.

The uterine lining is inside the womb, which is inside of our pelvis, and the womb is where babies grow if an egg is fertilised. Due to the menstruation cycle, and the possibility of fertility, having a womb can feel like a big responsibility for some people, and should therefore be honoured as such.



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When a person starts bleeding from their womb, they can become more connected to their bodies and cyclic living.

“Mens” means month or moon, which is where the word menstruation comes from, because people usually bleed for 28 days, which is the length of a moon cycle, or lunar cycle. Therefore, womb holders are naturally connected to the moon.



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Many things change when we go through menarche, and it is important that this change is marked by a rites of passage. Rites of passage for people in menarche can help to assure that young women and womb holders are properly prepared for a completely new way of living life, from a careless child to a fertile young adult.

Susmita made her way to the red tent, which were once known as menstrual huts, where all of the women in her mother's and grandmother's women's circles waited for her.



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"Welcome Susmita" the women said one by one as Susmita walked into the small hut. Susmita had known these women for all of her life. She had even heard the voices of these women before she was born into this world, as they had all been around Susmita's mother for her entire pregnancy.



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These women had also given Susmita's mother a mother's rite of passage into motherhood while Susmita was inside her womb.

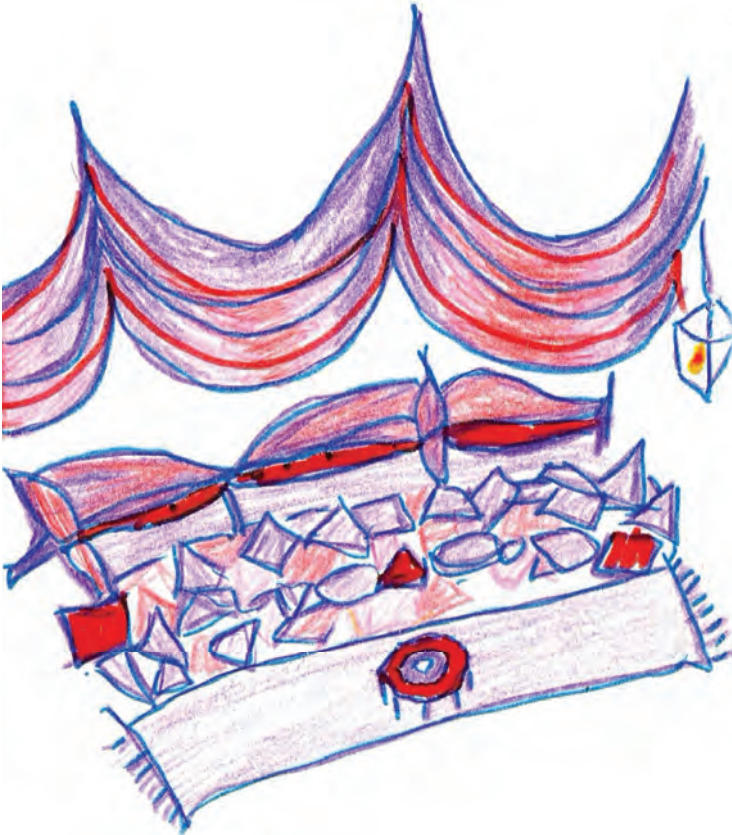
They had painted Susmita's mother's stretched belly with colourful toxin-free paint, and pampered her as Susmita sat inside listening to the hum of their chatter and songs.

These women who now surrounded Susmita were all considered family, whether related by blood or not.

This is because they were all women and/or womb holders, and therefore were all connected through the red thread, the life giving force of menstruation.

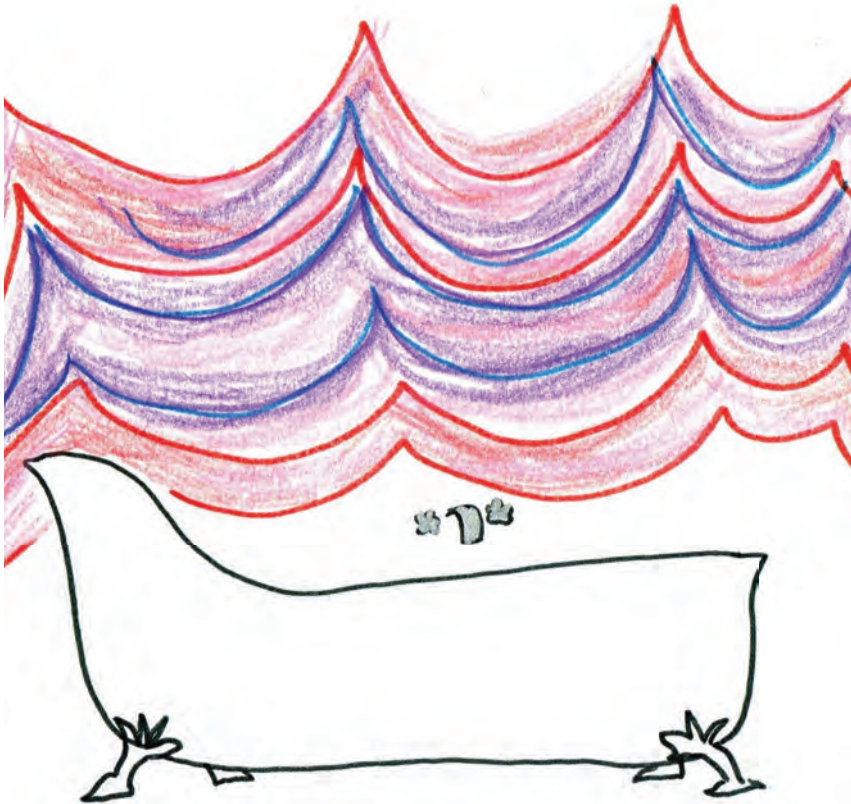
SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

The menstrual hut was decorated with Moroccan furnishings in deep purples and reds. Susmita had never been allowed inside the red tent before this day, as only people who had gone through menarche or had stopped bleeding could enter. The women who had stopped bleeding were the wise women in menopause or moonpause.



SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

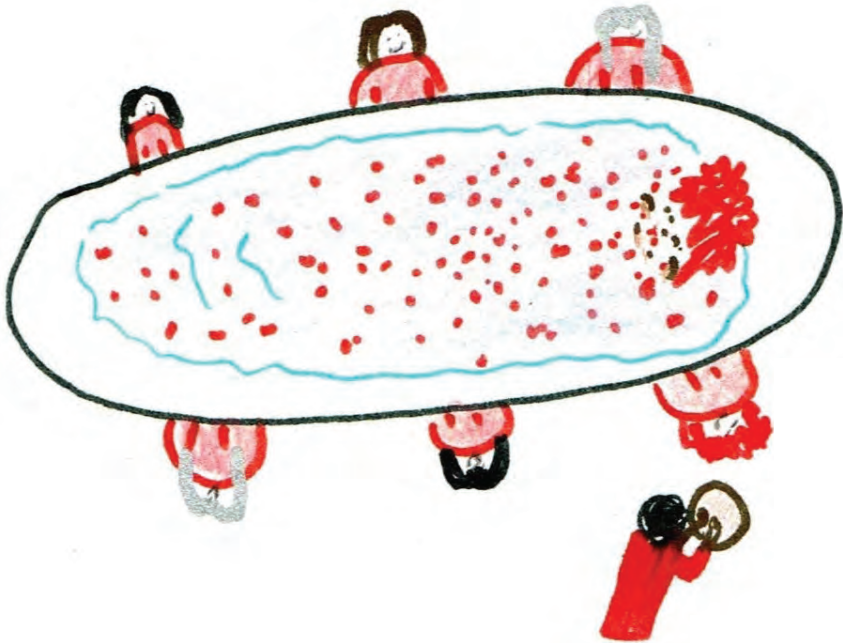
Susmita took off her clothes and laid in a warm bath filled with rose petals as the other women gathered in a circle around her. They all waited for Susmita's grandmother to begin the ceremony as Susmita got settled in the bath.



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Once in the bath Susmita closed her eyes. Susmita's grandmother then began to beat on the deer hide medicine drum Susmita had heard pounding from the red tent as she grew up.

Susmita felt her whole body relax, as though she had just floated into the safest place in the world.



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Susmita felt so loved and supported by the women around her, she could not believe all of this was just for her. She felt so lucky to experience something so special, as she knew some people going through menarche would never experience a rite of passage in their entire lives.

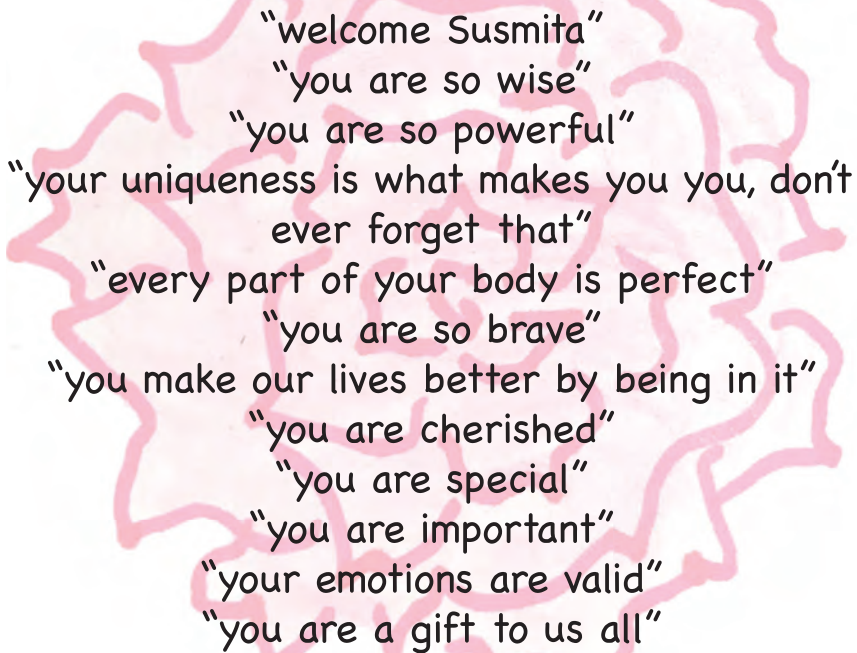
"Susmita, you have entered menarche—your first blood rite of passage" Said Susmita's grandmother, as she kept a steady rhythm on the drum. The drum sounded like the heartbeat of the earth.

"You are surrounded by women who love you and welcome you into this new chapter with open arms and hearts. You shall never want for anything again, for as long as there are red tents, you are never alone. Your heart is connected by a thread to each womb holder and woman in the world".

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Susmita felt the women around her begin to sponge bathe her with the rose petal water that she was laying in with sea sponges.

As her community bathed Susmita, they fed her pomegranate seeds representing the loss of innocence and were singing words of love to Susmita:



- "welcome Susmita"
- "you are so wise"
- "you are so powerful"
- "your uniqueness is what makes you you, don't ever forget that"
- "every part of your body is perfect"
- "you are so brave"
- "you make our lives better by being in it"
- "you are cherished"
- "you are special"
- "you are important"
- "your emotions are valid"
- "you are a gift to us all"

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Susmita's tears began to streak down her cheeks and into the bath water. Susmita would never forget this day for the rest of her life.



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Once Susmita had been bathed the women dried her, wrapped her in a warm fluffy red robe and put her slippers on for her as she was carried to sit in the centre of the circle.



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Once out of the bath, Susmita was given a cowrie shell and red ochre to paint it, symbolising the first blood on her precious yoni.



Yoni is the word Susmita's family uses for the vulva, vagina and womb, as it means source or origin of life. This does not mean the life of humans only, but all creative ideas that are birthed and nurtured.

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Susmita's grandmother continued:

"You may have begun to experience pleasurable sensations on or inside your yoni already Susmita, which is a beautiful gift of the divine.

It is perfectly normal to feel nice feelings in your yoni, however you must be aware, this pleasure is for you only until you are in a loving and caring heart-connection with a worthy beloved.

The time and age doesn't matter to us as long as we know you are safe, you are loved and you are empowered in your consensual decision to share this pleasure with another".

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Susmita's grandmother continued:

"The world is filled with people who are mindlessly attracted to our young maidens, and it is our duty to keep you safe and ensure that your temple is kept sacred, and that you use your sexual power wisely.

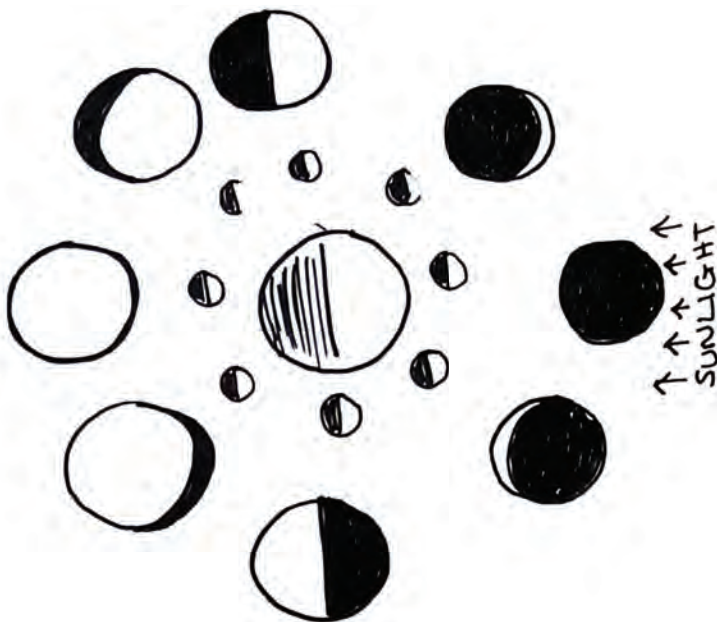
This cowrie shell represents your yoni and will be placed on the altar and kept sacred. It is so important that you do the same with your own yoni sweet Susmita. To do this simply listen and act upon your inner guidance, your inner yes and no".



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"We are now celebrating your fertility and your joining of the moon mysteries.

Just like the many faces of grandmother moon, womb holders also go through distinct phases, and change every single day".



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"During the time where the moon is dark and impossible to see is the time where you will be the most introverted, as you will begin to bleed.

This phase is called menstruation. You will need to draw your energy inwards and take time to rest. This time is also important to begin to pay attention to your extrasensory gifts.

This phase is also called the "crone" or "winter" phase of the cycle", and is known as your "inner winter."

"The next phase of the cycle during the first quarter moon is the maiden, spring, or the follicular phase, where you will produce estrogen and have lots of energy. This happens when the ovaries are making a follicle for an egg to be released to the uterus.

During this time you will feel more social, with lots of energy, and feel very confident within yourself. You will also be having lots of ideas and things that you will want to do.

The nectar that comes out of your yoni can be watery or creamy during the spring phase of your cycle. You will be fertile during this phase, so once you start to make love you will need to be extra careful at this time to not conceive—until the time is right, should you choose".

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"The next phase of the cycle is ovulation, which often happens during the full moon, and is known as the mother or summer phase. During this time, you will feel like having friends around and doing fun things together, as well as doing nice things for them.

During this phase you release an egg from the ovaries. Your yoni nectar will also change to be the consistency of raw egg white, making it easy for sperm to swim through to the egg. Therefore, you will be extremely fertile at that time for around 48 hours.

The cervix is also soft and open during this phase".

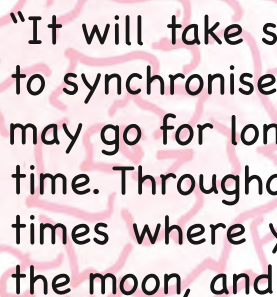
SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

"The next phase of your cycle is the luteal or premenstrual phase, where your progesterone and sensitivity will increase. Here you begin the journey inwards. This is also called the enchantress/maga or mage phase, as well as the autumn phase.

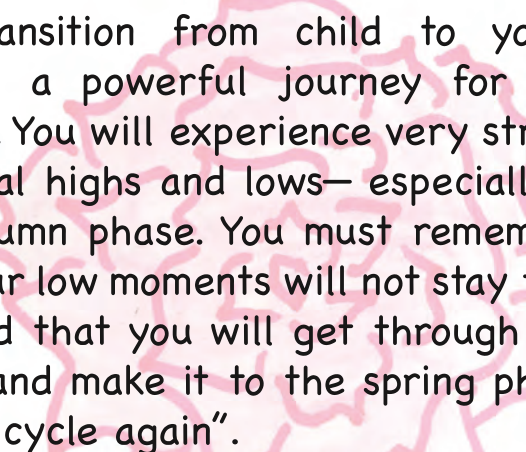
During this time your ability to reflect is heightened to make sure you don't repeat any of the same mistakes as you did the last cycle, as well as to harvest all of the wonderful things that you birthed during your cycle with the past moon. You need to take care during this phase not to be too critical of yourself and others.

The nectar of your yoni will become thick, white and creamy and then sticky and glue like, making it difficult for sperm to swim through. The cervix will become hard and closed again, and stay like this until the next time you ovulate".

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"It will take some time for your cycles to synchronise with the moon, and they may go for longer or shorter periods of time. Throughout your life you will have times where you are out of sync with the moon, and this is ok.

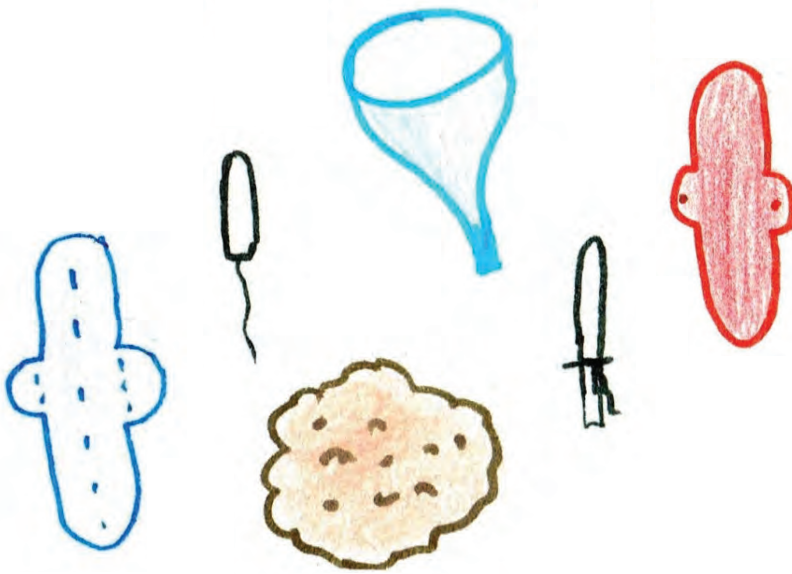


This transition from child to young adult is a powerful journey for you Susmita. You will experience very strong emotional highs and lows— especially in the autumn phase. You must remember that your low moments will not stay that way, and that you will get through the winter and make it to the spring phase of your cycle again".

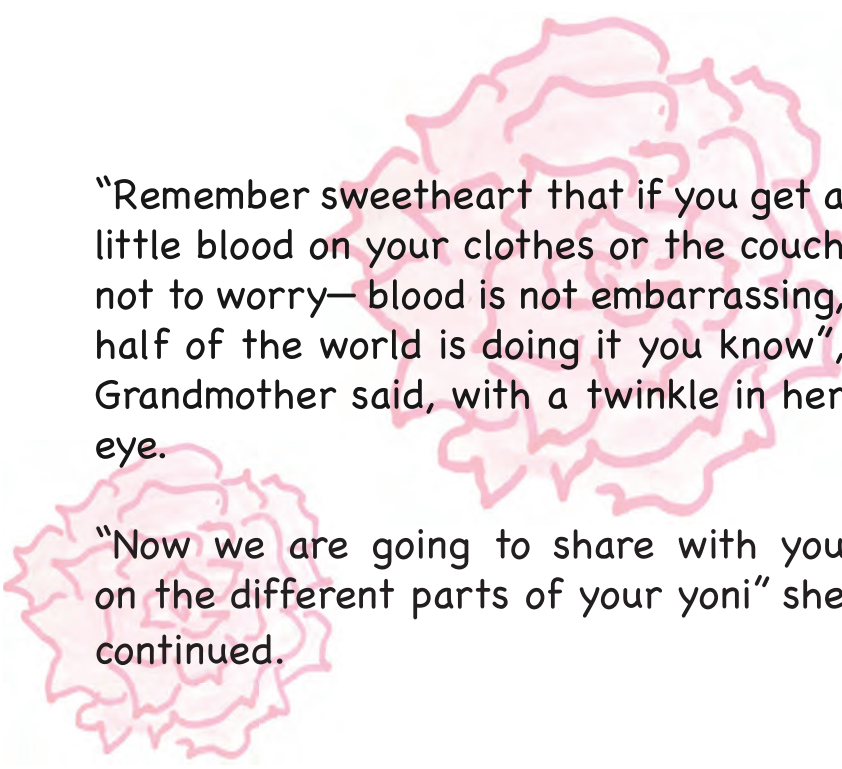
SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

"Now we are going to share with you the different things that you can use on your moon" Susmita's grandmother announced, as Susmita sat in the circle of women who passed around different sanitary items.

Susmita learned so much during this part of her rite of passage. For more details on what Susmita learned on sanitary options, see page 34.



SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

A large, stylized pink floral illustration with multiple layers of petals, rendered in a simple, hand-drawn style. It is positioned in the upper right background of the page.

"Remember sweetheart that if you get a little blood on your clothes or the couch not to worry— blood is not embarrassing, half of the world is doing it you know", Grandmother said, with a twinkle in her eye.

"Now we are going to share with you on the different parts of your yoni" she continued.

Susmita learned a lot about the yoni during this part of her rite of passage. The yoni is made up of the womb, the vagina and the vulva.

SUSMITA'S FIRST MOON

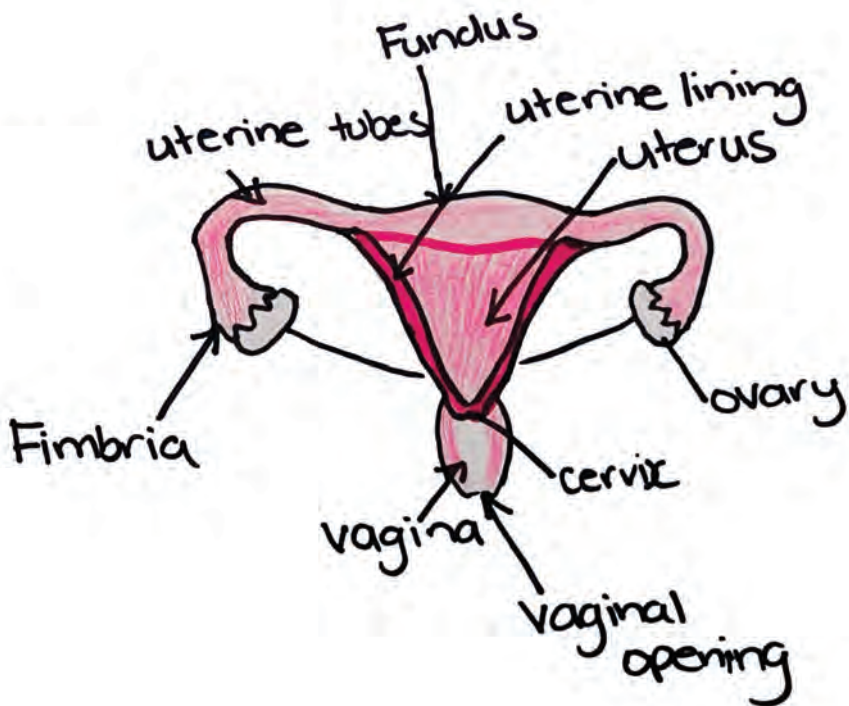
The womb is made up of:

- > The uterus, which is where the uterine lining sheds from, making the period. It is also where a fertilised egg implants to grow a baby.
- > The ovaries, where the eggs are made, one on each side of the womb.
- > The fallopian tubes, where the egg travels through to get to the uterus, one on each side of the womb.
- > The cervix, which is where the blood comes out of into the vagina.



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The vagina begins at the entrance of the yoni and reaches up to the cervix, and is made up of muscles, mucosa and connective tissue. Susmita learned it is important to take care of the muscles in the vagina, just like anywhere else on the body."



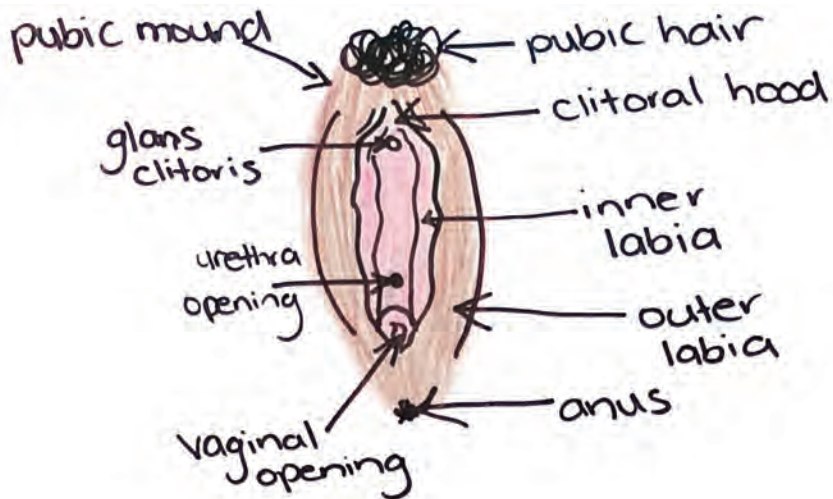
The vagina has four main pleasurable parts:

1. The g- zone (also known as the g-spot), which is found on the anterior wall of the vagina.
2. The a-spot which is also found on the anterior wall of the vagina, a little deeper inside than the g-zone.
3. The posterior fornix, behind the cervix.
4. The tip of the cervix itself.

If properly aroused all of these areas can feel pleasure, and at times even while unaroused.

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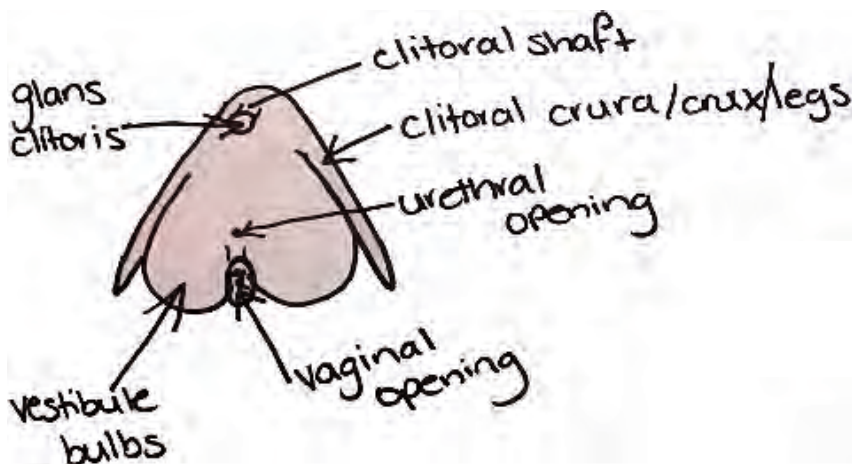
The vulva is the outside part of the yoni. This part of the yoni can be very pleasurable to touch, as the glans clitoris and clitoral shaft have lots of nerve endings. The clitoral complex, hidden underneath the vulva, is connected to the glans clitoris and clitoral shaft.



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The clitoral complex is made up of erectile tissue, which fills with blood when there is enough sexual arousal. Therefore, engorgement of the genitals is mainly experienced internally for people with clitorises.

"Wow" Susmita thought, "I didn't know that having a yoni was so complex!"



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The women around Susmita began to share their favourite things about menarche, having a womb and/or being a woman:

"I love how empathic we are"

"I love how sensitive we are"

"I love how intuitive we can be"

"I love our soothing presence"

"I love how receptive we are"

"I love how nurturing we are"

"I love our connection with the moon"

"I love how we can enjoy the art of
doing nothing"

"I love how fluid we are, always changing"

"I love how we can be so strong yet so
soft"

"I love how connected to our emotions
we are"

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Susmita's grandmother closed the ceremony with these final words:

"Dear sweet Susmita, you must remember that your body is changing, that your uterus and your ovaries are growing, therefore your hips are expanding.

Sometimes you will also be bloated and have more fluid in your body as you go through your cycles.

You must remember that you are perfect in all states and phases. You have a remarkably intelligent reproductive system and body, and part of menarche oftentimes means that we become more curvaceous, or have fluctuations in weight. And due to society's commentary on our bodies, you may feel negatively about your body at times".

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"But every month, when you come sit with us in the red tent, you will be reminded that you are perfect in your curves, dimples or bloating, exactly as you are".

To close the ceremony the women chanted together:

"We love you Susmita.
Welcome to the your menarche"

Susmita knew from this moment on, that her whole life had changed. She wasn't a little kid anymore. But she felt ready for her transition into menarche with the support of the women around her.

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THE END

Sanitary Options Info:

Reusable pads sit inside the underwear and are a good option as they are good for the earth, and allow the menstrual flow to happen as it naturally would without anything obstructing it.

Disposable pads are like reusable pads however they can't be used again.

Luna cups are great to collect our blood and to place onto the earth. Sponges are also a really beautiful product to use as they are natural and good for the earth.

Tampons are a common option for many people, they are cotton objects placed inside the yoni like the menstrual cup and the sponge.

Tampax are like a tampon however they are inside an applicator that helps to place the tampon inside the yoni without putting fingers inside the yoni.

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