

# PERIOD PAINS

The Journey from  
Girlhood to Womanhood



**MARGINS**

*Push Boundaries*

A publication by Marginal Mind Matters NPC.



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# Chapter 1

## *When Thembi was Still a Girl*

*“You should have been a boy!”* Lindi shouted.

Thembi looked shamefully down at her dirty bare feet. Her dress was torn and dirty too. She grinned quietly to herself as her mother shouted at her, remembering how earlier that afternoon she played netball with her friends and then took pieces of cardboard and slid down a hill. The world was a place to explore; it was full of adventures and Thembi wanted to do it all.

Thembi changed into her shorts as Lindi looked at Thembi’s damaged school uniform. She remembered being young once too and all her own carefree adventures. Lindi took a plastic basin and filled it with water and soap powder and began washing Thembi’s dress. Thembi sat awkwardly on a chair restlessly swinging her legs.

*“Go! Go play with your wild friends!”* Lindi shouted at her.

Thembi leapt off the chair and ran outside.



## Chapter 2

### *The Change to Womanhood*

The next morning, Lindi laid out a clean uniform for Thembi. She had sewn up the tears so well that they could not be seen. Thembi put her dress on and kissed her mother. She then grabbed a piece of bread and her school bag and ran outside.

Zanele, her best friend, was waiting for her on a street corner. The two friends hugged each other and then set out for school. As they walked, Thembi noticed the boys pointing and laughing at her. She felt uncomfortable and embarrassed and did not know why they were laughing.

*“You got your period,”* Zanele whispered to her as she took her school bag and covered Thembi’s back.

Thembi uncomfortably looked at the back of her dress and saw a red stain. Zanele continued to hold her bag behind Thembi as they walked back to Thembi’s home.

*“I have to go to school now,”* Zanele said as she smiled shyly at Thembi.

*“I will see you tomorrow,”* she said and ran off.

Thembi entered the house ashamed. The dress that her mother had lovingly cleaned was dirty again. Lindi got a sanitary pad from the cupboard and gave it to Thembi.

*“You have to start washing your own clothes now,”* Lindi said sympathetically.

So, Thembi changed out of her uniform and filled the plastic basin as her mother had done a million times before.

Life seemed different suddenly and she could not explain how she felt. All her friends were waiting to get their period because then they would be women but when it came, everything felt strange.

*“It doesn’t feel nice,”* Thembi thought.





# Chapter 3

## *Confusion*

Thembi wasn't a carefree girl anymore. The next day, Thembi went to the street corner. She was excited to see Zanele. Thembi looked forward to talking to Zanele so she could understand what had happened but Zanele was not there.

Thembi was so confused about what had happened and her best friend was not there for her. Thembi felt like she wanted to cry. When she got to school, Zanele ignored her and was with another group of girls.

*“Could she be jealous that I got my period before her?”* Thembi asked herself.

Thembi was uncomfortable all day at school. She could not concentrate on anything because her stomach was cramping and she had to wear a pad. She did not know when it would overflow or how long it would last and there was no one to talk to.

Life changed in one moment and after that moment everything was different. The boys started to look at her differently and Thembi felt like a different person. She was self-conscious. She did not feel like playing anymore. She was feeling a lot of emotions that she did not understand and she felt alone because she did not know who to talk to or how to express herself.



# Chapter 4

## *Coping*

**Adjusting to being a Young Woman is hard. Let's talk!**

1.How many have had their period?

2.Do you know what a period is?

3.How did you feel when you got your first period?

4.How did those who are still waiting to get your period feel when your friends got their period before you?

5.Do you know what shame is and how do you cope with shame?

6.Do you feel embarrassed when you get your period?

7.Do you feel scared that you are going to have an accident?

8.How do cope with the cramps?

9. Do you struggle to concentrate in school and with other activities?

10. Do you have a lot of emotions when you have your period?

11. Do you understand why you have these emotions?

12. How do you cope with all these emotions?

13. Do you understand what a period means?

14. Do you understand the precautions you need to take when you have your period?

- Pregnancy
- Personal Hygiene
- Mental Health



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