



Hood (Object Lessons)

By Alison Kinney

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Hood (Object Lessons) By Alison Kinney

Object Lessons is a series of short, beautifully designed books about the hidden lives of ordinary things.

We all wear hoods: the Grim Reaper, Red Riding Hood, torturers, executioners and the executed, athletes, laborers, anarchists, rappers, babies in onesies, and anyone who's ever grabbed a hoodie on a chilly day. Alison Kinney's *Hood* explores the material and symbolic vibrancy of this everyday garment and political semaphore, which often protects the powerful at the expense of the powerless—with deadly results. Kinney considers medieval clerics and the Klan, anti-hoodie campaigns and the Hooded Man of Abu Ghraib, the Inquisition and the murder of Trayvon Martin, uncovering both the hooded perpetrators of violence and the hooded victims in their sights.

Object Lessons is published in partnership with an essay series in *The Atlantic*.

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Hood (Object Lessons) By Alison Kinney Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

“From executioners in modern-day Florida, to the Ku Klux Klan, to ‘hug a hoodie’ Cameron – this scholarly study explores a complicated cultural history ... The book is at its best on the connections between hoods and marginalised communities. In her lively discussion of David Cameron’s 2006 “hug-a-hoodie” speech, Kinney notes the no-win situation in which many young black people find themselves. On the one hand, hoods serve a purpose for those with disadvantaged and precarious lives, allowing them to hide from hostile attention and violence, even to feel empowered. On the other, the garments themselves become stigmatised, attracting the very attention that they seek to avoid.” – *The Guardian*

“Hoods infiltrate mass media, political discourse, supermarkets, school uniforms, New York Fashion Week, our homes?but it is easy to overlook them, or dismiss their ubiquity as apolitical and inconsequential, as a result. Alison Kinney’s *Hood* is centrally constituted around reaffirming this inherent ordinariness, while magnifying the extraordinary contexts hoods so often become wrapped up in. *Hood* is published as an installment of the ongoing Object Lessons series, which prompts writers and readers alike to focus on the smaller objects that constitute a life, engage in imaginative intellectual play with them, subject them to inscrutable human curiosity, and utilize them as mirrors that reflect back upon a very human world.” ? Lauren Stroh, *Public Books*

"Provocative and highly informative, Alison Kinney's *Hood* considers this seemingly neutral garment accessory and reveals it to be vexed by a long history of violence, from the Grim Reaper to the KKK and beyond?a history we would do well to address, and redress. Readers will never see hoods the same way again." ?*Sister Helen Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking*

"In spry and intelligent prose, Alison Kinney tours the many uses of the hood in human culture, exploring seemingly unconnected byways and guiding the reader through some surprising connections. The ubiquitous hood, she shows, is an artifact of human relationships with power, the state, and one another. By the end of my time with *Hood*, I had laughed out loud, sighed in exasperation, and felt by turns both furious and proud." ?*Rebecca Onion, history writer for Slate Magazine*

"This slim, energetic book ricochets between medieval executioners, Abu Ghraib, anarchist protestors, the Ku Klux Klan, Trayvon Martin, and the Grim Reaper in search of a Unified Theory of Hoods. Surprisingly, it ends up finding one, and unearths all manner of fascinating hood-related facts along the way." ?*Pacific Standard*

"Part of the publisher Bloomsbury’s ‘Object Lessons’ series, *Hood* contains a definite chill as Kinney tracks the history and significance of the garment through the 15th century to the present. ... Kinney tells a riveting story of the origins of the Ku Klux Klan’s hooded uniforms. ... This examination is part of the strength of the Object Lessons series. (Other titles look at *Silence*, *Glass*, and *Dust*.) Kinney, a writer in Brooklyn, New York, knits seemingly disparate subjects ? burkinis and gentrification, for example ? together in such a way that the connection is instantly appreciated – and she does her work in fewer than 200 pages. It’s thought-provoking without the lecture. In examining these small yet significant objects of daily life, we find new meaning in the world around us. Next time you get a little chilly and reach for your hoodie, thank Kinney for this history lesson." ?Tara Jefferson, *The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards Book Review*

"The Object Lessons series achieves something very close to magic: the books take ordinary?even

banal?objects and animate them with a rich history of invention, political struggle, science, and popular mythology. Filled with fascinating details and conveyed in sharp, accessible prose, the books make the everyday world come to life. Be warned: once you've read a few of these, you'll start walking around your house, picking up random objects, and musing aloud: 'I wonder what the story is behind this thing?'"?Steven Johnson, best-selling author of *How We Got to Now: Six Innovations That Made the Modern World*

"The Object Lessons project, edited by game theory legend Ian Bogost and cultural studies academic Christopher Schaberg, commissions short essays and small, beautiful books about everyday objects from shipping containers to toast. *The Atlantic* hosts a collection of "mini object-lessons", brief essays that take a deeper look at things we generally only glance upon ('Is bread toast only insofar as a human toaster perceives it to be "done?" Is bread toast when it reaches some specific level of nonenzymatic browning?'). More substantive is Bloomsbury's collection of small, gorgeously designed books that delve into their subjects in much more depth." ?Cory Doctorow, *Boing Boing*

About the Author

Alison Kinney is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, New York, USA. Her writing has appeared online at *Paris Review Daily*, *The Atlantic*, *Hyperallergic*, the *New York Times*, *The New Inquiry*, *New Republic*, *Narratively*, and other publications.

Users Review

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Charlie Hartman:

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