



Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us

By Rachelle Bergstein

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Rachelle Bergstein brings readers along on a unique and delightful romp through the history of shoes, the women who wear them, and the profound impact they have on our lives.

Women from the Ankle Down includes interviews and cameos with influential figures ranging from Lisa Mayock of Vena Cava to Oscar Award–winning costume designer Patrizia van Brandenstein, from Doc Martens historian Martin Roach to Fashion Institute of Technology museum director Valerie Steele; from Marilyn Monroe and Jane Fonda to Salvador Ferragamo and Christian Dior; from Judy Garland to Wonder Woman.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A fleet-footed social history.” (**Liesl Schillinger**, *New York Times*)

“A lively look at the history of stilettos, sneakers and sundry other leather- and rubber-soled objects of swoon.” (**Olivia Barker**, *USA Today*)

“If style defines the woman, and shoes a woman’s style, then ooh la la, here’s the definitive history and guide—everything from Chinese bound feet to Ferragamo, from Hollywood favorites to running up one’s credit card on the sine qua non of fashion.” (**Mireille Guiliano**, author of *French Women Don't Get Fat*)

“If you could glimpse the passing parade of the last hundred years or so from behind a slightly raised curtain, you’d have a pretty good idea of what’s going on in this richly anecdotal history of shoes.” (**Amanda Lovell**, *More Magazine*)

“Every woman who loves her shoes should read this book—hell—every man who loves women’s shoes should read this book....Informative, interesting, and just plain fun.” (*New York Journal of Books*)

“[Bergstein’s] entertaining book wears its research as lightly as a pair of strappy sandals.” (**Tricia Springstubb**, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*)

“Fun.” (**Susannah Calahan**, *New York Post*)

“At last someone has dared to probe one of the most mystifying phenomena in our culture: what’s the deal with women and shoes? Rachelle Bergstein starts from the ground up and tells us—with wit and brio—a lot about society from an unusual and original perspective.” (**Ron Rosenbaum**, author *The Shakespeare Wars* and *How the End Begins: The Road to a Nuclear World War III*)

“As a woman who walks, I’ve often wondered why I don’t wear more sensible shoes. Now I know. Rachelle Bergstein has written a compulsively readable history: it won’t keep you from buying an absurdly uncomfortable and expensive pair, but it will make you understand why you’re doing it.” (**Ruth Reichl**, author of *Garlic and Sapphires*)

“[An] engaging, toe-to-heel study....From flats à la Audrey Hepburn, Keds and white go-go boots, Tommy-era platforms, and Jane Fonda’s Reebok Freestyles, to Sex and the City’s pricey Manolo Blahniks and Jimmy Choo’s, Bergstein ably runs the gamut of styles over the decades...” (*Publishers Weekly*)

“An illuminating study of the history of women’s shoes in the 20th century....Wickedly provocative.” (*Kirkus*)

“An entertaining journey through the social history of shoes and the people who have worn them....Well-written and well-referenced....Recommended to all fashion followers as well as those who enjoy the ankle-down approach to studying our high-end material culture.” (**Holly Hebert**, *Library Journal*)

“Engaging....A charmingly interwoven story of the past 100 years, detailing a bit of the psychology behind

different styles as well as the fame that drives the fates of a variety of soles and heels.” (*Booklist*)

From the Back Cover

What is it about a pair of shoes that so enchants women of all ages, demographics, political affiliations, and style tribes? Part social history, part fashion record, part pop-culture celebration, *Women from the Ankle Down* seeks to answer that question as it unfolds the story of shoes in the twentieth century.

The tale begins in the rural village of Bonito, Italy, with a visionary young shoemaker named Salvatore Ferragamo, and ends in New York City with a fictional socialite and trendsetter named Carrie Bradshaw. Along the way it stops in Hollywood, where Judy Garland first slipped on her ruby slippers; New Jersey, where Nancy Sinatra heard something special in a song about boots; and the streets of Manhattan, where a transit strike propelled women to step into new cutting-edge athletic shoes. Featuring interviews with designers, historians, and cultural experts, and a cast of real-life characters, from Marilyn Monroe to Jane Fonda, from Gwen Stefani to Manolo Blahnik, *Women from the Ankle Down* is an entertaining, compelling look at the evolution of modern women and the fashion that reflects—and has shaped—their changing lives.

About the Author

Rachelle Bergstein, the author of *Women from the Ankle Down*, works at a literary agency in New York. She lives with her husband and their son in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Glenn Flinchum:

The book *Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us* can give more knowledge and also the precise product information about everything you want. Why then must we leave the best thing like a book *Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us*? Wide variety you have a different opinion about book. But one aim in which book can give many information for us. It is absolutely suitable. Right now, try to closer with your book. Knowledge or details that you take for that, you can give for each other; you could share all of these. Book *Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us* has simple shape but the truth is know: it has great and large function for you. You can appearance the enormous world by open up and read a guide. So it is very wonderful.

James Edwards:

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Marie Boyd:

Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to place every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Women from the Ankle Down: The Story of Shoes and How They Define Us yet doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one of it. This great information could drawn you into completely new stage of crucial imagining.

Susan Woods:

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