

The Three Faces of Eve, or Hormones

a game for 3-9 players by Maury Brown

Women's identity is often stereotypically expressed in idealized terms as three main stages: Maiden, Mother, & Crone. These were popularized by mythologist and poet Robert Graves, and often reduce women to terms of their physical beauty and ability to reproduce. What is left out of these idealized descriptions are the physical changes and pervasive symptoms that accompany each biological transition. These cause women to be dealing with chronic pain, fatigue, discomfort, and incapacitation that is at odds with the idealized stages. This game pits the two together and has women of all three generations solve scenes or scenarios while dealing with societal expectations and physical symptoms brought on by the hormones. Since menopause is the loss of the ability to become pregnant and the loss of youthful beauty, it does not receive the same attention socially and culturally; in this game they are all represented and discussed.

This game uses masks to represent the Hijacking of Hormones. These are taken up and put down during each of the three stages as the characters (re)experience them and give advice to others in a sharing of intergenerational wisdom and a spectrum of beauty and sisterhood across women. Our physical bodies (which are a part, but not all, of who we are) are prisoners of our hormones, to a degree, as they control and determine aspects of self and interplay with expectations & tropes.

Content warning: female bodies, hormonal changes, pregnancy, fertility/infertility, miscarriage, aging, tropes, reproduction. These will not necessarily appear in the game, but they may, unless players determine at the start that any of these (and other topics, such as sexual assault, are out of bounds).

The game is for 3 to 9 players. The first three players each portray one of the three typical stages: Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Each of these characters takes up a mask. If more players are present, they play Whispers, or manifestations of conscience or consciousness or society that speak to and augment the masked character's roleplay. They also participate collaboratively in determining the advice to give at the end of each round.

Supplies & Space: three objects to represent masks, number of chairs as there are players. A private or semi-private space to play.

Time to play: 60-120+ minutes, depending on number of scenes played. Minimum of three 10-minute scenes, three 5-minute negotiations, 10-minute debrief and 5-minute intro (60 mins).

Characters:

Required (see descriptions below):

- [Insert Name] Maiden (puberty)
- [Insert Name] Mother/Aspiring Mother (pregnancy)
- [Insert Name] Crone (menopause)

Additional:

- 1-3 Inner Whispers (fears, hopes, dreams, symptoms, thoughts, positive or negative, from within the Face).
- 1-3 Societal Whispers (messages, traditions, expectations, advertisements, gaslighting, rules, demands, burdens, assistance, support, positive or negative, from society, institutions, or others)

Preparing to Play

1. Determine your player count. The facilitator can be a character.
2. Determine who will play the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone
3. Determine Whispers (if any). To do this, begin with one Whisper (who can whisper to all 3 Faces); then two Whispers (also shared among the 3 Faces), then three Whispers (one per Face, being both Inner/Societal). Then add a Whisper to the Maiden first, then the Mother, then the Crone, for a total of up to 6 Whispers, two per Face, an Inner and a Societal.
4. Have three different “masks” or objects that can be put on and taken off, or can be worn or held that signify the three Faces. For example, they can be three different colored Mardi Gras masks, or three colored bandannas, three hats or scarves, or something like a feather, a pebble, and a glass, as long as it’s clear which object represents which Face. You can also take an index card, post-it, or piece of paper and write “Maiden,” “Mother,” and “Crone” on them, and hold them up to your forehead during a scene. The important part is the designation and the ability to switch them. The Masks represent the Hormones -- the bodily hijacking that takes place when they take over.
5. Explain the “Bird in Ear” metatechnique to all players. The Whispers use this technique in play.

Bird-in-Ear is a technique in which a person loudly whispers in another’s ear things they could be thinking. The other player (in this case the Face) can choose to use what you are saying or ignore it. The goal of bird-in-the-ear is to help increase intensity and guide the scene, as well as providing ideas for players to work with.

Game Play

The game is played in a series of scenes. There must be at least three scenes, so that the roles of Maiden, Mother, and Crone can switch and each player has the opportunity to play more than one role. When there are more than three players, the group can decide how they will switch roles, whether the original three Faces will remain Faces and switch stages, or whether Whispers will change with the Faces. There can be enough scenes so that every person plays each of the three Faces and is a Whisper at least once. The duration after three scenes is up to the group. Scenes can be played in any order or may be chosen randomly by dice roll, etc.

Each scene lasts approximately 10 minutes, with the Hormone Masks worn for 50% of the time. The facilitator can decide whether the scene starts with the Masks on, or calls to put on or take off

the Mask during the scene. Facilitators can also cut scenes early if they are at a particularly dramatic point that makes a good ending. Before each scene, players negotiate who is playing what, creating a quick first name and the premise, any other plot ideas or direction, and negotiating touch, content, and boundaries. Each scene ends with a “Last Sentence” by each character. Something they didn’t get to say but wanted to, or an afterthought, pithy remark, etc.

Scene 1: Parent-Teacher Conference. The teen is not doing well. One is the parent, one is the teacher.

Scene 2: Doctor’s Appointment or Emergency Room. Choose b/t mother & crone as the patient. Others can be family members, friends, volunteers, or medical staff.

Scene 3: Quinceanera, Bat mitzah, Coming Out Debutante Party, “Sweet Sixteen” party. You’re all relatives of each other.

Scene 4: A funeral. Choose who has died, how you knew them, and your relation to each other, if any.

Scene 5: A nail salon. You may know each other or just happen to be in adjacent chairs. You’re getting your nails done for something important. What is it?

Scene 6: Cruise ship dinner. You’re assigned a table together. The people-watching is intense.

Optional Scene (in lieu of one of the above): A bathroom in a bar, late at night. One or more of you is being skeeved on and/or drunk.

Additional scenes can really be anywhere three generations of women might be, together, such as a wedding, birth of a child, graduation, bingo, church picnic, kitchen, bathroom, etc.

When playing a character, consider three things:

1. The physical symptoms you are experiencing as a result of estrogen and progesterone. These are powerful and nigh overwhelming. And yet you are conditioned not to discuss them socially. In this game, however, you are encouraged to discuss them. When you put the mask on, the physical symptoms become overwhelming.
2. The societal tropes of your stage in life. They are powerful and omnipresent. Do you measure up to the expectations for your stage? While much of this is often inner dialogue and manifests as jealousy or anxiety, in this game, we encourage you to vocalize them. When the Mask is on, these are amplified.
3. Your own needs, experiences, desires, knowledge, temptations, hopes -- despite the physical symptoms and societal burdens placed on you. Women are often taught to express themselves in terms of others. Speak YOUR mind. Your Whispers may help.

Maiden: Puberty

Physical Symptoms:

Tender breasts

Heavy menstruation

Irregular menstruation

Weight gain

Vaginal discharge

Hair growth

Oily hair

Oily skin

Acne

Irritability

Mood swings

Anxiety

Low self-esteem

Increased libido

Aggression

Depression

Hair growth on the body,
underarms, and genitals

Fatigue

Increased appetite

Abdominal cramps

Tropes:

Passionate, beautiful, less rational or logical, emotional, naive, seductive, ruled by instinct, strikes awes in others, powerful yet unaware of power, hot-headed, temperamental, idealistic.

Mother: Pregnancy

Tender breasts	Irritability	Stretch marks
Nausea	Dizziness or lightheadedness	Incontinence
Fatigue	More frequent urination	Acne
Food aversions	Changes in hair and nails	Dark patches on the face
Food cravings	Weight gain	Cries easily/heightened emotions
Constipation	Abdominal cramps	
Mood swings	Sensitivity to smells	

Tropes:

Nurturing, sensual yet experienced, stable, admirable, graceful, guardian, caretaker, eccentric, compassionate, selfless/self-sacrificing, family, home, rules/social conventions, competent.

Crone: Menopause

Fatigue	Difficulty staying asleep	Irritability
Night sweats	Amenorrhea	Moodiness
Osteoporosis	Irregular menstruation	Lack of libido
Hot flashes	Dry hair	Vaginal dryness
Heavy sweating	Hair loss	Weight gain
Insomnia	Anxiety	More frequent urination
Difficulty falling asleep	Dry skin	

Tropes:

Wizened, bitter, sharp-tongued, “no-filter,” cynical or jaded, traditions and customs, expectations, knowledge, legacy-oriented, unsentimental, rules & habits, nostalgic, mind/logic.

Inner Whisper

(e.g. Shoulder Angel, or the passionate and caring Id) Appears to the right of the Face character (on the side of right/eousness). Often the trope of The Conscience. In our case, the Inner Whisper voices things that are interior to the character, positive or negative. It is also the voice of the pain/symptoms, or encourages the Face to give their voice to these things.

Societal Whisper

(e.g. the Shoulder Devil, or the cold, heartless, ruthless, Superego) Appears to the left of the Face character (the “sinister” shoulder). This is the voice of advertising, “shoulds,” of rites, traditions, etc.

Debrief: Spend about three minutes per player allowing them to talk about the experience.