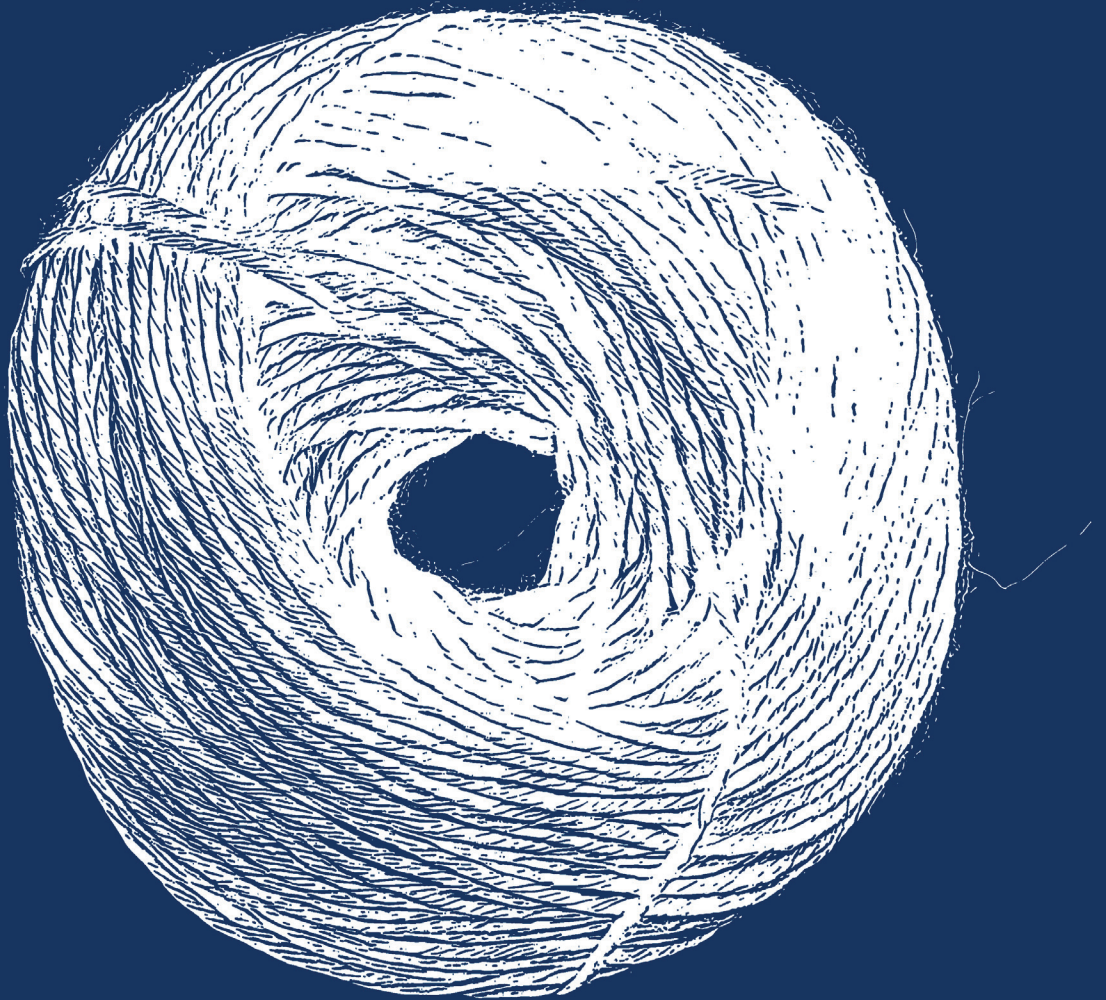


the Bechdel Loom



A freeform larp

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a freeform larp
created for the Golden Cobra Challenge 2025

*Images: elaborations from Freepik originals.
"Bechdel" is taken from the Bechdel Test.*

Premise

This parlor larp takes its inspiration from the song *Good Times* by Italian singer Ghali. A verse says: *Le mie ex han fatto un gruppo / E sulla chat si parla solo di me* ("my ex girlfriends made a group and in the chat they only talk about me"). That's what the game is about: a group of former girlfriends who have this strange thing in common and try to let go of bad memories and unresolved questions, connecting each other and with their inner feelings, until they can talk about themselves and not about him.

This is the default premise from the song, but of course you can change the game to suit any other gender/sexual mix.

Intended target

The game is aimed at a group of 4-8 people, sitting in a circle of chairs or connecting on-line. There is no game master and the facilitator can play as one of the characters. The game can touch adult themes so it's better suited for mature players; share communication tools before playing (like Lines and Veils) and align with each other about the tone of

the game. The suggested tone is "witty slice of life with touches of comedy"; sexual content is admitted and you can hint at it instead of giving graphic details (a good practice is talking as if there were kids around).

Setup

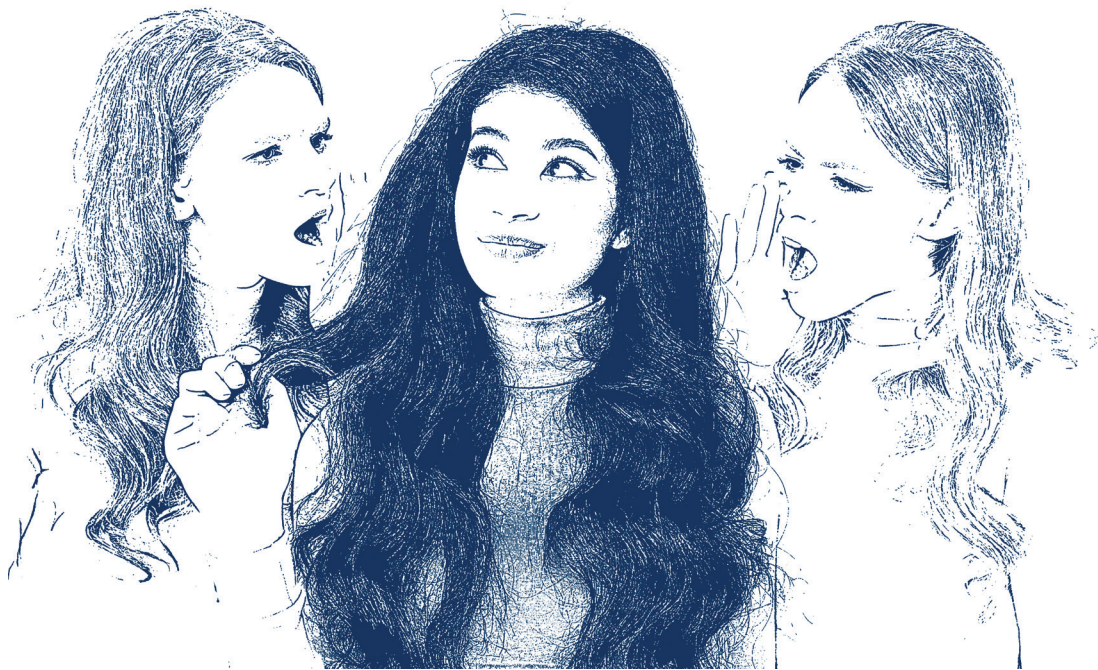
Sit in a circle. Print the Roles and put them inside the circle, maybe on a little table, where everyone can read them. Everyone selects a Role.

Opening ritual

Everyone stands up.

One player at a time, do the following:

- introduce yourself, telling the name of your character and your Role;
- answer the three questions you have on your Role card;
- sit down and stay in your character's emotional posture until everyone is seated (e.g. you can sit crossing your arms in a protective way, or looking outside the circle with discomfort).



The Roles

- **The First.** You were his first girlfriend. Was he your first boyfriend? What about him struck you? You introduced him to one of the others: whom?
- **The Last.** You were his last girlfriend. Where did you meet? Have you had other relationships after him? You were friends with one of the others: whom?
- **The Short Story.** Yours was a very short relationship. How long? What's a thing of his it's still in your possession? One of the others tried to warn you about him: who?
- **The Long Story.** Yours was a very long relationship. How long? What's a habit you still have from your days with him? You think you are better than one of the others: whom?
- **The Parallel.** You had a relationship with him while he was officially with one of the others: whom? How did he tell you about her? Which of the two parallel relationships ended first?
- **The Twice.** You had a story with him, you broke up, after some time you were together again. What did you see change in him the second time? Were you right? One of the others stopped talking to you when she knew of your second try: who?
- **The Nearly Wed.** You were almost married. At what stage of planning/execution did the story end? What's an object from that time that still haunts you? One of the others was your intended maid of honor: who?
- **The Badly Left.** Your story ended abruptly and in tears. Your tears, his tears, or both? After breaking, you did something that you regret: what? You argued with one of the others: whom?



Memories and Reactions

Now take the Memories prompts (you can print them on cards), shuffle them and put them in the center of the circle, where everyone can see them. You can use all of them or just part of them for a shorter game.

Print all the Reactions and distribute them evenly among the players.

The last person sitting down in the opening ritual will be the first to start.

The game flow is:

- select a Memory prompt and answer it (you can pick it up randomly if you want);
- everyone can freely talk about it;
- someone (not the player that has played the Memory) selects a Reaction, plays it and discards it;
- everyone passes their Reaction cards to the right, except one that you must keep.

The game proceeds in clockwise order.

Player principles

- Build on what others say
- Timeline coherence is important, but don't put yourself in a cage
- The characters don't need to be friends with each other, but the players are collaborating
- Characters don't need to reach consensus on what to think about the boyfriend (on the contrary, different opinions are encouraged)
- Talk freely about your character but don't create past events for the others
- Don't pronounce the boyfriend's name (it's just "him")

Ending the game

When every Memory has had a Reaction, the game reaches its conclusion. Try to distribute them evenly among the players.

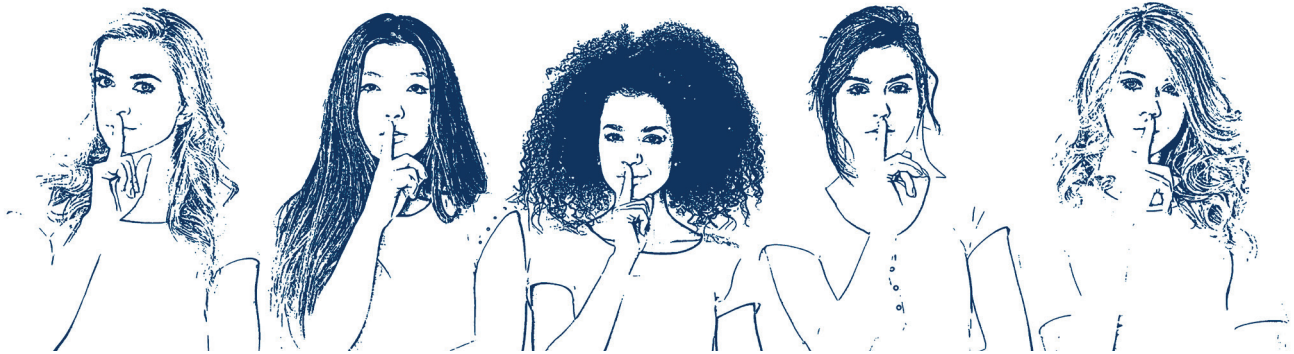
Every player, one at a time:

- stands up;
- tells what she will do now with her life;
- cites the boyfriend only if she wants him to

be part of her life (you can give him a name or nickname if you want);

- walks behind the chair and stands in a posture coherent with the feelings of her epilogue.

When everyone has played their epilogue, the game ends. If you want, decompress and talk freely about the game.



Memories

- That time he made you happier than anyone ever had before.
- That time he made you happier than anyone ever would again.
- That time he told you that you had made him happy, and he was sincere.
- That time he told you that you had made him happy, but he wasn't sincere.
- That time he got very angry with you, without reason.
- That time he got very angry with you, and he was right.
- That time you got very angry with him, without reason.
- That time you got very angry with him, and you were right.
- That time he made you feel stupid.
- That time he made you feel intelligent.
- That time you made him feel stupid.
- That time you made him feel intelligent.
- That time he revealed a side of you that you didn't know.
- That time he didn't see an obvious side of you.
- That time you showed him a side of himself he didn't know.
- That time you didn't see an obvious side of him.
- That time you told him what he deserved.
- That time you told him something he didn't deserve.
- That time he told you something you deserved.
- That time he told you something you didn't deserve.
- That time you thought it would last forever.
- That time you thought he would leave you.
- That time you thought you would leave him.
- That time he broke something.
- That time you broke something.
- That time you defended him against all reason.
- That time his behavior was unjustifiable.
- That time he surprised you positively.
- That time he surprised you negatively.
- That time he left you speechless.

Reactions

Print three copies of every Reaction.

- The same thing happened to you. How does finding this out make you feel? What do you tell her?
- The opposite happened to you. How does this make you feel? What do you tell her now?
- You feel a sudden sense of solidarity with the other. Why? What do you tell her now?
- You feel a sudden sense of hostility toward the other. Why? What do you tell her now?
- You were in a similar situation, but it went better for you. How does finding this out make you feel? What do you tell her now?
- You were in a similar situation, but it went worse for you. How does finding this out make you feel? What do you tell her now?
- In her place, you would have done better. What would you have done? What do you tell her now?
- In her place, you would have done worse. What would you have done? What do you tell her now?
- You feel pity for the other regarding what she told. Why? What do you tell her now?
- You feel pity for yourself regarding what the other told. Why? What do you tell her now?

