



FREDERIK BERG OLSEN

THE MOTHERS

In the mothers' support group, there was no one that was to push to talk about the baby's progress, family life, womb and sex life.

A game of fake smiles, the evil of the real world and back-stabbing.

Contents

The game consists of:
2 set of characters (one for each part of the game),
2 game cards (these),
1 npc (incl. flowchart and hints)

The game lasts 2-3 hours

Colophone

Idea, text and design:

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Synopsis

The players play mothers that meet for the first time in their support group. **In the group, these new mothers discuss their problems** with children, men and themselves. And on top of that, its a bit of a coffee club.

However, this mothers' group is different. Instead of ventilating problems, **they compete about being the best mother**, have the most problem-free child and control over their bodies, careers and men. Naturally, its all lies, except for one person. For her, this is just how it is. She is slim and sexy and her husband is probably fantastic too.

In the beginning, the group are attached to a nurse (gamemaster), that makes sure that things progress the way they should. **The nurse is just in on the first meeting** – then the control is transferred to the group itself.

When they meet alone for the first time, **the pandora's box of unpleasantness is opened**. At their first meeting, they all twisted the truth (except Nadia) not to lose face or status in front of the others. One of the mothers break the ice, and addresses a real problem. That is the start of an avalanche and all the mothers get to let off some steam. **Except for Nadia**. She doesn't talk about her problems, because there are none. The others believe that she lies to gain status, just as they did before. The other players make snide remarks to Nadia, that gradually worsen and turns into bullying. **The game ends when Nadia decides to protest and abandon the grup.**

The Mothers is a horror game, but not in the classical sense. In 'new horror', realism is key — monsters, serial killers, blood and gore begone. The fundamental idea is that there is enough horrors in the real world. In the mothers group, this realism is pivotal, and hopefully at least just as scary.

Because horror is a physical thing. You can tell when things are bad. The form of horror I'm looking for is the one where your stomach cramps, and you start to feel desperate, feel the need to up an leave or bite back. A bit like a fight, or a rape.

The Mothers is about bullying and uses bullying to make the horror part work. The player that plays Nadia will gradually feel that the distance between player and character is erased. It gets personal. It gives belly aches. The rest of the players (the bullies) should, when the game is over, have a bad taste in their mouths. It is hard for the single person to withstand a coordinated attack from all the other players. At the same time that's not what Nadia's player expects.

The players become two character sheets. One for the first meeting and one for the second. The first sheet simply contains facts, a few instructions and a story about the labour. The next sheet contains a so-called tag cloud of words and setting that the player can use to define her role. Nadia's is the only card with positive words, everyone else has negative words. The players are not meant to assume all these properties — they are more for inspiration. The back-side of the character sheet contains camouflaged instructions and inspiration to problems that can arise after having given birth.

You have a character sheet for the nurse, who also contains a overview of how the game should progress. Everything you need to know to prepare and run the game is also on this sheet. I imagine that the game is to played "as larp as possible." When the game is over, it is important that the players really get out of their characters as it can be a tough experience for the player playing Nadia. If the player shows signs of having too hard a time, take a break and talk to the player, or stop the game entirely. This is of course not always easy to know, but trust your intuition.



Here is a collection of words and terms and other things that all mothers know about pregnancy and labour. Other good ways of preparing is talking to someone who was recently pregnant.

Pregnancy — A pregnancy lasts 40–41 weeks. Generally, the labour is forced in week 41 as the child risks growing too big otherwise. Pregnant women generally talks in terms of months and weeks.

Epidural blockage — a local anesthetic in the lower part of the spine. Ensures a pain-less labour.

Episotomy — a cut in the meat towards anus to avoid at kvinden flækker when the baby is born.

Pliers & suction cup — tools that are used during the delivery to

get the baby out. Only used if complications arises.

Anesthetic fluid — the water that the baby is swimming in before it is born. When the water breaks, green water is a sign that the baby is stressed. The green colours are waste. That's what leaves the body when the water breaks.

Due date — The expected date of labour.

Contractions — happens in periods leading up to the birth. It is exercises for the uterus.

Dilation — pains the woman has at the beginning of giving birth that make the uterus open up.

Contractions — these pains come last. The help getting the baby out and signals to the woman to start pressing.

Opening — The cervix should be open 10 cm for the baby to get out. When the dilations start, the cervix expands about 1 cm an hour. Some people talk about 'fingers' instead.

CT scan — Cardiotokography. tracks the child's heart rate and the uterus' contractions.

APGAR system — A point system to measure the state of the newborn. Heartrate, breathing, muscle contraction, reflexes and skin colour are given a point between 0 and 2. The scale is 1-10, higher is better.

Looking for more details on the internet is not bad idea. Wikipedia is not a bad starting point, but venturing on to forums for pregnant couples and women about to give labour is even better.

