

*Sacred Apple Tree/Quert
Maiden, Daughter, Virgin Archetype.
Goddesses: Artemis, Persephone
Element of Air and Water/Mists.*

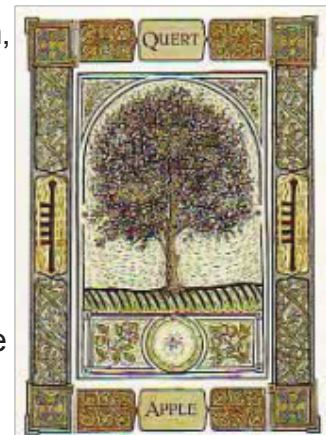


Welcome to the first moon, the Apple Moon. We begin with the first of a triune of three, the Maiden, the Mother and the Priestess.

**In this lesson it is my hope to inspire, remind, and stretch you and your maiden self, which is always with us regardless of age.
Dive in, enjoy, and allow the mists to take you into the grove....**

Apple: There is nothing like the sweetness of the spring time apple blossom, pink, tender and full of the sweetest pollen beckoning to the honey bee. The apple {Quert} is the second tree in the classic Celtic Tree Ogham - which is pronounced {Ow-wen} - and if you were to pull the apple ogham, it would represent a time of healing and regeneration.

The apple tree also represents abundance, openhearted generosity and gratitude. In Celtic myth the apple tree is associated with Avalon, the Isle of Apples, which is a transcendental place known to be a crossing over into the otherworld. Avalon is said also to be the land of mists, a place that folks can get lost in and sometimes never return, for it is said that the fae can carry those who get lost in the mists of time away.



In Greek mythology apple orchards were guarded by and tended by maidens who were representatives of Hera, goddess of love and prosperity. These maidens symbolically joined hands around the sacred tree of life and became its outer protection with a serpent coiled around its roots. This symbolism would later become distorted and placed within the garden of Eden.

Then there is the goddess of apples, Pomona, who is the guardian goddess of fruit trees, orchards, and agriculture, much like her sister counterpart Demeter, who she is commonly associated with. Pomona is said to watch over and protect fruit trees as well as care for their cultivation.

Pomona's name, of course, comes from the french word "Pomme" which means "apple". Another interesting thing about Pomona, is that she was considered to be among the Numina, or guardian spirits, of Roman mythology, who watched over people, places, or homes. The Numina are from whom the word "numinous" derives, meaning spirits of a place. I have to say there is nothing more magical then walking through an apple orchard in the spring time as each of the pink blossoms is filled with the buzzing of sweet bees going about their business of pollinating. One can almost see tiny fairies flying about, or perhaps they are bees, who can say?

The sweet apple itself, when sliced in half, reveals the sacred symbol of the pentagram, or five pointed star. The pentagram has many associations - one is the elements of earth, air, fire, water, and in the centre, ether. The pentagram was originally a symbol of the goddess Kore, who was worshiped thousands of years ago, and whose sacred fruit was the apple.

The Roma gypsies of Romania still cut open apples and refer to them as stars of knowledge, with folk traditions saying that couples should cut apples in half on their wedding night to share so that they will be fertile.

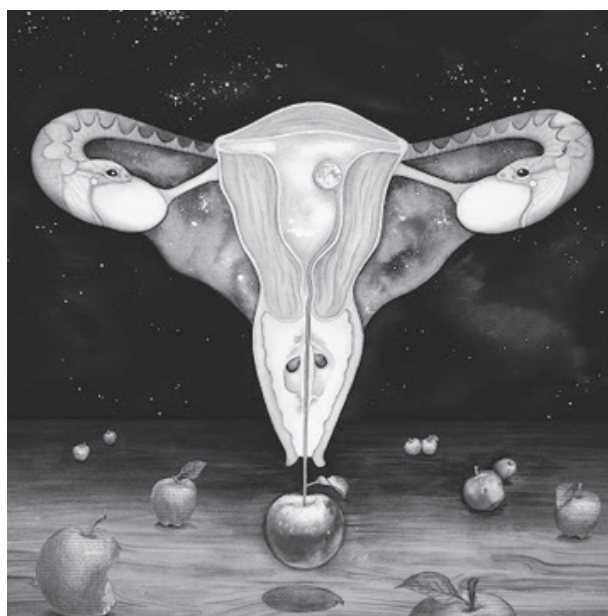


Image by Liz Darling

Barbara Walker-The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and secrets.

Likewise, the five pointed star within a circle was the Egyptian hieroglyph for the underworld womb, where rebirth is said to occur. Evidence shows that the belief that apples help to carry souls from one incarnation to the next exists in many cultures from the Scandinavians to the Romans, Egyptians and even the Chinese.

The apple tree offers us a time of reprieve, a time to rejuvenate ourselves and understand the blessings we have in our lives. The apple tree is said to support us in times of lack to trust that there will be abundance once again.

In fact, apple blossoms were often used as wedding flowers, representing the virgin form of the goddess, whose full maturity was shown when the full blown fruit was ripe and ready to eat. Of course, so many of these old pagan symbols were taken over by the Christians, as shown by the Apple-Eve-Mother-Goddess who was said to be another form of Rose-Mary the Virgin, for whom the five petaled rose and the apple blossom were often mystically combined.

Barbara Walker-The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and secrets.

The Silven Bough:

In Irish mythology there is a poem called The Voyage of Bran, in which a silver branch from an apple tree, called a silven bough, is said to offer its user entry to the otherworld of Tir na nog. In my Celtic shamanic training we made silven boughs from small branches of apple trees as a representation of our work in the otherworld, and it was a beautiful and inspiring process to sink into as we sat creating a sacred tool to support us in our work within the “Otherworld”.

Here is a short version of the silven bough story:

In Old Ireland there was a marvellous silver bough, which like the golden bough of Virgil, served as a doorway into the Otherworld of the gods. Some say it was the property of Manannan MacLir, others that it belonged to Lugh. Cut from a mystic apple tree, the silver branch gave forth magical music which none might resist. The nine apples it bore served as dangling bells, which played the most beautiful music, that put people into a deep, trance-like sleep, which allowed them entry into the otherworlds. Folklore tells a tale of Cormac MacAirt, the high King of Ireland, who was lured to the Summerland one day, when he encountered a young man holding a wondrous branch of silver which had nine golden apples dangling from it. When the youth shook the branch, the apples touched and made sweet music, like bells, so that he who heard it forgot his sorrow and care. Cormac asked the young man if he would sell the marvellous branch, but to his dismay, the youth demanded the king's wife, son, and daughter in exchange. Enchanted by the music of the silver bough, Cormac agreed. His family were distraught to learn how they had been traded away until they heard the music of the branch, at which they immediately forgot their dismay and departed with the young man joyfully.

After a year had passed, King Cormac longed to see his wife and children and so, taking the silver branch, he set out to find them. As he rode, a magic cloud enveloped him and he found himself on a beautiful green plain, before a majestic house. Within he was greeted by Manannan who ushered in Cormac's wife and children. Manannan revealed that it had been he himself who had taken the king's family in order to lure him to his happy country. Cormac and his wife and family slept that night in the house of Manannan, and when they awoke the next morning they found themselves in their palace at Tara with the silver branch and other magical gifts beside them.

This story beautifully describes the power of the magic bough or wand to transport its wielder into the Land of the Gods, the astral realm of archetypal form and becoming. Story adapted from Lewis Spence, *The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain*

Exercise:

Make a silven bough for yourself, taking time to remember your own childhood/maidenhood filled with dreams and magic, and allowing yourself to re-live that powerful and magical time. It is really easy to make one, all you need is a small stick, or if you can get an apple branch even better! Typically a silven bough has 9 silver bells on it but other than that you have free range on how creative you want to get with it!

Make sure to eat some slices of apple as a treat while you do this activity.

Elements of Air and Mists:

The apple tree contains both the elements of air and mist, as it relates to the Mists of Avalon, the sacred isle where priestesses lived and worked. These mystical mists were said to only be lifted by an

initiated priestess of the Isle, and the apples of Avalon are said to be the sweetest and most magical apples on earth.



These mists are often what women think of when they consider the classic training and initiation of a priestess, especially if you have read the book *The Mists of Avalon*.

Sadly this is not an option for us any more, if it ever really was as idyllic as described by Marion Zimmer. Our initiations are hard-won by life experiences, and the only mastery we can hope to achieve is over ourselves.

However, it is not such a bad thing to dream a little.....

If you have not read the book [The Mists of Avalon](#) by: [Marion Zimmer Bradley](#), you might enjoy it. There is also a movie about the book which I have watched many times with my daughter and included a clip.

Journey into the Sacred grove:

If you decided to make a silven bough, you may also feel called to use it for your next shamanic journey. Hold your bough as a representation of your permission to enter the otherworld, jingling it softly at the beginning of your journey to mark your entry into non-ordinary reality, and then gently set it down as you get deeper into the journey.

You will now begin your first sacred task by journeying once again into the sacred grove. Begin by meeting your power animal, and ask them to take you to cross the river and then into the opening of the grove.

Once you enter the grove find the apple tree and walk towards it, looking for entrance into it. You may want to ask for permission to enter. The tree will either open for you or you will see an opening that is clearly for you to enter.

Slide down through the apple tree and sit below its sacred roots. These roots carry and hold the spirit of the tree, so in essence you are still very close to and working with the apple tree.

If the spirit of the tree comes she will probably look like a goddess, so make note of how she appears to you.

This is your Intent:

As you sit keep your heart open to whatever will come to you, and state your intent by asking the tree: What aspect of my maiden time is asking for healing at this time?

If you do not understand the intent and/or question, call me and we can go over it so you have a really comfortable understanding of what you are to do for this journey.



Make sure you notice everything you see, as it is “all important”, and then give yourself a few days to process. Please journal or muse on your feeling of what this message you received means to you. Remember—the message may not necessarily be words, she may show you images or sing a song, she may also give you a gift, or show you a story. The possibilities are endless, so keep an open mind.

The archetype of the Maiden, Wounded Child, Virgin and {Sacred Prostitute}:

The archetype of the Maiden/Daughter stands on the threshold of womanhood; she recognized her transformation the moment she began to bleed, in that she is no longer a small child, but rather a woman capable of getting pregnant and giving birth.



The archetype of the **Maiden/Daughter** shows us a woman still living in her parents home, relying on them for her food and shelter, as well as emotional stability, and slowly learning to find her own way, separating until she no longer needs them. A daughter who has a healthy relationship with her parents will have deep understanding that she is safe in her parents home, and that once she leaves home, she can go back if she

has need. It is this “knowing” that allows her to eventually separate and experience the initiations of life.

However, not all of us were fortunate enough to have this kind of healthy experience, and so that tender, slow, learning time of trials, can become mists, which can rise up to create shadows within us later in life if we do not face them, grieve them and then grow up and out of that wounding shadowy place.

In her book, *The Pregnant Virgin*, Jungian psychologist Marianne Woodman speaks about a German word that first appeared in English in 1963, that seemed to be so profound that it was eventually incorporated into the English Oxford Dictionary.

This is what she says of the word:

“It is *torschlusspanik* {pronounced tor-shulss-panic}, defined as “Panic at the thought that a door between oneself and life’s opportunities has shut”.

The doors that were once opened through initiation rites are still crucial thresholds in the human psyche, and when these doors do not open, or when they are not recognized for what they are, life shrinks into a series of rejections fraught with *torschlusspanik*: like the graduation formal to which a girl was not invited; the marriage that did not take place; the baby that was never born; the job that never materialized.



Looking back we recognize that it was often not our choice that determined which door opened and which door shut. We are chosen for this, rejected for that.”

This is why regardless of our age, regardless of how long it has been since we were youthful maidens, we have the opportunity to look back and to see where we missed out on important initiations, or perhaps where we lived through exceedingly hard times. To see that we not only survived, but thrived, and never once paused to see those hard times for what they were - powerful life initiations.

The shadow side of losing our childhood too early or leaving it too late, is that as we grow up there can be certain areas where, although we are fully grown adults, our reaction to things is that of a young child, and in these cases it is our responsibility to grow ourselves up.

If we find ourselves having to do this as adults, the patterns can run deep, and the process can be hard; however, moving through this process is a powerful initiation in and of itself, and this, dear sisters, is where each of us has the opportunity to grab the torschlusspanik by the handle and open up our own damn doors.

This is the mystery into ourselves and the ride is always wild!

Welcome.....

The shadow of the wounded child:

Adults who react from the place of a wounded child most often have no idea that their feelings and sensitivities are coming from a place of old wounding, which is why it is really hard to spot, not just for themselves but for those in their lives.

The Wounded Child is easily caught up with the fact that they see themselves as the victim, and thus they easily get stuck in their story of suffering.

Adults caught in the snare of their wounded childhood can feel abandoned, misunderstood, unloved, and uncared for, even by themselves. **They are often very sensitive to the pain and emotions of others often to the point of confusing other people's emotions with their own.**

The Wounded Child archetype has experienced some kind of initiatory wound in their early life, and this experience creates a lens through which they see their circumstances and the motives or actions of others.

The Wounded Child may have been bullied, or injured in a car accident, or suffered many medical problems in childhood; they may have lost a parent or sibling early in life, suffered sexual abuse or rape, or it may be that they were simply neglected or witnessed a traumatic event. There is no end to how a child may have been wounded, but the problem that happens within the archetype of the “wounded child” is that, unless tended to, the trauma will continue to replay the event over and over in their adult lives.

This constant replaying out of old woundings is subtle and hard to spot, as we grow up and into our complex lives as adults. For example, if we are bullied as children and the wounding from that time has not healed properly, we may continue to see our lives or certain aspects of it through the lens of a



bullied child. Co-workers, store clerks, our husbands, friends or parents will all seem like bullies to us and our relationships with them will feel unbalanced all the time, as we will feel powerless and shamed during what would normally be natural confrontations in the process of life. These confrontations will feel exaggerated and we will instantly be taken back to that time when we were bullied, and in that trigger-second moment we react, not once realizing that our reaction is actually coming from an old wound.

It is said that we will continue to recreate the dynamics experienced in our childhood with us as the victim if we do not take the time required to go in and re-visit old wounds.

What I personally found interesting was that after what feels like decades of self work in this area I was still able to find blind spots where I was reacting to things, not from my adult self, but from an old wounding that I never even realized bothered me, until I started following the breadcrumbs behind my reactions to all sorts of things.

A helpful thing to do is to pay attention to those “this always happens to me” types of experiences or feelings, as this can be an effective tool for recognizing the Shadow of our Wounded Child. Another helpful tip is to, when we feel strong emotions rising up within ourselves, take a moment {more often than not this happens after we calm down, or even a day later} and ask ourselves how old we feel.

If in that moment you feel like a 12 year old, or a 6 year old, and not the age that you are, chances are you are behaving like a 12 year old because of an old wound that was never properly tended to.

The Shadow Wounded Child will blame the wound or wounding for much of their adult life’s problems, or feel misunderstood a lot of the time, and this is because they believe that they feel more deeply and intensely than others. They often take things personally and become easily offended, and often the blame for what is happening in their lives is placed firmly outside of themselves.

The shadow aspect of this archetype also is that they often seek validation from others, and feel the need for everyone around them to know that they are suffering, confused or extra sensitive, in order to have their feelings and sufferings validated. Much like a child, they will not feel steady until someone around them sweeps in, either to rescue them or to validate their feelings.

However, if we scratch the surface of this, we see that underneath the compulsive need for validation is actually a hope for healing, and this is the light at the end of the tunnel.....

The Healed Wounded Child:

Discovers that by diving into their pain they can find a way out of it, and that their suffering is actually “optional”. If we figure out that something is no longer working for us, we can change it; this is the power we have over ourselves as grown adults and it is often some of the most meaningful, empowering work we will do in our lifetimes.

Healing our wounded child requires a massive amount of letting go, and this can be hard, especially if what we want to let go of is a deeply rooted pattern we have been carrying around with us for a long time. However, by letting go and embracing the intense emotions that come with healing, we can

actually become a beacon of light and, in turn, we can help others - this is the path of the priestess.

We are essentially ALL wounded children in some way or other; really none of us escape our maiden times without some form of hardship, and this is called the initiation of life.

We can learn to embrace our woundings, understanding that some of them will never be healed, but only understood, and that they are a part of us, a part of our darkness that becomes a beautiful shadow, which only covers our light if we let it.

Many of the most passionate, caring and strong women have the deepest most traumatic childhoods, and they lived through it to become the people they are today.

The Maiden and Her Father:

There is a lot of information out there about mothers and daughters, but child Maidens also need to have healthy relationships with their fathers, as her father serves as her first understanding of men and will influence all of her relationships with men once she is grown. In an ideal world, her father will communicate and treat her equally, as he would treat her brother, and give her the opportunity to learn skills typically associated with what a father would pass down to his children.

Through all of these interactions, the **Maiden/Daughter** learns about communication with her father, and in general about communicating with men, as men simply communicate in a different way from women. We as women need strong father role models, as this is the best and healthiest way for us to learn how to have healthy relationships with the men that will eventually come into our lives as friends {and for some women}, lovers, and husbands.

If there is an unhealthy father-daughter relationship, or a non-existent one, the daughter/maiden grows up with a distorted view of men or a complete lack of understanding of her relation to them. What this means is that the **Maiden/Daughter** learns through trial and error in her relationships with men, either ending up in bad relationships, or looking for a man to replace the father that she never had.

Sadly there are a great number of men out there looking for women with “daddy issues” to have one night stands with, and we as priestesses owe it to ourselves to heal any woundings we may have had with our fathers when we were daughters/maidens. This will help us, not just to avoid unsavory encounters, but to grow as women and as priestesses, as well.

Shamanic Soul Retrieval can be one way to heal these issues, as well as taking the time to explore this aspect of ourselves.

Before we can become priestesses unto ourselves we must heal our woundings, otherwise we may find ourselves unable to support other women or our daughters through their own processes in this realm.

Archetype Journal Work:

While working with the **Maiden archetype**, I would like you to journal on these questions:

Is there parts of me that carry aspects of the wounded child?

Am I ready to go into the those dark places and heal that child within me, so that I can create my life

from a more grown up place?

What aspect of my childhood or maidenhood {from the time you can remember and have memories, until your first moon time/period} do you remember most? What was great and what was not so great about it?

What is your current relationship to your father? Is there any healing work that needs to be done here? Healing work does not always need to involve the other person, it can be done within ourselves.

Do you have a daughter, step-daughter or young woman in your life {niece etc..}? If you do, can you think of some ways that you can offer them some support as they move from maidenhood into puberty and their first moon?

Do you feel called to do more of this kind of work? If yes why? If no why?

There is no wrong answer here, this is just to get you thinking about what might be calling you as a priestess...

The goal here is to explore further into what you do, and no not, feel called to. This is important work as you journey through your priestess year. Not all of us are called to work with maidens in this capacity; some are called to work with women, and others called to work in other aspects of healing and priestess work. As you move through this year we will be exploring many of these roles more deeply.

The Archetype of the Virgin:



As a woman not yet skilled in the arts of love, she is on the verge of discovering her own sexuality, and she sets out on a path of self-fulfillment, despite her parents wishes around her virginity. She must explore her own sexual, creative and spiritual awakening, for all three of these are more linked than the virgin/daughter ever realizes. As a daughter, the virgin is aware that she no longer feels the girlish closeness to her father, and begins to pull away in her need to explore her budding sexuality. The father, in turn, either reacts by becoming stricter in his endeavor to keep her as his little girl a little longer, or by pushing her away..

The daughter in turn may also feel conflicted by these changes. She too notices the changes in her father, and may push against them in an attempt to find autonomy, or suppress her feelings and

become the dutiful daughter. Even this is a simplistic description of the inner changes a woman goes through as she explores herself as a virgin, and the changes she will go through in the upcoming years as she becomes a fully sexual woman.

Explore in your journal how your father reacted to you during this time. How did you feel about it? What was your own reaction to his changes?

In turn, how did your mother deal with your changes as you explored your sexuality? Did you share with her when you lost your virginity? Or not? Would you have liked to have been able to have an open communication with her? How would you have done it differently?

The virgin archetype, if we dig deeper yet, shows us a rich history of women, priestesses to whom virginity meant that no man had control over them. This archetype is not only about physical expression, the losing of one's virginity, but also about the collective consciousness that extends back to the priestesses in the temple days, who was often referred to as the **Sacred Prostitute**.

“Ancient moon priestesses were called virgins. ‘Virgin’ meant not married, not belonging to a man - a woman who was ‘one-in-herself’. The very word derives from a Latin root meaning strength, force, skill; and was later applied to men: virile. Ishtar, Diana, Astarte, Isis were all called virgin, which did not refer to sexual chastity, but sexual independence. And all great culture heroes of the past, mythic or historic, were said to be born of virgin mothers: Marduk, Gilgamesh, Buddha, Osiris, Dionysus, Genghis Khan, Jesus - they were all affirmed as sons of the Great Mother, of the Original One, their worldly power deriving from her. When the Hebrews used the word, and in the original Aramaic, it meant ‘maiden’ or ‘young woman’, with no connotations to sexual chastity. But later Christian translators could not conceive of the ‘Virgin Mary’ as a woman of independent sexuality, needless to say; they distorted the meaning into sexually pure, chaste, never touched.”

Monica Sjoo, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*

A word on Virginity: The concept that we actually “lose something” is actually misinformed and wrong; the idea that someone can take away our virginity, or that we give a man our virginity, is pretty dis-empowering. I think that the idea that, once we “lose” our virginity, we can never get it back, is absurd! Worse yet, women who are not partnered up with men, but who have had sex with another woman, are somehow still considered virgins!

Here is how I see it, followed by a sassy little video by a young woman who makes the best, most straightforward videos on sex out there. I have also included a link to her video on the HYMEN and the myth around that “old story “ as well.. Enjoy!

How I see it: The word virgin is just a construct created by men in ancient times to dis-empower and commodify women. You don't actually “give something away” when you have sex for the first time. The only thing you do is give away the “memory” of the first time you had sex, but actually, since both of you are experiencing it, you are really just “sharing” the memory of the first time you had sex! The word virgin, in ancient times, was originally used by the priestesses to explain that they were “unto themselves”, which really means that they choose not to get married - it had nothing to do with sex at all!



Also here is another sassy and well informed video about the myth of virginity and the "hymen and Virginity". Bear with her as she take a bit to get going, but I like her approach and these little videos might be helpful for any of you who have young women in your lives who may be at the beginning of having these issues come up in their lives - share away!

A few things to ponder about virginity:

How was your experience of sex for the first time? How tied-up with it was your sense of being a Virgin? Did you feel that you became a woman after having sex for the first time? Allow yourself to write free-flow style in your journal about this and see where you end up. Be curious about yourself and your views of maidenhood, virginity and sexuality.

The origins of the sacred prostitute:

"During the millennium when the sacred prostitute existed, cultures were built on a matriarchal system. Matriarchy here does not simply mean that women replaced men in authority positions; rather, the focus was on different cultural values.

In the ancient matriarchies, nature and fertility were at the core of existence. The people lived close to nature; therefore their gods and goddesses were nature divinities."

Desire and sexual response were experienced as a regenerative power, and were recognized as a gift or a blessing from the divine. Man and woman's sexual nature and their religious attitude were inseparable. In their praises of thanksgiving or in their supplications, they offered the sex act to the goddess revered for love and passion. It was an act honorable and pious, pleasing to both deity and mortal alike. The practice of sacred prostitution evolved within this matriarchal religious system and thus made no separation between sexuality and spirituality."

Nancy Quallis-Corbett, Forward by Marion Woodman, *The Sacred Prostitute*

The truth that is hidden in the archetype of the sacred prostitute is about power and control - not only of our virgin territories, virgin ideas or thoughts, but also of our sexuality and how we, as women, ultimately need to be in control over own bodies and sexuality.

We will be exploring more of this later on in our lessons, but it is good to begin thinking about it a bit now...

Goddesses: Persephone/Kore and Artemis



These two goddesses are the epitome of this archetype, and their stories are ripe with lessons and inspirations we can take away with us.

Persephone:

This is the classic “Maiden” story, which tells of a naive young woman and her eventual marriage to the god of the underworld... but how the heck did that happen? Well, I am sure

you can relate to the idea that things never quite turn out as you expected they would when you were younger!

In the story of Persephone and Demeter, her mother splits up the young woman into two phases - the one where she is Persephone the maiden, eternally on the cusp between childhood and womanhood, and the woman she becomes as Kore, after she is abducted by Hades and taken to the underworld to be his bride.

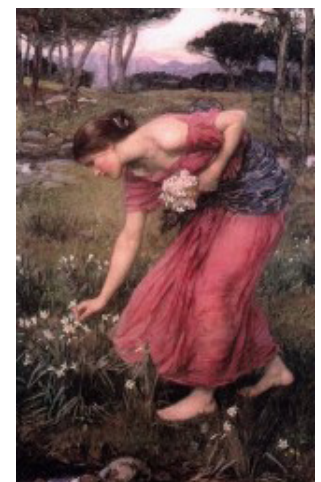
One moment Persephone is a *virgin*, walking along picking flowers, enjoying the sunshine without a care in the world, and certainly without thoughts of sex or growing up yet. Then, in the next moment, she is abducted and made the bride of Hades.

Persephone in this phase was the “nameless maiden”; she represents the young girl who does not know “who she is” and is as yet unaware of her desires or strengths.

Most young women go through a time of being between these phases, being nameless, before they decide on a career or find their passion in life. Other women remain the maiden for most of their lives. They are uncommitted to a relationship, to work, or to an educational goal – even though they may, in fact, be in a relationship, have a job, or be in college or even graduate school. Whatever they are doing, it doesn’t seem “for real”. Their attitude is that of the eternal adolescent, indecisive about who or what they want to be when they “grow up”, waiting for something or someone to transform their lives.

Child-Woman

Prior to her abduction and the “loss” of her virginity, Persephone was a child-woman, unaware of her sexual attractiveness and her beauty. This archetypal



combination of sexuality and innocence permeates the Western culture, where the woman who is considered desirable is a sex kitten.

A Persephone woman does not need to be young in age, or sexually inexperienced, to lack a sense of herself as a sensual or sexual woman. As long as she is psychologically still a maiden, her sexuality has not been awoken. Although she likes men to like her, she lacks the passion to see it through.

Initiation into womanhood is different for every woman. For some, it was getting their first period, or having sex for the first time, and for others it was getting married, or becoming a mother. For many women, establishing their career and settling into life without need of their parents support marked womanhood for them.

Of course, some maidens become women too early in their lives; this is sometimes due to necessity. For some women, the early end of their maidenhood comes from having to care for a parent or sibling because of an untimely death, alcoholism or drug abuse. For some, it comes due to rape, incest or other sexual abuse.

Take a moment here to reflect on your own maidenhood - how old were you when were you aware that it had left you? What happened that day, or perhaps that summer/season, that made you understand that your maiden-time was over and another phase of your life was beginning?

Was it positive or negative?

If it was negative, I would like to invite you into a new way of seeing.

I suggest that, if your maidenhood was taken from you, you have the choice now, no matter your age, to change that story, and to take the power away from that terrible day or time in your life.

Take a moment now to think of another time, later on, where you did something that you felt proud of, and perhaps thought to yourself, "this was a really 'grown up' thing to do".

You can decide that your womanhood was marked by a new story, a time when, on your own, away from family and friends, you did something truly to be proud of as a woman. This is the moment that you truly became a woman!

Take a moment now to write down your new story.

Having said that, in no way do I want to invalidate any woman's life story; I want to acknowledge that for some, even a negative story can, over time, become empowering, for it is during these trials that we become initiated!

So if, for you, though your story of becoming a woman was marked by a trial or hardship, it has actually come to live in your life "story" with a positive spin, then this is a wonderful thing.

I would now suggest that there are two options here, but that both require that you LET GO of your old story, the one where you are a victim, and move into a new story, one where you overcome hardship, to become the woman you are today.

Story:

When I first began thinking about these questions myself, I realized that my maiden-time was kind of split into two times of my life. The first was birth to age nine, when I lived on a goat farm with my

family. This was a very powerful and magical time for me, as we lived in a very remote place and my childhood was spent tromping deep into the woods alone. I was allowed to explore the natural world freely, and I was a wild little thing, truly! The second part of my maiden hood was full of hardship as my family moved into a small town where I was bullied daily and things happened that forced me to grow up faster than I would have if we had not moved. It was through this realization that I chose to hold close to my heart the magical time, and find solace and strength in the little wild thing that I once was, recalling memories of my “invisible” wolf friend that came with me everywhere, and my alter-ego self that had long flowing hair and wore a soft buckskin dress.

Take a moment to write down the story of your becoming a woman. Write this story with yourself as the heroine!

And finally, as one last thing to muse over.....

Do you think we can still experience these types of phases long after we become women? Can we experience new things as we once did when we were maidens, at age thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, or seventy?



Artemis:

Artemis is also known as the virgin goddess, but not for the reasons you might think.

Artemis was a Greek goddess, and her name roughly translates to Bear, which feels like an appropriate name for a fierce and protective goddess.

She is the goddess of the forest, the patroness of the animals, pregnant women and the maiden time of life. Armed with her bow and arrow, Artemis defends the untamed things in nature, and chooses to live in the meadows, groves, and virgin forests away from the prying eyes of men.

She is a virgin by choice - although some would argue that she is not actually a virgin, in the sexual sense, but rather that she is a virgin because she chooses to not associate with men.

Artemis was the daughter of Leto and Zeus, and the twin of Apollo.

She is the goddess of the wilderness, the hunt and wild animals, and fertility. She is the helper of midwives as a goddess of birth. To the Greeks in Asia Minor, (modern-day Turkey) she was a prominent deity, and was worshiped mainly as a fertility goddess. The cult statues found at Ephesus show her in the eastern style, standing erect with numerous nodes on her chest.

She is also known as the moon goddess Diana, who is associated with fire festivals; her title, Vesta, indicates a perpetual holy fire in her sanctuary. On her annual festival held on Aug 13th, she is invoked to protect the harvest from autumn storms and lack of rain. Diana typically wears a crescent moon and holds a torch, to represent the fiery nature of the goddess.

Artemis' image at Ephesus depicts a torso covered with breasts, conveying her as the fertile nurturer of all living things. She was also the Huntress, killer/destroyer of the very creatures she brought forth - demonstrating the light and dark side of the goddess.

Unlike her Greek sister Athena, who loves the battle and spending her time with men, to the point of practically being one, Artemis is said to be a virgin goddess, who prefers the company of pregnant women, nymphs and animals, and serves as their fierce protector.

One could see how she may not actually be a “virgin” in the sense of never having had sex, given her time spent with the nymphs; however, there are many stories of the rape and attempted rape of her sister nymphs, to which she came to the rescue with her sturdy bow and arrows, which are said to have been made by Hephaestus, the god of volcanoes, fire, metal, and blacksmithing.

Other legends, however, say that at an early age she asked her father Zeus to grant her eternal virginity. The question begs to be asked, though, if virginity meant the same thing then as it does today? Was she asking to stay virginal, as in never have sex, or asking to never have to marry a man? It is also said that all of her chosen companions were virgins as well, but this only serves as another one of her wild contradictions.....

In many circles she is compared to the Greek goddess Athena, and yes, in many ways she is similar, yet she is also different, as her “virgin” sister Athena loves the battle and everything to do with men including being around them, whereas Artemis prefers to spend her time in the company of women far and away from the politics and ways of men.

Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and the twin of Apollo, and as the story goes, she was born first and then helped her mother to birth him, thus her beginnings as a midwife.

She is often depicted with the crescent of the moon above her forehead and was sometimes identified with Diana or Selene the goddess of the moon.

Her favourite thing to do was to roam the forests hunting for wild animals, the stag being a favourite. Of course, this is a contradiction to her role as the goddess and protector of wild animals, but like most goddesses, she is both of these things, and it is said that she always ate and shared the meat she hunted.

Being a goddess of contradictions, she was the protectress of women in labor, but legends say that, just as fast, her arrows might bring sudden death to a woman while giving birth.

Artemis was known also to be a very possessive goddess, who would shower her wrath upon anyone who disobeyed her wishes, especially against her sacred animals. There is a story about how the great hero Agamemnon came upon the wrath of Artemis, when he killed a stag in her sacred grove. Much later she had her revenge by literally taking the winds out of his sails when he was about to leave for Troy. With no winds to sail his ships, he went to a seer, who told him that the only way Artemis would bring back the winds was for him to sacrifice his daughter! Some versions say he did sacrifice her to Artemis, and others say that Artemis was willing to exchange a deer in her place.

Presider over puberty and initiation rites:

It is said that when young girls reached puberty they were initiated into the cult of Artemis, BUT if they decided to marry, they were asked to lay in front of her altar with everything they owned that

represented their virginity/maidenhood, all of their toys and play things as well as any saved locks of hair. Once they got up, and upon her bidding, they were to leave everything behind and not look back. It should be noted that leaving was not considered a good nor a bad thing to do, just simply a rite of passage made by a maiden as she moved into her womanhood.

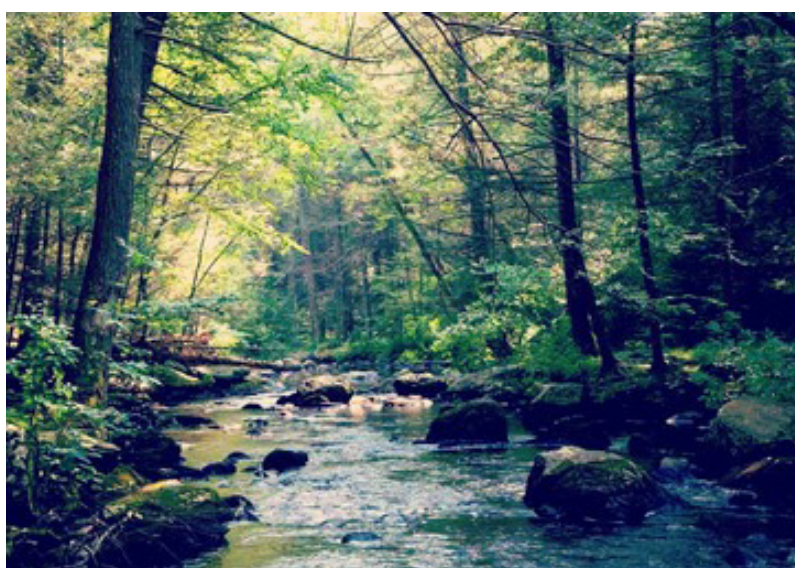
Artemis resides over transitions in a young maidens life, as no one really can tell a woman the moment she is no longer a maiden; for some it may be first menstruation, loss of virginity or consummation of sexuality, or for others it is childbirth. Artemis is associated with all of these things as an eternal “maiden” herself.

Her message is that we can never be fully tamed of our wild nature, for it lives deep within us and never goes away. The true time of our maidenhood lives in those wild moments before we knew the troubles womanhood would bring us.

Journey for your sacred object:

Begin by journeying into the sacred grove with your power animal. Take your time to cross the river that runs in front of the grove, and allow the river to take away all of your cares and worries, so that you can journey into the grove unencumbered. You may choose to do this each time you journey if you wish...

Once you enter the grove sit close to the apple tree or even lean up against it, but do not enter into it, for this journey you will be in the grove working with your animal guide and they will show you the answers to your questions.



You may also choose not to enter the grove, but instead to simply ask your guide to take you to your power object, and this can happen elsewhere in your lower earth.

In this journey you are looking for information about your medicine object as it relates to you as **Maiden**.

Your journey intent is: to seek a sacred object that will represent you as Maiden for your medicine bundle.

Once you know what the object is, you can go back in another journey and: **Ask to see, or understand the nature of this object to do with you as your Maiden self.**

Later, once you actually have the object in hand, please take another journey with it, asking:

What lessons of the maiden do you have for me at this time?

Once you have your object please place it into your medicine bundle and then place the bundle onto the altar that you have set up specifically for this work.

{**Please note:** if another/different question pushes though to be asked, please go with that question over the one I have written here. This is YOUR journey and so what I have written can, and should, be ignored when your own spirit calls for something else!}

Also: There is no wrong way to find a power object once it has been shown to you in your journey, I have had students see specific things and then only be able to find them on E-bay or Etsy. They ordered them and then cleansed them at home.



There are a few ways to cleanse your new object - one is to simply smudge it with the little pouch of smudge you received in your welcome package. Another way is to soak it in clear water, even better if it is a full moon night. You can place the water outside, with your object in it, asking the moon to cleanse it. If you live near a river or body of water, hold your object in your hand and allow the water to cleanse it.

Blood Mysteries

Please read the introduction and first chapter in your Moon Mysteries book.

In this first month we begin by simply getting your 13 moon charts photocopied and ready and marking on your chart your moon cycle for the month. If you would prefer we have a [pdf downloadable version](#) on-line at our website so you can use the printer in your home.

For women in the menopausal years:

If you have had a hysterectomy, or are either peri-menopausal (and your periods are sporadic), or fully menopausal, I still recommend using the chart for moods and emotions, adding in the horoscope aspect of it to gather information in a deeper way on your inner psyche.

It is also a good way for you to chart your moods and sexuality, as well as charting any patterns that may be happening with your cycle, as many women report feeling that their bodies continue, in a very subtle way, to “cycle” even after they cease bleeding.

If you have fully completed your menstrual time, also you may simply read through the book with the eye of the wise woman in mind, taking notes and noting things you may wish to offer younger women. Your approach to the book will be with the priestess in mind, in that, whatever you take in may be passed on.

