

# WE ALL WEAR MASKS

## Faces of Halloween Eve

**W**HEN THE SEASONS CHANGE and the air carries a chill, when the leaves turn red and the harvest is over, spirits of the dead and damned press against the membrane of our world. On Halloween Eve, they walk among mortals once more, haunting and wreaking havoc as they go. Our wise ancestors learned to disguise themselves as spirits and monsters to blend in with them, to avoid their attention.

Every Halloween Eve, we donned masks. We wore the faces of the dead and the monstrous. In doing so we were safe...but the longer we wore these masks, the more we risked becoming monstrous ourselves.



**WRITING** KIEL CHENIER  
**COLOR ART** KIM VAN DEUN  
**EDITING** JAMES J. HAECK  
**LAYOUT** ERIC LIFE-PUTNAM

This article features five new magic items: five masks inspired by Hallowe'en. These masks are for characters of any level, race, or class. Each mask lets its wearer wield a different horrific but useful power, perfect for a horror-themed Fifth Edition adventure, but varied enough to be useable in any kind of campaign.

Each mask features the following rules and worldbuilding details, useful for both players and Game Masters:

- ▶ The history of the mask.
- ▶ The benefits granted to the wearer.
- ▶ Places where the mask might be encountered, and NPCs who might be wearing them.
- ▶ Optional curses or drawbacks for Game Masters to use.

All of these magic masks are considered very rare wondrous items. Each requires attunement to use. A character cannot be attuned to more than one of these masks at a time. They each take an action to don or wear, adjusting the eyeholes or fit. They can be removed as a swift action.

## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

### THE GHOST HOOD

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this hood you can perceive invisible or intangible undead creatures (ghosts, specters, wraiths, banshees, etc.) as if they were solid and material. Undead creatures perceive you as being a similar undead as well, and are nonhostile unless you attack them or are clearly associated with a creature that is hostile to them.

Additionally, whenever you calculate the damage you would deal to an incorporeal undead creature, you ignore its damage resistances.

### Hallow's Eve

#### A Hallowe'en-inspired festival and holy day

Hallow's Eve is exactly what it sounds like: it is a Hallowe'en and fall harvest festival centered around the dead rising from the grave to walk amongst the living as ghosts, specters, ghouls, and other undead creatures. It is also a totemic day for other horror-themed monsters like hags, liches, flesh golems, witches, devils, and cultists of all kinds to carry out evil deeds and rituals out of sight of the deities who might normally keep them in check. Common people wear horrific masks and costumes to disguise and protect themselves from such monsters.

In addition, Hallow's Eve could feature any of the following traditions or effects in your game:

- ▶ Children wear costumes and roam from house to house, asking for candied treats and baked goods.
- ▶ Elves and dwarves might scoff at the idea of Hallow's Eve, whereas humans, halflings, and other races might embrace it fully.
- ▶ The evil primal power of the holy day saps divine magic of its power, so all divine spells suffer penalties or are cast with disadvantage. On the flip side, necromantic magic is buffed and cast with advantage.
- ▶ The barriers between the living, the dead, and the monstrous are broken down during the twilight hours of Hallow's Eve. Spells like *speak with dead* and *tongues* can be cast as rituals.
- ▶ Offerings of food and money are left on doorsteps and in graveyards for the dead; which thieves and goblins are quick to exploit.

**Appearance:** The *ghost hood* is a pure white linen sack with two prominent eye holes. Despite its rough appearance, it feels smooth like velvet and cold to the touch.

### Open Game Content

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**Background:** A Hallow's Eve tradition is to cut eye holes in white sheets to disguise yourself as a ghost. Years ago, a talented medium made such a disguise, but found that she could see spirits as plain as day while wearing it. Even after her death, the disguise retained this eerie magic. Over time the sheet became frayed and tattered, until only enough remained to cover the wearer's face as a mask.

This mask has been passed on by supernatural experts, shamans, and clerics who work to lay unquiet spirits to rest. It is often found in either consecrated places like churches, temples, or shrines, or in haunted locations.

**Optional Drawback:** Undead creatures of all kinds are drawn to the character attuned to the mask when it is not being worn. These creatures single out that character and attack them exclusively, driven to destroy the mask. The opposite is true when the mask is being worn.

## HAG MASK

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this mask you feel the bewitching powers of a green hag coursing through you. You can cast the following cantrips at will, requiring no material components: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*. The mask's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12).

This mask has 3 charges. While wearing it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *fear* spell (save DC 12). The mask regains 1 expended charge daily at midnight. If you expend the mask's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the mask shrivels away into nothingness and is destroyed.

**Appearance:** The hag mask looks like the leathery face and head of a green hag with warts and strands of hair. It has eyeholes and a mouth slit. In dim light or darkness, the mask is just realistic enough to fool some people into believing the wearer is an actual hag.

**Background:** The mask is the sliced off face skin and scalp of a green hag named Auntie Bittersweet. She lost a bet with her coven sisters, and the only way to remain part of the coven was

to cut off her own face. Taking it as a trophy, the other hags stitched it into a grotesque mask and imbuing it with magic.

This mask fell out of possession of the hags when their coven was destroyed by adventurers. Morbid collectors and wannabe witches have owned it in the past. The mask is currently on display in an oddity shop, its owner eager to sell it while being completely unaware of its magical properties.

**Optional Drawback:** Auntie Bittersweet the hag is still alive and still faceless. When a character wears the *hag mask*, Auntie Bittersweet can see and hear what the wearer does. Whenever the wearer uses its *fear* spell power, Auntie Bittersweet can speak through the wearer's mouth. She bides her time, collecting information on the wearer and taking every opportunity to poison their friendships. Auntie Bittersweet wants her face back, and she will eventually claim it once more.

## MASK OF THE SHAMED ROYAL

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

While wearing this comical mask you bring a sense of mirth to those around you, putting them at ease. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to interact with people who dislike the noble your mask depicts. Once per day, you can speak using the actual voice of the noble the mask is made to depict, allowing you to cast the *charm person* spell (save DC 12).

**Appearance:** This highly detailed mask is modeled after a notorious and generally disliked royal NPC (choose whichever NPC from your game that you think fits best). It covers the face and head entirely, with small eye holes and a larger hole for the mouth, complete with an attached wig styled and colored like the royal NPC's hair. The mask is not flattering, and when paired with a good vocal impression, it delights common people and nobles alike who share a distaste for that particular royal NPC.

**Background:** The mask was made by a court magician who served under the royal NPC but was unfairly dismissed. This court magician



loathed the royal, and crafted this mask to mock them during private parties. Being a magician, they figured a couple extra enchantments upon the mask couldn't hurt.

This mask is currently in the possession of a group of thieves working out of a dungeon. It can be made available to characters in a treasure chest in any dungeon thieves and bandits might occupy.

**Optional Drawback:** The mask has been saturated in negative energy from all of the mockery it has endured at the expense of the royal NPC it is modeled after. Every time the mask's *charm person* spell is used, there is a 10 percent chance the mask will permanently bond with the wearer's face, transforming their appearance into that of the royal NPC. Now the wearer physically appears to be the hated person they mocked.

## VISAGE OF THE VAMPIRE

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this vampire mask you are imbued with some of the traditional gothic powers of a vampire. This mask has 3 charges. While wearing it, you can use an action to expend one of its charges to use the vampire's shapechanger ability, and are able to transform into a bat or into a cloud of mist. The mask regains one expended charge daily at sunrise. If you expend the mask's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the mask shrivels away and is destroyed.

While wearing the mask, you have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls if in direct sunlight.

**Appearance:** This finely crafted porcelain mask is made to resemble a vampire lord's stony visage. It covers the face but leaves the mouth and chin exposed. While its porcelain is quite thin and fragile looking, it is heavy and cold upon the face and is seemingly unbreakable. It glows a faint green in darkness.

**Background:** The mask is a relic from a faraway gothic human country shrouded in mist. It was made to be worn during Hallow's Eve masquerade balls in its country of origin. How it came to rest so far away from its homeland is unknown.

This mask is currently in the possession of a travelling merchant woman who sells trinkets out of the back of her wagon. She will trade the mask for expensive wine or liquor or a pretty piece of jewelry. She seems eager to part with the mask, and as she leaves she calls out that "great and terrible things await any who wear it at night!"

**Optional Drawback:** The mask is modeled after a real vampire lord from another country. This vampire lord does not take kindly to others wearing his visage or using his powers without being a vampire themselves. Whenever you use the mask's shapechanger ability, make a Constitution saving throw (DC 12). Failure causes you to thirst for blood. Until you consume a pint of fresh blood, you have disadvantage on all ability checks, even once the mask is removed.

## THE SLASHED FACES

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this vampire mask you are overcome by rampant bloodlust and the urge to kill. Once per day, you may enter a Rage, as if you were a 1st level barbarian. The rage ends after 1 minute or if the mask is removed.

**Appearance:** This frightening mask is made from the human flesh and hair of three faces stitched together. It fits over the head completely, and has holes for the mouth, eyes, and nostrils. The mask's skin is leathery and shriveled, stained with dark splotches of blood. On the inside of the mask it smells strongly of blood and smoke.

**Background:** This mask is the twisted remains of three long dead murderers: a female human butcher known as Lysa the Slicer, a male dwarf called Urgeth Two-Teeth, and a male halfling only known as The Green Poisoner. A malevolent force exhumed their graves, removed their faces, and stitched them together into this vile murder mask. It retains the vile impulses of the killers it's fashioned from.

This mask currently lays upon an altar devoted to a death god in random dungeon, waiting to be claimed.

**Optional Drawback:** The mask's murderous personalities can assert themselves over the attuned wearer, even when the mask isn't being worn. Whenever the wearer uses its rage ability, there is a 20 percent chance that during the wearer's next long rest they are compelled to kill



in their sleep. The wearer sleepwalks, putting on the mask, and venturing out into the night to kill. The wearer doesn't perceive this happening, and wakes up with no memory of the random killing of a single stranger that they committed in the night. 