

LEGACY ITEM:

The Mask Of Seriphides

By Mike Bourke, Johnn Four, & Michael K Tumey



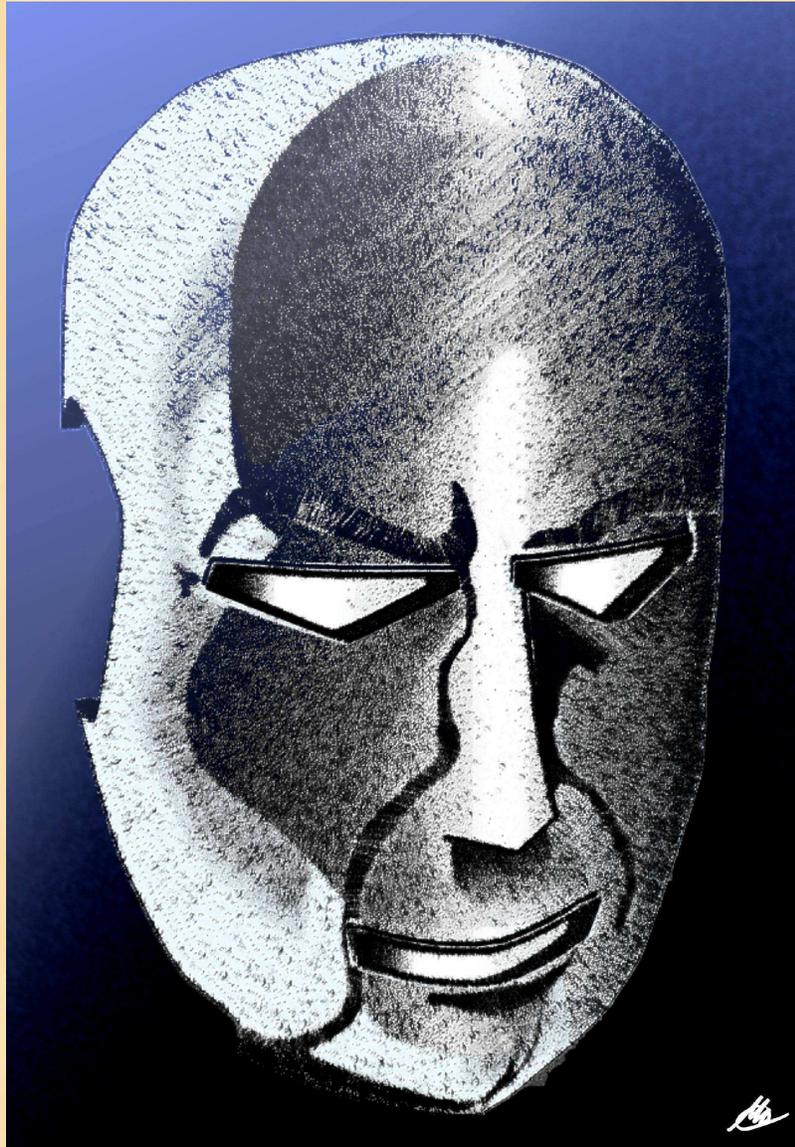
This is one of eight Legacy Items included in *Assassin's Amulet* which we are re-presenting here in a format optimized for use in play. There is no additional information included (other than this introduction); but the content is organized differently.

These supplements are organized into five parts. The first is this introduction. The second contains page(s) with the name, description, and an image of the item, as the typical PC would perceive it. The third part consists of a series of tables describing the Legacy Powers, with any appropriate notes – the first describes only the First Inheritance, the second describes both First and Second Inheritances, and so on. The fourth contains the history of the item, which is something a Player may discover – eventually. It also contains the pronunciation guide. The final part contains

the GM-only information that completes the Description of the Legacy Item.

Page Numberings have been manipulated throughout. This is not just one game supplement – it is nine. Each of the pages in section three has the SAME page number, so the player never needs to know that the Legacy Item contains a further power to be unlocked, or how long it will be until it happens. The GM simply hands the newly-printed page containing the additional Legacy Power to the player as a replacement for the one he already has. The remaining page numbers within the supplement are also tailored accordingly.

We have also included a page for additional notes, with NO page number showing. This can be printed as many times as necessary. Just print as many copies of the page as you need to contain the additional info for the player. Enjoy....



The Mask of Serephides

At first glance, or when not being worn, the mask reflects an expressionless face of silver embossed with curlicues.

Subsequent viewings of the mask suggest subtle emotions, according to the emotional state of the viewer (not the wearer). Reflected light on curlicue in one corner of the mouth might hint at a smirk, or at one corner of an eye might suggest a tear; a shadow across the brow might imply a frown; and so on.

After the owner has worn the mask regularly for some time, the expressions displayed may begin to reflect the emotional state of the wearer.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Total: 1			

Notes:

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes a calmness and clarity in stressful situations.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Total: 3			

Notes:

Following the Unlocking of the Second Inheritance, the mask (when worn) displays the emotions of the wearer perfectly, and even seems to transform itself to be more suggestive of the face of the possessor. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with complete certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes a calmness and clarity in stressful situations.

The character is sheltered from anger and rage. When exposed to situations that would provoke such emotions, he may make a Will save to avoid them, and each round that he experiences such emotions he may attempt such a saving throw to regain his composure. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	<i>Hatred:</i> mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Total: 6			

Notes:

The mask when worn displays the emotions of the wearer perfectly, and even seems to transform itself to be more suggestive of the face of the possessor. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with complete certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes a calmness and clarity in stressful situations.

The character is sheltered from anger and rage. When exposed to situations that would provoke such emotions, he may make a Will save to avoid them, and each round that he experiences such emotions he may attempt such a saving throw to regain his composure. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

The character is sheltered from hatred and may make a Will Save to avoid the effects of prejudice in any form, including the pre-judgment of circumstances and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of clear proof of intent and action, he must fail such a saving throw before he can take violent or precipitous action of any kind.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	<i>Hatred:</i> mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Fourth	4	3	<i>Sorrow, regret and outrage:</i> mask must be worn at least 9 hours/day; any staff becomes Rod of Lordly Might when held, 1/day per level gained thereafter
Total: 9			

Notes:

The mask when worn displays the emotions of the wearer perfectly, and even seems to transform itself to be more suggestive of the face of the possessor. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes calmness clarity in stressful situations.

The character does not feel anger or rage except when he fails a Will save, and may attempt further saving throws to regain his composure each round after experiencing such emotions. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

The character is sheltered from hatred and may make a Will Save to avoid the effects of prejudice in any form, including the pre-judgment of circumstances and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of clear proof of intent and action, he must fail such a saving throw before he can take violent or precipitous action of any kind.

Notes (cont):

The character is relatively unaffected by sorrow, regret, and outrage, getting a WILL save to remain dispassionate when confronted by any of these or circumstances which might lead to their being experienced. He must fail a WILL save to

determine that someone has been 'sufficiently punished' or to contemplate any form of extenuating circumstances.

Good aligned characters will shift alignment towards Neutrality.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	<i>Hatred:</i> mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Fourth	4	3	<i>Sorrow, regret and outrage:</i> mask must be worn at least 9 hours/day; any staff becomes Rod of Lordly Might when held 1/day per level gained thereafter
Fifth	3	3	<i>Joy and pleasure:</i> mask can be removed for no more than 3 hrs/day and while sleeping; +2 Str, +2 Int
Total: 12			

Notes:

The mask when worn displays the emotions of the wearer perfectly, and even seems to transform itself to be more suggestive of the face of the possessor. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes calmness clarity in stressful situations.

The character does not feel anger or rage except when he fails a Will save, and may attempt further saving throws to regain his composure each round after experiencing such emotions. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

Notes (cont):

The character is sheltered from hatred and may make a Will Save to avoid the effects of prejudice in any form, including the pre-judgment of circumstances and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of clear proof of intent and action, he must fail such a saving throw before he can take violent or precipitous action of any kind.

The character is generally unaffected by sorrow, regret, and outrage, getting a Will save to remain dispassionate when confronted by any of these or circumstances which might lead to their being experienced. He must fail a WILL save to determine that someone has been 'sufficiently punished' or to contemplate any form of extenuating circumstance.

The character is unable to experience Joy or Passion unless he fails a Will Save. His daily existence is one of routine and habit. He must fail a Will save to feel enthusiasm for any activity, and in general will not bestir himself to act or intervene (only to react to circumstance) unless friends or family are threatened directly. When he does act, he will disregard hurt caused to anyone other than friends or family except after failing a Will Save, and in general be completely implacable until his objective is achieved.

All characters shift towards Neutral Evil alignment.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	<i>Hatred:</i> mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Fourth	4	3	<i>Sorrow, regret and outrage:</i> mask must be worn at least 9 hours/day; any staff becomes Rod of Lordly Might when held 1/day per level gained thereafter
Fifth	3	3	<i>Joy and pleasure:</i> mask can be removed for no more than 3 hrs/day and while sleeping; +2 Str, +2 Int
Sixth	3	3	<i>Friendship and companionship:</i> mask can be removed for no more than 1 hr/day and while sleeping; +2 Con, +2 Wis
Total: 15			

Notes:

The mask when worn resembles the face of the possessor but is now as expressionless as it was when first obtained. Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes calmness clarity in stressful situations.

The character does not feel anger or rage except when he fails a Will save, and may attempt further saving throws to regain his composure each round after experiencing such emotions. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

Notes (cont):

The character is sheltered from hatred and may make a Will Save to avoid the effects of prejudice in any form, including the prejudice of circumstances and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of clear proof of intent and action, he must fail such a saving throw before he can take violent or precipitous action of any kind.

The character is generally unaffected by sorrow, regret, and outrage, getting a Will save to remain dispassionate when confronted by any of these or circumstances which might lead to their being experienced. He must fail a WILL save to determine that someone has been 'sufficiently punished' or to contemplate any form of extenuating circumstance.

The character is unable to experience Joy or Passion unless he fails a Will Save. His daily existence is one of routine and habit. He must fail a Will save to feel enthusiasm for any activity, and in general will not bestir himself to act or intervene (only to react to circumstance).. When he does act, he will disregard hurt caused to anyone else except after failing a Will Save, and in general is completely implacable until his objective is achieved.

The character is incapable of feeling friendship or companionship. He feels no kinship with anything else, alive or dead; all that is left to him is Loyalty and Duty. Past ambitions are pursued without out of habit and *nobless oblige*, not because the character especially cares any more.

Nor is the character capable of regretting what he has lost.

The character is ruthless to the point of being sociopathic when roused He no longer has any sense of proportion and will burn down a city if that is the only way to achieve the objective, barring the gates to ensure that the target does not escape.

The character retains his intellect, and will not act violently without reason, but if he has reason, the act of violence which will achieve his goals or the goals of those to whom he is loyal will be undertaken.

The character is now Neutral Evil in alignment.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	2	1	<i>Fear and excitability:</i> mask must be worn at least 1 hr/day; +1 to saves vs. Fear, +1 to hit, longsword added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Second	3	2	<i>Anger and rage:</i> mask must be worn at least 3 hrs/day; +1 to any command/leadership check, +1 to critical threat range, +2 Str, battleaxe added to list of permitted weapons if not already a class feature
Third	4	3	<i>Hatred:</i> mask must be worn at least 6 hrs/day; Weapons Proficiency: Martial Weapons conferred if not already possessed; if wielder already has this class ability/feat, character receives a bonus feat in addition to any other feats received
Fourth	4	3	<i>Sorrow, regret and outrage:</i> mask must be worn at least 9 hours/day; any staff becomes Rod of Lordly Might when held 1/day per level gained thereafter
Fifth	3	3	<i>Joy and pleasure:</i> mask can be removed for no more than 3 hrs/day and while sleeping; +2 Str, +2 Int
Sixth	3	3	<i>Friendship and companionship:</i> mask can be removed for no more than 1 hr/day and while sleeping; +2 Con, +2 Wis
Seventh	6	4	<i>Love and loyalty:</i> mask can no longer be removed; +4 Cha; confers Leadership feat (stacks with existing Leadership feat if any); character becomes completely ruthless in pursuit of any remaining goal.
Total: 19			

Notes:

Those wearing the mask are instantly recognizable and yet anonymous, for they can never be identified with certainty.

When suppressing an emotional state, the mask will suggest that the wearer is experiencing the emotion at appropriate times, as though it is feeling the emotion on behalf of the wearer, so that they are not distracted by the sensation.

Notes (cont):

The character is sheltered from Fear and Excitability, remaining calm in circumstances where he might otherwise be nervous. He exudes calmness clarity in stressful situations.

The character does not feel anger or rage except when he fails a Will save, and may attempt further saving throws to regain his composure each round after experiencing such emotions. If the circumstances are such that he already gains the benefit of a saving throw, he gains a +1 to that saving throw instead.

The character is sheltered from hatred and may make a Will Save to avoid the effects of prejudice in any form, including the pre-judgment of circumstances and circumstantial evidence. In the absence of clear proof of intent and action, he must fail such a saving throw before he can take violent or precipitous action of any kind.

The character is generally unaffected by sorrow, regret, and outrage, getting a Will save to remain dispassionate when confronted by any of these or circumstances which might lead to their being experienced. He must fail a WILL save to determine that someone has been 'sufficiently punished' or to contemplate any form of extenuating circumstance.

The character is unable to experience Joy or Passion unless he fails a Will Save. His daily existence is one of routine and habit. He must fail a Will save to feel enthusiasm for any activity, and in general will not bestir himself to act or intervene (only to react to circumstance).. When he does act, he will disregard hurt caused to anyone else except after failing a Will Save, and in general is completely implacable until his objective is achieved.

The character is incapable of feeling friendship or companionship. He feels no kinship or association with anyone or anything else. No cause matters. The character must fail a Will save in order to experience any emotion at all, and will pursue past ambitions without vigor or activity and out of habit alone.

The character is ruthless to the point of being sociopathic. He no longer has any sense of proportion and will burn down a city if that is the only way to achieve the objective, barring the gates to ensure that the target does not escape.

The character retains his intellect, and will not act violently without reason, but if he has reason, the act of violence which will achieve his goals or the goals of those to whom he is loyal will be undertaken.

The character is now Neutral Evil in alignment.

Origins & History

The Mask is the Legacy of The Cloisters of Shahd'rah, a minor order of monks who eschewed all passion and emotion, believing these were temptations to stray from the path of purity.

The monks frequently wore anonymous masks without discernable features as a barrier against emotional temptation when interacting with other members of the order.

The monks of the Cloister of Shahd'rah* had a profound impact on other religious thinking of their era, specifically addressing the question of whether emotion and passion are good or evil by nature. Some came to believe passions were the gift of the gods, and darker emotions were a perversion or corruption of this gift; they became hedonistic (to the greater glory of the gods, of course). Others avowed that passions were a curse of the devils and demons that warred with the gods for power over the populace at large, and the influence of the gods twisted the curse to create the positive emotions; they preached abstention. At the heart of the philosophical debate was the question of the isolated savage who remained untouched by the machinations of either side: would his natural inclinations be those of the beast, or of an angel? Did man begin life as a pure spirit and become corrupted by outside machinations, or was life a struggle to elevate oneself above baser instincts?

Neither side was ever in a position to establish theological dominance over the other. In time, a position of moderation became the norm, as other points of debate became more strident. However, before this balance was achieved, various groups adopted extreme positions on the issue, and both positions were manipulated and turned

to their own advantage by the forces of darkness.

The Assassins of Shahd'rah were one group that grew out of this manipulation. They named themselves after the monkish Order, and were nihilists who believed passion was a curse and inseparable from life, and that it must be burned off the mortal world one life at a time. Eliminating the most passionate and emotional removed more than the average concentration of evil from the world, leaving the balance that much closer to perfection.

The history grows confused at the point of formation of the Assassins; not only were the two frequently associated in the minds of the commons of the time, but the Assassins actively pursue the destruction of all documents pertaining to their existence or activities, and many record keepers maintained any distinction between the assassins and the monkish order from which they drew inspiration.

Only one document from the past addresses the assassins specifically, and it describes their nature and philosophy, nothing more. It can be speculated the assassins were formed around an extremist splinter of the monks, perhaps a lay brother or unfrocked monk.

Some say every extreme perspective creates its own antithesis, pushing uncommitted moderates further in the opposite direction until a breakaway of extremists forms holding the opposite position to that of the originating group. This was certainly the case with the Assassins of Shahd'rah.

An order of paladins who affirmed the value of life above all formed in the name of the goddess Cyrene to oppose the evil of "the waking dead." The Knights of the Nine Points, whose symbol was a Stag Rampant

with nine points on its antlers, began a series of skirmishes and confrontations. The knights proved to be just as obsessive, violent and un-compromising in pursuit of their agenda.

How the monks met their end is a matter of speculation amongst the historians who care about such details, but no one has ever confirmed them. The historical record hopelessly entangles and confuses the Monks with the Assassins at this point.

All that is known for certain is that a demon who often goes by the name of Ny'tarreth was involved, and that the final days of the monks' order were filled with murder and betrayal.

Fifty years after the monks vanished into the pages of history, a minor noble commissioned the famed artisan Serephides to create the mask for a costumed banquet, a popular event amongst the nobility a century and a half ago...

Pronunciation guide

Serephides: Ser-eff-id-ees

Shahd'rah: Sh-ah-de-rah

Ny'tarreth: Nikt-ar-eth

GM Information Section

Further History

There is clearly a lot of more modern history to be incorporated into the background of the Mask.

Just some of the unanswered questions to consider are:

- What happened to the minor noble, and who was he or she?
- What did possession of the Mask drive him to do?
- What happened to the mask afterwards? Where has it been for the last 150 years?
- What happened to Ny'tarreth?
- If he survived, what has he been doing since?
- What happened to the Knights Of The Nine Points?
- What have they been doing since the destruction of the Assassins of Shahd'rah?
- What, if anything, do the Assassins of Shahd'rah have to do with the Hands of Cyrene?

Because this information will ultimately have to integrate with the established history of the campaign world, the answers to these questions has been left to the GM.

In play

The mask is especially tempting to rogues, assassins and fighters, but any class can use it. Bonding to it is comparatively easy. At lower levels, it shelters the wearer from the experience of strong emotions, starting with fear. It brings a sense of calm and clarity greatly prized in desperate situations, but over time, it exacts a terrible price from the wearer. As Inheritances are Unlocked, one after another, the mask leeches the capacity to feel emotion from the wielder until he becomes a dispassionate shell, capable of the most extreme ruthlessness imaginable without regret or empathy. In order, the emotions lost are fear and excitability; anger and rage; hatred; sorrow, regret and outrage; joy and pleasure; friendship and companionship; and finally, love and loyalty.

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Ignore the feelings of a friend
- Remain calm when you should be angry
- Treat an enemy as a friend

Mid level:

- Attend a funeral and feel no sympathy for anyone present
- Commit an act against your nature
- Destroy an artistic masterpiece

High level:

- Betray an alliance
- Humiliate a friend
- Betray an oath taken sincerely

Designer's notes: The Mask of Seriphedes

At early levels, this is a typical Legacy Item, though it has illustrative features. It is unusual insofar as each Inheritance has a specific title and personality effect. Players would normally decide personality alterations, and the use of specific titles and effects at regular intervals always seems to emphasize the mechanics of the process, which are good reasons not to do it this way.

From the fifth Inheritance onward, the requirement to wear the mask most of the time is a sufficiently onerous penalty that I

applied an additional -1 power ranking. The seventh Inheritance comes with an extreme personality restriction that might be sufficient to render a character an NPC, so I awarded it an additional -1 ranking.

This illustrates how additional penalties or restrictions imposed on the wielder by the nature of the Legacy should affect the overall power of the Legacy Item.

The following page can be printed to provide additional notes to a player who has come into possession of Mask Of Seriphedes.

The font used for body text in the other pages of notes is **Book Antiqua, 10 pt**, which should be available on any Windows system.

Note that the page numbering earlier assumes that there will be one page produced in this way for Inheritances 1 through 4 (Legacy Power 5 is the first one to require a second page of notes).

Notes (cont):

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