

# The Twelve Inscrutable Masks of the Dark Zodiac

By definition, we know very little about what happened prior to the invention of writing and the keeping of records. Ever wonder that this may be deliberate? That writing itself might have been a desperate weapon, wielded by people who needed to learn a new way of thinking before they were eaten by the all too seen, and the dangerously definable?

There aren't many relics from that time, but the Twelve Inscrutable Masks of the Dark Zodiac (and **bless** Victorian occultists for that particularly hideous, and power-sapping description) would be unique, even if every other item from that horribly different time before writing still survived. Each mask appears to be crudely made from limestone, and each one has a suitably lurid imaginary god, fabricated constellation, and quite real power associated with it:

- Kritchatter the Rat-God (Rat, Contagion): The wearer of this mask commands all rodents, and they bring him wealth without bidding.

- The Jester in the Smoke (Jester, Delirium): This mask gives its wearer the power to make any man laugh until the Jester wills that he stop, or the man dies.
- Barbed Matriarch (Childless Mother, Murder): only a woman may wear this mask, and while she wears it all she can either ensure a safe birth -- or prevent it.
- Maureznok the Liar (Liar, Lies): When wearing this mask, every word that the wearer utters is a lie -- and every lie is believed.
- The Anticipatory Reaper (Death, Dying): Those who don this mask know the easiest and safest way to kill anyone that they see.
- The Seducing Gibbon (Seducer, Lust): Wearing this mask gives its owner the ability to engender irresistible lust in anyone -- but only towards someone that that person truly hates or loathes.
- Click-click-click! (Skeleton, Gluttony): The one who wears this mask will know what strange hungers lurk under the surface of any person the wearer sees.
- Rotun the Imbecilic (Fool, Stupidity): Those who put on this mask discover that they can will that a crowd of people become each as smart as the crowd's stupidest member.
- Tongue-Ripped Wraith (Mute, Silence): Wearers of this mask can make a man forget how to talk. Forever.

- Still-born Angel (Child, Secrets): This mask can be only worn by a child: its wearer can look at a person and know what secrets that person would rather die than reveal.
- Consumer of Life (King, Order): Only a man may don this mask. He may order women to engage in bitter strife with agents of the Consumer of Death.
- Consumer of Death (Queen, Chaos): Only a woman may don this mask. She may order women to engage in bitter strife with agents of the Consumer of Life.

...Yes, none of this really makes any sense; neither does the associated 'theology,' constellations, or even (absolutely made-up) folk traditions surrounding it. That is entirely the point. By coming up with this collection of bizarre, yet frighteningly powerful, set of powers the aforementioned British occultists were trying to keep the **true** powers of the Twelve Inscrutable Masks from activating. Because if those ever do, then... well, it's entirely possible that a respectable percentage of the population would survive the transformation of the entire perceived universe into something else. But whoever did would be permanently inhuman, in a very real sense that transcends mere genetics and physiology. Mere mad arcane duels in the occult underworld seemed like the less dangerous option.

And it worked. We know this, because the world has not ended. However, there's another group out there who is now trying the insanely risky stratagem of trying to define the Twelve Inscrutable Masks in terms of our existing [scientific-materialist paradigm](#). It may work, too -- and more permanently. But if it doesn't, things could get bad. Very, very bad. Bad enough that the reward may not justify the risk.

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