

## UNDER THE MASK

BY WHITNEY "STRIX" BELTRÁN

**Content Warning:** This scenario contains themes of child-birth, death and stillbirth

### WITNESS

*Akundayo* is a priest of the Dogon people in the village of Sanga. He is the priest of stillborn children and women dying in childbirth. He is an elder and keeper of deep knowledge. He is open, friendly, and sober, but has a hard, unpredictable streak. His source of strength is his *resilience*. His personality trait is *crafty*.

### OTHER CHARACTERS

- ⊙ *Déni* is a woman in her third trimester of pregnancy. She is fierce and proud, but secretly afraid there is something wrong with her baby. She will do anything to ensure its health.
- ⊙ *Gana* is a 17 year hunter who wishes to gain the esteem of his elders. He recently tried his hand at creating a sacred amulet, which is strung on a leather thong and covered with dried blood.
- ⊙ *Koguem* is an old and sickly blacksmith. He has not aged well and is sour tempered. He is deeply afraid of women and their power to pollute.
- ⊙ *Awa* is young and unmarried, but has a scar across the bridge of her nose, earned when she fell into a fire as a child. Many people avoid her, and her parents have struggled to arrange a suitable marriage.

### LOCATION AND ERA

The village of Sanga lies in Dogon territory in West Africa, before European colonization. Life here is materially simple, but spiritually very complex. The Dogon live in a world of rich symbolism and intricate ritual. It is a place of red earth by day, and at night the sky is filled with the tremendous weight of stars.

### OTHER LOCATIONS

- ⊙ *The old men's granary* - The village has a men's granary and a women's granary. Some years ago the men's granary was struck by lightning and heavily damaged. It now stand dilapidated and empty.
- ⊙ *The moaning cave* - a secret place concealed amongst nearby cliffs. The cave has swallowed up a spirit. The spirit is trapped at its bottom and calls out to be set free. No one goes near it.
- ⊙ *The strange bushes* - Near the village a new and unfamiliar kind of scrub bush has started growing. Its leaves are a diseased orange, and its sap is a thick, dark ichor. Many dead animals have been found among the thicket's spiny branches.
- ⊙ *The poisoned water* - Something has polluted the spring and made many people ill. The youngest and the weakest died. Babies born soon after were silent and lifeless. The spiritual leader, the Hogon, has tried to cleanse it, unsuccessfully.

### SPECIAL CARDS

- ⊙ Warped Bodies
- ⊙ Sorcery
- ⊙ A hostile group
- ⊙ A strange location
- ⊙ Flashback

*Quality of the  
artistry appears to be  
superior in the older  
buildings, degenerating  
in the newer ones.*

*Progressive decadence  
of their art led to  
Constantine-like hoarding of  
art from earlier periods.*

*Wars with octopus-headed  
interlopers, Shoggoth slaves,  
space fungi... is there no  
end to this bizarre?*

**UNDER THE MASK: SAMPLE CLUES**

- ⊙ The blood pouring out of a sacrificed goat is yellow.
- ⊙ An unknown dancer enters the mask ceremony for the dead, with a mask that is familiar and yet no one can name.
- ⊙ All of the sacred amulets in the village disappear.
- ⊙ The hunters return with strange bruises and can't - or won't - explain where they came from.
- ⊙ A child is born with a sickly yellow caul.
- ⊙ A child is born but taken away in a hurry, before anyone - even the mother - can look at it.
- ⊙ Something panics the normally-placid herd, and they flee into the hills.
- ⊙ A secretive gathering of women, held late at night.
- ⊙ Remains of a ceremony not sanctioned by the elders.
- ⊙ A gourd filled with a pungent blue liquid.
- ⊙ Koguem's blacksmith's tools go missing, then are secretly returned with deep gouges in them.
- ⊙ The millet stores are invaded by a purple fungus that nobody has ever seen before.

*It seems the Shoggoths began to show independent and malevolent thought, culminating in a rebellion and later re-subjugation.*

*They appear to have a peculiar dread of the westward mountains, and of something that came down the river from there.*

*Mural maps show tunnels connecting the city to the underwater city.*