

## The Haitian Goatskins of Sabatina Achille

In the early 1970's, anyone who was actively practicing occultism (*Mediums and Spiritualists* in particular) had heard of the name "Sabatina Achille". Sabatina was a Haitian vodouist who was said to regularly make contact with an ancient African god. While this Sabatina concurred that she conversed with this god regularly, she refused to reveal his name. She would only say that his power in the spirit world is potent and would sometimes bleed into the physical world while communicating with her.

Only a scant few of her close friends and high ranking vodouists were ever allowed to attend her communication ceremonies and were sworn to secrecy of her methods of contact. One of them did say once while heavily intoxicated that when she spoke to "her" god, he would communicate through the body of one of the goat's she'd sacrifice during the ceremony. He also said that these carcasses were forever permeated with a morsel of the god's power. Sabatina would then salvage as much of the goat's body as she could; the bones, skull, teeth and skin in particular. What she didn't need she would sell, and her goods became particularly popular in the occultist community.

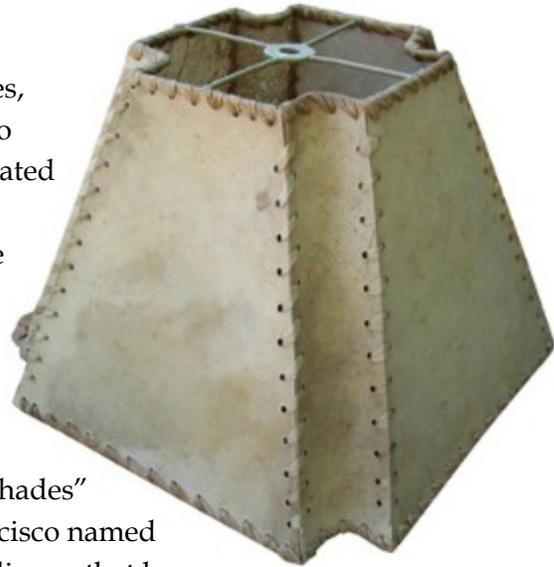
However, she refused to ship her goods; her "goat goods" were only available for sale in a little tourist shop area in some small town in the middle of Haiti. This required interested parties to come to her directly before a couple of savvy Haitian businessmen started buying her good to ship themselves (at an increased cost). Those who are still alive and remember her (there aren't many) say that Sabatina became one of the 'richest' people in her village as many occultists and collectors of oddities wanted her goat goods.

It's worth noting that Haitian goatskin products were commonly exported to the United States for a long time and included bongo drums, wineskins, hassocks, small rugs, decorative wall coverings (mosaics), "Balancers", ladies' purses and unfinished goatskin hides. That changed however on May the 1st, 1974 when the **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission** warned the nation that "goatskin products imported from Haiti may be contaminated with anthrax spores". The **U.S. Centers for Disease Control** discovered that some of these products had indeed contained deadly anthrax spores after a U.S. tourist contracted cutaneous anthrax after purchasing contaminated bongo drums made of untreated goatskin during a visit to Haiti. All Haitian goatskin products in the U.S. were recalled, although no fatalities were ever reported.

After only a few years of fame, Sabatina's goods suddenly became virtually impossible to acquire in the United States (where the majority of buyers came from). In time black marketers and sneaky business practices would have found a way to circumvent the recall, but Sabatina died shortly afterwards. As no one knew her ceremonial practices, much less the name of her god to attempt to replicate her skins, Sabatina's goatskins became a thing of occult lore and legend.

## The Sabatina Lampshades

Sabatina dealt primarily in unfinished goatskin hides, leaving it to artisans and craftsmen to turn them into usable products. In most cases these goods were created for use in occult ceremonial items like drums, wineskins, gloves, rugs and the like. However, none of these items have any true value to them. Ironically the only handcrafted item(s) ever known to have any real occult value today are a few dozen items that are called “**The Sabatina Lampshades**”.



In reality they should be called “The Charlie Lampshades” as they were created by a starving artist in San Francisco named Charlie Best. Those who recall anything about Charlie say that he was a “leftover hippie from the Summer of Love”. Coming from a military family who hated his hippie lifestyle, Charlie stayed in San Francisco after the summer of ‘67 to become one of the many starving artists residing there for years before finally giving it up and leaving town for parts unknown. No one knows how Charlie got his hands on any of Sabatina’s goatskins to make the lampshades or if he knew of their significance. That is known is that these lampshades have certain powers, including the following:

-If you create or alter an existing table lamp to hold a candle, and then light that candle through either magical means or a Firewalker’s **Create Fire** ability and then cover it with one of Sabatina’s Lampshades, the bleak orange-yellow light that emanates from the lamp illuminates “those that can’t be seen”. In short, the light from Sabatina’s Lampshades imitates the **See the Invisible** psychic ability! The area of effect is only about a thirty to forty foot radius around the lampshade, but it’s still an impressive ability none the less.

-Depending on your point of view or the timing of the situation at hand this ability can be a blessing or a curse, but people who stand in the light of the lampshade are provided protection via the **Mind Block** psychic ability. This includes the +1 save vs. all psychic and mental attacks.

-The lampshades are most beneficial to **Firewalkers** and **Psychic Sensitive** types. When the lamp is properly lit and the appropriate psychic is within its range of illumination, the following abilities cost one less I.S.P. to perform.

For **Firewalkers** this includes **Burnt Message**, **Burst of Light**, **Fire Omen** (by reading the flickering light casted upon the lampshade), **Shed Light**, **Snatch Fire**, and **Throw Fire** (note that the last three abilities require snatching the tongue of fire from of the lamp, snuffing it out in the process).

Sensitive abilities include **Commune with Spirits**, **Dispel Spirits**, **Object Read**, **Psychic Literacy**, **See Aura**, **Speed Reading**, **P.P.E. Shield**, **Thought Reading** and **Total Recall**. Note that all of these abilities must be performed while within the lamp light and those that might be affected by these abilities must also be illuminated in the light.

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**Hypnotic Suggestion** can be attempted in this same manner, but the recipient gets the +1 save vs. psionics bonus due to the lampshade's influence.

At this time there are about a dozen of Sabatina's Lampshades known to exist. A few of them tend to circulate around the occult market, a few of them are owned by members of the Lazlo Society and others are held in private collections. That being said, it's believed that there are more out there. In fact, one of them was discovered in an estate sale just outside of San Francisco a few years ago, while another was found in a small town antique store in Ohio last year. It's a matter of knowing what to look for when you come across an old goatskin lampshade.

**Lore note:** If looking at or trying to determine if a lampshade is an actual "Sabatina Lampshade", the viewer/researcher must attempt a **Lore: Magic Arcana** skill roll with a -20% penalty if the PC hasn't seen one before (Charlie used particular style in his work). A failed roll could mean that it's not a Sabatina Lampshade, but it could also mean that the observer isn't sure and needs someone of experience to take a look at it.

Note that properly lighted Sabatina Lampshade won't guarantee proof of what it is as invisible beings might not be in its illumination at that moment, and investigating or observing psychic abilities to determine authenticity is the same as being "Under the Microscope", meaning that the lampshade's bonuses won't always work in this manner (see page 31 of BTS-2 for details).

It's also worth noting that the lampshades are fragile and should be carried around in a protective box or case and kept within them when not in use. If damaged somehow, a successful **General Repair and Maintenance, Leather Working** and **Sewing** skill roll could repair it. If not, a successful **Salvage** skill roll could collect enough unbroken lampshade/goatskin to repair a second broken one. A **Jury Rig** skill could get the lampshade to work, but decrease the range of illumination by 1D6x10% until it's properly repaired.

**Debunker note:** Any debunker will tell you that Sabatina had a brilliant scheme going for herself in the last few years of her life. The before mentioned people who knew her also shared that before becoming famous Sabatina was an impoverished widow who made her living by raising goats. She only began to 'communicate' with her secret god a few years before she died, and was successful enough that she didn't have to raise goats anymore, opting to buy them from others instead. It's no secret that she enjoyed her fame and the wealth it brought her. It's also no coincidence after she died that several other goatskin sellers in Haiti began to claim that her god now communicated with them and empowered their goatskins. Of course none of these other goatskins have ever proven to have any occult value.

**Designing note:** The **Sabatina Lampshades** were an accidental discovery and an unknown success for a long time. As Sabatina sold skulls, teeth and bones as well as goatskin hides, there could be other occult items out there that provide some occult or paranormal related use or unique ability. There might be other items that were crafted for a specific purpose (and do what they were created for), or they might be collecting dust in a second hand store, flea market, garage sale, or estate sale, waiting to be discovered by the right person.

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