

The Haitian Goat Hides of Sabatina Achille

In the early 1970's, anyone actively practicing occultism (Parapsychologists, Arcanists, Acolytes, Mediums and spiritualists in particular) knew of, or had at least heard of a woman named *Sabatina Achille*. Sabatina raised goats for meat and hides all her life, but was also a Haitian voodooist who was said to make regular contact with an ancient god. While Sabatina concurred that she conversed with this god, she refused to reveal its name, only offering that the power of this "spirit world god" is potent. Its power was so potent in fact that it sometimes bled into "the living world" while communicating with her.

Only a few of her close friends and high ranking vodouists were ever allowed to attend her communication ceremonies and all were sworn to secrecy of her methods of contact. One of them did say once (while heavily intoxicated) that when she spoke to this god, it would communicate with her through the body of a goat she'd sacrifice during the ceremony. This eyewitness also said that these possessed carcasses were then permeated with a morsel of the god's power. Sabatina would then salvage and preserve as much of the goat's body as she could; their hides in particular. What she didn't need she'd sell at market, and her goods became popular in the occultist community.

At first her goods were near impossible to get as Sabatina refused to ship them; they were only available at a little tourist shopping area in the middle of Haiti. This required interested parties to come to her directly until a couple of savvy Haitian businessmen started buying her good to sell and ship themselves (at an increased cost). Those still alive and remember her (there aren't many) say that Sabatina became one of the wealthiest people in her small village as many occultists and collectors of oddities wanted her goods.

It's worth noting that Haitian goat hides and skin 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 goats hides. That changed however on May 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 handful of famed years, Sabatina's goods suddenly became near impossible to acquire in the United States (where the majority of buyers were from). While sneaky business practices found ways to circumvent the recall in time, Sabatina died shortly afterwards. As no one knew her ceremonial practices (and therefore couldn't replicate them), much less the name of the god that infused her goats with its power, *Sabatina's goods* became a thing of occult lore and legend.

The Sabatina Lampshades

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



In reality they should be called *The Charlie Lampshades* as they were all crafted by a starving artist & craftsman in San Francisco named *Charlie Hess*. 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 for parts unknown. No one knows how Charlie got his hands on any of Sabatina’s goat hides to make the lampshades or if he even knew of their significance. What **is** known is that these lampshades have certain magical properties than provide psychic benefits, including the following:

-If you create or alter an existing table lamp to hold a candle or flammable light source, light it through either magical means or psychic ability (like the 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 within a twenty-foot radius around the lampshade, but it’s still an impressive ability.

-Those who stand in the light of the lampshade are provided with a sort of psychic protection that works identical to the **Mind Block** psychic ability. This includes the +1 save vs. all psychic and mental attacks bonus. Depending on the timing or the situation at hand, this ability can be a blessing or a curse, but it’s still a useful feature.

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

Firewalkers: 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 Psychics: includes **Commune with Spirits, Dispel Spirits, Object Read, Psychic Literacy, See Aura, Speed Reading, P.P.E. Shield, Thought Reading** and **Total Recall**. Note that these abilities must be performed within the lamp's range of illumination and those items/beings that might be affected by these abilities must also be illuminated. **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 about a dozen of Sabatina's Lampshades are known to exist. A few of them tend to circulate around the occult market, some of them are owned by members of the **Lazlo Society** while others are held in private collections. That being said, it's believed that more are out there. In fact, one 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, and how to look for them when you come across an old goatskin lampshade (the **object read** or **sense magic** abilities are the best methods of confirming them).

Lore note: When 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 as Charlie used a 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 with more experience to take a look at it. Also note that a properly lit Sabatina Lampshade won't guarantee its authenticity as invisible beings might not be within its range of illumination at the moment, and investigating or observing psychic abilities to determine its authenticity is the same as being *Under the Microscope*, meaning that the lampshade's bonuses won't usually 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 transported in a protective box or case and kept inside them when not in use. If damaged, a successful **General Repair and Maintenance**, or **Leather Working** and/or **Sewing** skill roll could repair it. If not, a successful **Salvage** skill roll could collect enough unbroken lampshade/goatskin to repair another damaged/broken one. A **Jury Rig** skill could get the lampshade to work, but decrease the range of illumination by 1D4x10% until it's properly repaired.

Debunker note: Any debunker will tell you that Sabatina had a good scheme going for herself in the last few years of her life. The before mentioned people who knew her all claimed that before becoming famous Sabatina was an impoverished widow who was barely surviving on her goat raising livelihood. She only began to 'communicate' with her "conveniently secret god" the last several years of her life, but was successful enough that she didn't have to raise goats anymore, opting to purchase them from others instead. It's no secret that Sabatina enjoyed her occult fame and the wealth it brought her. It's also no coincidence that after she died, several other hide sellers in Haiti began claiming that her god was now communicating with them and was empowered their goat hides. None of these other goat hides (as yet) have ever proven to have any magic properties.

Nega-Psychic note: As expected, the magical properties of the Sabatina Lampshades DO NOT function when a Nega-Psychic is present.

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 goat hides, there could be other occult items out there that provide some sort of occult or paranormal related benefit or unique ability. There may very well be other items that were crafted for a specific purpose (and successfully do what they were created to do) that are currently in use. There may also be plenty of items that are collecting dust and waiting to be purchased in a second-hand store or flea market, garage sale, estate sale, or even locked away in some occultist or collector's vault somewhere, waiting to be discovered by the right person and opportunity.

Written with pride for the House of BTS (houseofbts.net) by Steven Dawes - updated 6/1/2021

